



Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 33° C L 25° C	H 35° C L 26° C	H 36° C L 26° C

'Karnataka Congress Government Unstable, Won't Last Until 2028': HD Kumaraswamy



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Rahul Gandhi's Claim on Trump Invite Sparks Row in Lok Sabha



TPN | New Delhi

A heated exchange erupted in the Lok Sabha on Monday after Rahul Gandhi alleged that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was sent multiple times to secure an invite for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend Donald Trump's inauguration as US President. The claim, made in the presence of PM Modi, triggered strong objections from BJP MPs.

"When we engage with the United States, we don't send the foreign minister three-four times to get an invite for our PM. If we were leading in technology, the US President would come here and invite him," Gandhi said. The remark sparked loud protests from the treasury benches, with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju demanding evidence.

"The Leader of the Opposition cannot make serious, unverified claims about foreign relations. If he has proof, he must disclose who informed him about the Foreign Minister's visit for this purpose," Rijiju said. Rahul Gandhi, responding with sarcasm, said, "I apologize if my question disturbed your peace of mind."

Jaishankar Rejects Gandhi's Trump Invite Claim, Calls It 'Falsehood'



TPN | New Delhi

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday dismissed Rahul Gandhi's claim that he was sent "three-four times" to secure an invitation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend Donald Trump's inauguration as the 47th US President. Calling it a deliberate falsehood, Jaishankar accused the Congress leader of damaging India's global reputation. "Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi deliberately spoke a falsehood about my visit to the US in December 2024."

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Karnataka Congress in a Tug-of-War Over CM's Tenure

Siddaramaiah camp insists he will remain CM for five years.

Shivakumar supporters hint at a leadership change.

Congress high command yet to take a final call.

Ministers may push for cabinet reshuffle post-budget.

TPN | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Congress is currently wrestling with internal strife over the leadership tenure of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, with conflicting camps within the party. The Siddaramaiah loyalists are adamant about him serving the entire five-year term, while the supporters of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar are hopeful for an imminent shift in leadership.

During a recent victory celebration rally in Channapatna on Sunday, Magadi MLA HC Balakrishna stirred the pot by proclaiming that Shivakumar would soon step into the Chief Minister's shoes. This bold assertion from a prominent party figure has only added fuel to the speculation regarding Shivakumar's leadership ambitions.

Contrarily, in Bengaluru, Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara quashed any notions of a leadership change, retorting to Opposition Leader R Ashoka's prediction of a switch post-November 15 with a quip about Ashoka's newfound astrological insights. Parameshwara emphasized that no such agreement existed within the Congress for Siddaramaiah to serve just half the term. "There was no stipulation when Siddaramaiah was chosen as the CLP leader about him serving for only two and a half years. From our perspective, Siddaramaiah is here for the full five years. I'm unaware of any new directives from the high command," he clarified.



High Command's Crucial Role in Leadership Shuffle

As the internal tug-of-war escalates, RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge pointed out that any decision on leadership would be made by the party's top echelons. "The trio of Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar, and AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge have all agreed to let the high command decide," he noted.

Siddaramaiah's son, Yathindra Siddaramaiah, has been vocal about his father completing his full term, bolstering the case against a mid-term change.

Meanwhile, PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi and Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna are set to head to New Delhi to discuss how a change in leadership might affect the party's trajectory. Their agenda might also include lobbying for more Deputy CM positions if there's a cabinet reshuffle post-Siddaramaiah's upcoming budget presentation in March.

Parameshwara's Political Ambitions

Parameshwara, who seems to be carving out a significant role in this internal drama, aspires

for a portfolio shift and has hinted at this to the party leadership. Yet, he insists his forthcoming trip to New Delhi is solely for official business related to his Home Department, dismissing any political motives.

"I don't need to travel to New Delhi for political discussions; the AICC general secretary for Karnataka visits often, and our AICC President is from here. I can share my thoughts with them locally," he asserted.

This internal discord within the Congress surfaces at a pivotal moment as the party prepares for future elections while aiming to capitalize on recent bypoll victories in Channapatna, Shiggaon, and Sandur. Supporters of Siddaramaiah argue for his continued leadership, crediting it for the party's recent electoral successes and stability. The political landscape in Karnataka remains in flux, with potential cabinet reshuffles and leadership transitions on the horizon. The Congress high command's decision will be critical in determining whether Siddaramaiah holds the fort for the full term or if there's a leadership handover to Shivakumar or another contender.

Bengaluru's Groundwater Crisis: 100% Depleted

Bengaluru hits 100% groundwater extraction in 2024, both urban and rural.



TPN | Bengaluru

Bengaluru is grappling with an acute groundwater crisis as both its Urban and Rural districts have reported a 100% extraction rate in 2024, according to the Central Groundwater Board. This alarming statistic means the city is depleting its groundwater at the same rate it's being replenished, leaving no surplus for future use, as reported by The Times of India.

Karnataka's overall groundwater consumption stands at 68.4%, categorized as "safe," yet experts are sounding the alarm on the upward trend. The state's reliance on groundwater has grown from 66.3% in 2023 to the current rate, indicating an unsustainable path. For more than a decade, Bengaluru has been extracting nearly twice the amount of groundwater it can naturally replenish, pushing its reserves into the "over-exploited" territory, according to data

from the Karnataka Groundwater Directorate. **Water Crisis Looming this Summer?**

As summer approaches, Bengaluru braces for another potential water crisis. Areas like Mahadevapura and Whitefield are particularly vulnerable, with anticipated significant drops in groundwater levels. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has cautioned residents against depending solely on groundwater and suggested exploring alternative water sources. A comprehensive study by BWSSB has pinpointed 80 wards and 110 villages as critically dependent on groundwater, highlighting their high risk for severe water shortages. BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasanth Manohar, in an interview with PTI, urged residents in these high-risk zones to shift to Cauvery water connections. He explained, "The Cauvery Phase 5 Project has boosted water supply, providing a more sustainable option for Bengaluru's growing population." This call to action is seen as a necessary step to mitigate the city's escalating water crisis.

Kharge Stands by Kumbh Death Toll, Seeks Official Data

Congress Chief Links Apology to Govt's Clarity on Numbers



TPN | New Delhi

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has refused to apologize for his statement claiming "thousands died" in the Maha Kumbh stampede, insisting that the government provide official figures before demanding a retraction.

Speaking in Rajya Sabha, Kharge paid tribute to the victims, stating, "I pay my tributes to the people who died in Maha Kumbh... the thousands who died in Kumbh." His remarks triggered immediate protests from the BJP MPs, who accused him of exaggerating the toll.

Chairman Dhankhar Intervenes

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar urged Kharge to reconsider his words, emphasizing the global impact of statements made in Parliament. "You have spoken something that has numbed everyone. A message from this House carries great weight," Dhankhar said, appealing to Kharge's conscience.

Kharge, however,

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Vijayendra Confident of Continuing as Karnataka BJP Chief Amid Internal Rift

Vijayendra confident of retaining BJP chief post.

Yatnal-Jarkiholi faction opposes, to meet high command.

Internal rift caused damage, hopes for resolution.

BJP leadership monitoring, decision soon.



TPN | Karnataka
Karnataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra on Monday asserted his confidence in continuing as the state party chief, despite growing internal rifts within the party. He also expressed hope for a "happy ending" in the upcoming state presidential elections. Acknowledging the damage caused by internal conflicts, Vijayendra remarked that the BJP remains the only party where organisational elections are conducted systematically from the mandal level to the national level. He emphasized that the Karnataka BJP had fought unitedly against the "corrupt and evil" Congress government over the past year and that his performance as state president is well known to party workers and leaders. However, a faction within the BJP, led

by MLAs Basanagouda Patil Yatnal and Ramesh Jarkiholi, remains strongly opposed to his leadership. The faction has accused him of adjustment politics with the ruling Congress and has also criticized his father, B.S. Yediyurappa, for allegedly trying to maintain family control over the party. Reports indicate that the dissenting leaders plan to meet the party high command in Delhi to express their concerns. Vijayendra, who took over as state BJP president in November 2023, has faced repeated opposition from senior leaders who are dissatisfied with his style of functioning. Despite this, he remains

confident of retaining his position, stating that party central leadership is closely monitoring the situation. On the dissatisfaction regarding district-level organisational elections, Vijayendra admitted that competition for leadership roles has intensified. However, he reassured that the high command will soon resolve the issue, and a final decision will be announced in the coming week or ten days. "I have not made open remarks against anyone despite criticisms. I have fulfilled my duties as state president, and I will continue working to strengthen the party," he stated.



Aero India 2025: Bengaluru Airport Adjusts Airspace Closures, Alerts Travelers

TPN | Bengaluru

In preparation for the Aero India Show 2025, Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has announced revised timings for airspace closures from February 5 to 14. Travelers are urged to confirm their flight schedules with airlines due to anticipated disruptions. Scheduled Airspace Closures: **February 5, 6, 8:** No flights between 9 AM to 12 PM and 3 PM to 4:30 PM. **February 7, 9:** Airspace closed from 9 AM to 11 AM, with an extra closure from 3 PM to 4:30 PM on February 7. **February 10:** Restrictions from 9 AM to 11:30 AM and 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM. **February 11, 12:** Flight operations limited between 12 PM

to 2:30 PM.

February 13, 14: Closures from 9:30 AM to 12 PM and 2:30 PM to 5 PM. Managing Traffic and Transport Given the large number of attendees expected at the show, the Bengaluru Police have organized traffic diversions to manage congestion effectively. Parking facilities have been arranged at GKVK Campus and Jakkur Airfield, where visitors can leave their vehicles for free. To facilitate transport, the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) will run complimentary shuttle buses from these parking zones to the Aero India venue, ensuring smooth access for all participants and spectators.

SC Bars Centre, States from Reducing Forest Cover Orders interim protection to forest law amendments

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday barred the Centre and state governments from taking any steps that would reduce forest cover until further orders, issuing an interim protection amid legal challenges to the 2023 Forest Conservation Act amendments. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K Vinod Chandran, hearing multiple petitions against the amendments, ruled that any reduction in forest land must be compensated. "We will not permit anything which leads to the reduction of forest area. Until further orders, no steps will be taken by the Union of India and any state that would reduce forest land unless compensatory land is provided," the bench stated. The petitioners argue that this contradicts the Supreme Court's 1996 ruling in TN Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India, which had provided a broader definition of forests. The Supreme Court also mandated that any proposal to establish zoos or safaris on forest land must receive its prior approval. It directed state governments and union territories to submit details of forest land within their jurisdiction to the Centre by March 31, 2024, with the Ministry of Environment required to publish this information online by April 15.



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Eight-Year-Old Alleges Sexual Assault by Peers in School

TPN Correspondent | MANDYA

An eight-year-old girl from a government school in Mandya district has come forward with allegations of sexual assault by two boys in the school washroom, according to police reports on Monday. The incident reportedly took place on January 31, but only came to light on Sunday when the girl's mother filed a complaint with the local police. According to the girl's statement, she was coerced into the school's washroom by two boys, one from her class and another from a higher grade. They allegedly threatened her, made her remove her clothes, and then assaulted her with a stick, including blows to her private parts. The accused reportedly warned the young girl against disclosing the incident, but she eventually confided in her mother. Consequently, a case has been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Mandya Superin-



tendent of Police, Mallikarjun Baladandi, confirmed that the police are actively investigating the matter to verify the sequence of events. "We are reviewing CCTV footage from the school and cross-checking the details provided in the girl's statement," Baladandi stated. However, he noted that the medical examination did not reveal any injuries to the private parts as described by the girl. The statements of the accused boys are yet to be recorded to

further the investigation. BJP State President B.Y. Vijayendra took to social media platform X to express his condemnation of the incident, highlighting what he described as a deterioration in law and order in Karnataka. He called for stringent action against those responsible. The investigation continues, with the police aiming to clarify the inconsistencies in the girl's account and determine the next steps based on all gathered evidence.

Maharashtra Transport Minister Visits KSRTC

Studies Operations and Welfare Initiatives

TPN | Bengaluru

Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik, along with Madhav Kusekar, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC), and a team of senior officials, visited the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KS-

RTC) central office, depot, and workshop on Sunday to study its operations and welfare initiatives. The delegation held extensive discussions with Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, KSRTC Vice Chairman Rizwan Nawab, the Principal Secretary of the Transport Department, and other senior officials. The discussions focused on various aspects of KSRTC's functioning, including fleet operations, labour welfare schemes, and revenue generation strategies. During the visit, the Maharashtra

team gathered insights into KSRTC's premier vehicle operations, HRMS (Human Resource Management System), e-ticketing system, and commercial revenue models. They also examined key welfare initiatives such as KSRTC Arogya, the ₹1 crore accident insurance scheme, and bus refurbishing and upgradation efforts. The interaction between the two transport departments is expected to facilitate knowledge-sharing and improve public transport services in both states.

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Kharge Stands by Kumbh Death Toll, Seeks Official Data

maintained that his estimate was based on the scale of the tragedy and challenged the government to present the actual number of deaths and missing persons. "I did not say this to blame anyone. But they should give the figures, and if I am wrong, I will apologize," he added. **Maha Kumbh Stampede and Crowd Control** The January 29 stampede occurred at the Triveni Sangam during the Mauni Amavasya

snan, an auspicious occasion that saw an overwhelming crowd pushing through barricades. Officials confirmed 30 deaths and over 60 injuries, attributing the incident to severe overcrowding. Despite the tragedy, massive crowds continued to gather at the site, with over three crore devotees expected to take a holy dip on Basant Panchami. To manage the crowd, 270 IPS trainees, including 77 women officers, were deployed, and

VVIP movements were restricted. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has been monitoring the situation from Lucknow's control center, taking real-time updates since 3:30 am. The authorities have urged devotees to use multiple ghats to prevent congestion. As the Opposition blames the government for inadequate safety measures, the debate over the actual death toll continues to escalate in Parliament.

Jaishankar Rejects Gandhi's Trump Invite Claim, Calls It 'Falsehood'

I went to meet the Secretary of State and NSA of the Biden administration, and also chaired a meeting of Consuls General. At no stage was an invitation for the PM discussed," Jaishankar posted on X (formerly Twitter). The Minister stressed that India is typically represented by special envoys at such events, and it is common knowledge that the Prime Minister does not attend US presidential inaugurations. **BJP Slams Rahul Gandhi** Rahul Gandhi's remarks in Parliament

sparked a strong reaction from BJP MPs, with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju demanding proof. "The Leader of the Opposition cannot make serious, unverified statements on foreign policy. He must provide evidence if he claims the Foreign Minister visited the US for this reason," Rijiju said. Jaishankar also accused Rahul Gandhi of damaging India's reputation with baseless claims. "Rahul Gandhi's lies may serve political interests, but they harm India's global standing," Jaishankar stated.

3,000 Students at Risk as Massive Footpath Hole Near Whitefield School

Bengaluru resident flags massive footpath hole near Whitefield school
BBMP registers complaint after viral post sparks outrage
Citizens question city's crumbling infrastructure and civic negligence

TPN Correspondent, Bengaluru

A Bengaluru resident has raised alarm over a massive hole in the footpath near a school in Whitefield, warning that the safety of over 3,000 students is at risk. The issue, shared on X (formerly Twitter), has sparked outrage among citizens and forced the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to take



notice. The viral post included images of the uncovered hole, which has reportedly remained unattended despite its obvious danger to pedestrians. The resident criticized both BBMP and the school administration for failing to address the hazard. Following the out-

cry, BBMP's Integrated Command and Control Centre registered a complaint based on the post. Users on X expressed frustration over the negligence of civic authorities, with many calling for immediate action. "If BBMP officials walk even 2 km, Bengaluru's problems can be fixed. They can't be blind to pot-holes and hanging cables," one user remarked. Another alleged that the hole was intentionally created by a cable operator, noting, "That's a cable coming from the drain, crossing onto the footpath and taken to a tree. Brazen violations." The incident has reignited debates on Bengaluru's crumbling infrastructure and slow civic responses. "In a top 5 economy, this would have been fixed within an hour. Are we really in the top 5 with this infrastructure?" another user questioned. With mounting public pressure, residents now await BBMP's response and corrective measures to ensure student safety.

Bengaluru Lags in Rooftop Solar Adoption as RWAs Push for PM Scheme Benefits



TPN | Bengaluru

Despite the incentives of the PM Rooftop Solar Scheme (Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana), Bengaluru's adoption of solar energy remains low, with only 68,000 out of 92 lakh homes under BESCOM opting for solar installations. However, a residents' association in Horamavu is setting an example by actively encouraging homeowners to embrace the scheme. The Trinity Enclave Residents' Association (TERA) has successfully driven solar adoption in its layout, with 25 out of 250 houses installing rooftop solar in the first phase and more residents signing up. TERA president G Kochu Shankar

highlighted the affordability of the scheme, stating that a 3 KW rooftop solar unit costs ₹1.8 lakh, but ₹78,000 is reimbursed as a subsidy. With subsidized bank loans at 7% interest, payable over ten years, the monthly EMI equals a regular electricity bill. Within 4-5 years, the loan is repaid, leaving the household with free electricity for the next 20 years. More Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in Horamavu and other parts of Bengaluru are now following TERA's lead. While states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu have successfully promoted the scheme, Karnataka residents are yet to realize its full benefits, Shankar noted.

Bengaluru Scooter Amasses ₹1.61 Lakh in Fines, Still Unseized

TPN | Bengaluru

A Bengaluru scooter has accumulated a hefty ₹1.61 lakh in fines for traffic violations, yet it continues to navigate the city's streets without seizure, igniting public frustration and questions about law enforcement's effectiveness. The issue gained traction when an X user, Shibam, highlighted the situation on the social media platform. Shibam had been monitoring the fines on this particular vehicle, noting an increase from ₹1,05,500 to ₹1,61,000 over the past year. His post included visual evidence of the rider flouting traffic laws, notably driving without a helmet, alongside a screenshot from the Traffic Challan Payment app showing the accrued penalties. Responding to the public outcry, the Bengaluru traffic police issued a statement on X, acknowledging the problem and committing to action: "Noted, we will take necessary action."

Public Reaction on X

The response from X users was swift and critical, with many questioning the efficacy of traffic enforcement in Bengaluru. Comments ranged from cynicism about the eventual fate of the vehicle to calls for tougher legal measures. One user predicted, "Very soon the fine amount will exceed the scooter's value, and he will abandon the vehicle." Another suggested legal escalation, saying, "FIR should be lodged, and the fine



should be claimed through court irrespective of the vehicle." There was also a palpable sense of disappointment in the system's response time and effectiveness. A user lamented, "They are not taking it seriously. I per-

sonally posted traffic violators in public eye two months ago, and it's still kept open. If they mistakenly mark it solved, violations will be booked again," highlighting ongoing issues with enforcement and follow-through.

BMRCCL Kicks Off Land Acquisition for Namma Metro Phase 3

TPN | Bengaluru

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCCL) has launched the land acquisition process for the eagerly awaited Phase 3 of Namma Metro. This expansion aims to enhance Bengaluru's connectivity with two new corridors. Corridor 1 will stretch a substantial 32.15 km from J.P. Nagar Phase 4 to Kempapura, crossing through vital areas of the city. Corridor 2 will be a 12.5 km route from Hosahalli to Kadabagere, improving access to the western parts of Bengaluru. Both routes are designed with multiple interchange stations to facilitate seamless transfers. These include Peenya and JP Nagar on the Green Line, Mysuru Road on the Purple Line, and Sumanahalli on the Hosahalli-Kadabagere corridor. The project is part of BMRCCL's vision to extend the metro network to cover more of the city's expanding urban landscape, reducing traffic



congestion and improving public transport efficiency. The construction of these corridors is expected to connect residential areas with commercial hubs, significantly impacting daily commuting patterns. BMRCCL has already secured initial funding through a mix of government allocations and international loans, with tenders for construction expected to follow soon after the land acquisition phase. This development marks another step towards making Bengaluru a more metro-accessible city.

BBMP Elections Likely in May-June, Notification Expected by April-End

Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill to be tabled soon after public consultation.
Govt under Supreme Court pressure to conduct civic body polls.
Congress optimistic due to recent electoral successes.



sultation is planned this month before submission. The bill aims to streamline Bengaluru's administration, covering aspects like municipal restructuring, taxation, lake conservation, and waste management. The state government is under pressure to conduct the elections, especially after Maharashtra announced municipal polls following a Supreme Court directive. Officials may request the court to delay elections until after the exam season but are preparing for a May-June timeline. Congress is confident of gaining an advantage in the civic polls, citing its strong Assembly numbers and recent by-poll victories in Channapatna, Shiggaon, and Sandur.

TPN | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government is likely to hold Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) elections in May-June, with the official notification expected by April-end, sources said. The elections will be conducted after school and college exams to avoid inconvenience to students. Minister R Ramalinga Reddy confirmed that the government is working on the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, which will be tabled in the Assembly by Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad. A public con-

Burglar Patrol: Bengaluru Police's New Watchdog Service

TPN | Bengaluru

The surge in home break-ins has prompted Bengaluru Police to launch an innovative security measure: special patrols for homes left unattended. This pilot project, kicking off in South Bengaluru, invites residents to notify the police when they're away, ensuring their homes are not easy targets for thieves.

A Lockdown on Crime

Bengaluru's night-time burglaries have spiked, with 2023 witnessing 879 cases, a significant jump from the 702 and 654 incidents in 2022 and 2021, respectively. With only 264 of last year's cases solved, the urgency for enhanced security measures is evident. Under the watchful eye of City Police Commissioner B. Dayananda, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Lokesh B. Jagalsar has initiated this proactive policing strategy. Residents can secure their homes by sending a



snapshot of their locked doors to the control room at 080-22943111 or 9480801500. The control room then compiles a daily rundown of these "vacation homes," distributing it to all 18 police stations in South Bengaluru. Each night, officers use this list to guide their patrols, ensuring that Hoysala vehicles make rounds around these properties, offering a protective blanket over the city's empty nests.

Gone are the days when morning patrols had to play detective to find out which houses were empty. This new system turns residents into partners in security, making the process more efficient and less hit-or-miss. This initiative not only aims to deter crime but also fosters a community-police partnership, transforming Bengaluru's approach to residential security from reactive to proactive.



CBI Arrests Davangere University Professor in NAAC Bribery Case

TPN | Bengaluru

The Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) anti-corruption unit arrested Gayathri Devaraja, a professor at Davangere University, on Saturday for her alleged involvement in a bribery scandal linked to the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) inspection committee. Gayathri, previously the university's registrar (administration) and currently a senior professor in the Department of Studies in Microbiology, was one of the seven members of the NAAC team. The arrests extended to the chairman of the inspection committee and six other members, including the vice-chancellor of Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation (KLEF) in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, and two additional executives from the institution. The CBI has named KLEF president Koneru Satyanarayana, former NAAC deputy adviser L Manjunatha Rao, professor and director of Bangalore University's IQAC-NAAC, M Hanumanthappa, and NAAC adviser M S Shyam-sundar as accused in the FIR.

The operation led to the arrest of KLEF vice-chancellor G P Saradhi Varma, KLEF vice-president Koneru Raja Hareen, and A Ramakrishna, director of KL University's Hyderabad campus, for allegedly bribing NAAC team members to secure an A++ accreditation.

Searches were conducted across 20 locations in various cities like Vijayawada, Chennai, Bengaluru, among others, resulting in the seizure of Rs 37 lakh in cash, six laptops, one mobile phone, and other documents. The CBI has identified 14 individuals involved and is continuing its investigation to fully explore the extent of the corruption and identify any further accomplices.

Rahul Gandhi Alleges 70 Lakh Voter Additions in Maharashtra Polls



TPN | New Delhi

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Monday questioned the credibility of the Maharashtra Assembly election results, alleging that 70 lakh new voters were suddenly added to the state's electoral rolls after the Lok Sabha polls. He demanded that the Election Commission (EC) provide voter list data to the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) for analysis.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha during the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, the Rae Bareilly MP claimed, "The entire population of Himachal Pradesh was added to Maharashtra's voter rolls. After the Lok Sabha elections, 70 lakh new voters suddenly arrived in Maharashtra ahead of the Vidhan Sabha polls." Gandhi insisted that the EC should share the voter list details with the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT), and NCP (Sharad Pawar). While the poll body has not yet responded, it had previously dismissed allegations of arbitrary voter additions or deletions. Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde rejected Gandhi's claims as "false and baseless," stating that every voter list had been publicly uploaded by the EC.

In the Maharashtra elections held on November 20, the MVA won only 50 of 288 seats, while the BJP-led Mahayuti secured 235. Gandhi has repeatedly raised concerns over electoral transparency, accusing the EC of withholding voter data and alleging irregularities, including arbitrary deletions and additions of roughly 10,000 names per constituency. The EC previously refuted these claims, calling them "factually incorrect and misleading."

Sonia Gandhi Faces Privilege Motion Over 'Poor Thing' Remark on President

TPN | New Delhi

A group of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs on Monday submitted a breach of parliamentary privilege notice against Congress MP Sonia Gandhi, alleging that she used derogatory and slanderous language to describe President Droupadi Murmu. The MPs claimed that Gandhi's remarks were aimed at lowering the dignity of the highest office in the country.

The controversy erupted after President Murmu's address to Parliament on Friday, marking the start of the Budget session. Speaking to reporters, Sonia Gandhi reportedly said, "...by the end she could hardly speak, the poor thing."

BJP MPs Demand Action

In a letter to Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar, BJP MPs expressed their "deep dismay" over Gandhi's comments, calling them unparliamentary and demeaning. They argued that the remarks violated parliamentary conventions and demanded "exemplary action" against her.

The MPs cited a Supreme Court ruling, emphasizing that parliamentary privilege should not be abused. They also referred to the Parliamentary Ethics and Code of Conduct, which prohibits defamatory language against others, particularly concerning the President of India.

The letter further accused Gandhi of displaying an elitist and anti-tribal mindset, claiming she lacked an understanding of tribal struggles.

President's Office and BJP Leaders Condemn Remark

The Rashtrapati Bhavan responded sharply, calling Gandhi's words unfortunate, avoid-



able, and in poor taste. It stated that the remarks had hurt the dignity of the high office but dismissed any concerns about the President's health.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also condemned the statement, accusing Gandhi of insulting tribal communities. On X (formerly Twitter), he criticized her for displaying a "royal mindset" and disrespecting the country's first tribal President.

BJP national president JP Nadda labeled the remark "deeply disrespectful," asserting that it reflected the elitist and anti-poor attitude of the Congress party. Several BJP leaders echoed similar sentiments, demanding

an apology from Gandhi.

Priyanka Gandhi Defends Sonia Gandhi

In response, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra defended her mother, dismissing BJP's allegations as "misinterpretation." She emphasized that Sonia Gandhi, at 78 years old, merely expressed concern for the President's exhaustion after a lengthy speech and had no ill intent.

"My mother is a 78-year-old lady. She simply said the President must have been tired. She fully respects the President. It is unfortunate that this statement is being twisted by the media and political opponents," Priyanka Gandhi told reporters.

'Karnataka Congress Government Unstable, Won't Last Until 2028': HD Kumaraswamy

TPN | Bengaluru

Union Minister of Heavy Industries and former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy has predicted a short lifespan for the current Congress-led government in Karnataka, asserting it "won't last until 2028." He attributes this instability to rising discontent among Congress MLAs.

"This government (Congress Govt in Karnataka) won't last until 2028. There is a growing dissatisfaction among the Congress MLAs. We don't know when it will explode, but let's wait and watch," Kumaraswamy stated, dismissing claims that the opposition was actively trying to undermine the government. Instead, he argued, "It's not true that we are trying to topple their government; their MLAs and the people themselves are destabilizing the foundation of this government."

He further criticized the government for its inadequate allocation of development funds, suggesting that this has directly impacted the ability of Congress MLAs to engage with their constituencies, thereby fueling internal party dissent.

"There is immense dissatisfaction among them regarding the government's actions, and it will soon come to the fore," Kumaraswamy added, indicating that this could precipitate the government's downfall.

Congress MLA BR Patil Resigns

Adding to the Congress party's woes, MLA BR Patil resigned from his advisory role to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on January 31. Patil, a veteran in Karnataka politics with a history of representing various parties, has not disclosed the reasons behind his decision. "I resigned the day before yesterday. I have written a detailed letter to the Chief Minister. I will speak with him if he calls me. There are several reasons, but I cannot reveal them publicly. I have not spoken with the CM so far. I won't withdraw my resignation," Patil declared.

Patil's political journey includes victories in the Aland constituency of Kalaburagi district under different political banners over the years, from the Janata Party in 1983 to Congress in 2023, alongside stints as an MLC and Deputy Chairman of the Legislative Council.



Opposition Submits Dissent Note on 281 Pages of JPC Report on Waqf Bill

TPN | New Delhi

Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) Chairman Jagdambika Pal on Monday accused the opposition of attempting to push a political agenda against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, stating that they have submitted a dissent note on 281 out of the 428-page report.

Pal defended the JPC's report, emphasizing that all relevant stakeholders—including the Waqf Board, Minority Commission, government officials, and Islamic scholars—were consulted before finalizing the amendments. He dismissed claims that the bill would take away Waqf properties, calling them misleading.

"In all JPC meetings, we heard from all parties. The final report



was prepared after thorough discussions and a voting process on amendments. The opposition leaders, including Asaduddin Owaisi and Naseer Hussain, participated in the process and later submitted their dissent

notes," Pal said.

The JPC had adopted the draft report and revised bill on January 29, clearing 25 amendments across 14 clauses and sections. However, opposition leaders objected to the proposed changes

and recorded their dissent before the report was presented to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on January 30.

The bill, which will not be tabled in Parliament on Monday, seeks to introduce reforms such as digitization of records, enhanced audits, improved transparency, and legal mechanisms to reclaim illegally occupied Waqf properties. Critics have argued that the changes could lead to government interference in religious trusts.

Pal clarified that the report would be presented in the House once scheduled by the Speaker and the Business Advisory Committee. He reiterated that dissent notes from opposition members would be included in the final submission.



Dacoity Suspect Shot by Police During Escape Attempt in Ullal

TPN | Ullal

In a dramatic turn of events in Karnataka's Ullal, a suspect involved in the Kotekar Co-operative Bank dacoity was injured after police fired at him during an escape attempt on Thursday. The accused, Murugandi Thevar, sustained a gunshot wound below the knee as he tried to flee while the police were conducting an evidence recovery operation.

Murugandi had been in custody since he was implicated in the robbery case, with his detention scheduled to end on February 3. During his interrogation, he revealed crucial details about the crime, including how he, along with Shashi Thevar and another, strategized the heist in November 2024 near Ajjanadka.

According to police statements released on Saturday, Murugandi confessed that Shashi Thevar had supplied a firearm and had given insights into the bank's security weaknesses, which were instrumental in executing the robbery. He also indicated that Shashi had concealed the weapon near the crime scene. Following these revelations, a team comprising the Ullal police inspector, a sub-inspector, and two constables escorted Murugandi back to the location for evidence gathering and to recreate the crime scenario. It was during this operation that Murugandi made his escape attempt, leading to the police's use of force.

Aaradhya Bachchan Moves Court Again Over Fake Videos Seeks action as misleading content remains online



Image tweeted by @ANI

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi

Aaradhya Bachchan, daughter of actors Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, has approached the Delhi High Court again, seeking the removal of fake and misleading content about her health from various websites.

This fresh petition follows a previous court order directing Google, Bollywood Times, and other platforms to take down false information. However, with non-compliance by some websites and social media platforms, Aaradhya, 13, has filed another plea.

During the hearing, the court issued a notice to Google regarding the petition. The case is scheduled for the next hearing on March 17.

In April 2023, the high court had instructed YouTube to immediately remove videos falsely claiming that Aaradhya was seriously ill or had passed away. It had emphasized that every individual, regardless of celebrity status, has the right to dignity, especially concerning their physical and mental health.

2 Crore Devotees Take Holy Dip at Maha Kumbh on Basant Panchami

TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj

An estimated two crore devotees took the ritual dip at the Triveni Sangam on Monday, marking the third 'Amrit Snan' of the Maha Kumbh on the occasion of Basant Panchami, according to figures shared by the Uttar Pradesh government. The sacred event proceeded smoothly, with authorities enforcing stringent crowd control measures following the January 29 stampede tragedy that claimed at least 30 lives. After the tragedy on Mauni Amavasya, the state government, under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, implemented zero-error safety measures, ensuring an organized and disciplined gathering. Unlike the overcrowding seen previously, many devotees chose alternate ghats instead of congesting the confluence area.

Security and Crowd Management Strengthened

Chief Minister Adityanath monitored the situation remotely from Lucknow since 3:30 am, officials said. DIG (Maha Kumbh) Vaibhav Krishna confirmed that additional force was deployed across key pressure points. He assured, "Everything is running smoothly today." Senior officials, including the DIG, patrolled the Mela area on horseback to oversee crowd management. By 4 pm, over 1.98 crore devotees had taken a dip, with the total footfall expected to touch 5 crore by the end of the day.

Grand Akhara Processions and Rituals

At dawn, seers from various akharas, including the Naga sadhus, embarked on their ceremonial journey to the Sangam. The sacred Amrit Snan commenced at 4 am, starting with the Sanyasi akharas, followed by the Bairagi and Udaseen sects. Each akhara was allotted 40 minutes to complete their bathing rituals. By 3 pm, all akharas had completed their dip and returned to their camps. Helicopters showered rose petals on seers and devotees as they performed their rituals. Akharas moved in grand processions, with their mahants and mahamandaleshwars



leading on decked-up chariots, carrying sacred insignias and their Isht Dev (cherished deity). The Naga sadhus, covered in ash and adorned with marigold and rose garlands, marched toward the Sangam, reflecting an age-old tradition of the Kumbh Mela.

Spiritual Significance and Devotee Experiences

CM Adityanath extended his greetings to the saints and devotees on X, expressing his reverence for the spiritual gathering. Pilgrims from across the world shared their experiences. Sarthak from Delhi described a "deep spiritual connection," while Niranjana Mishra from Nepal praised the orderly arrangements.

Crystal from Belgium expressed gratitude for being introduced to Sanatan Dharma, while Meenakshi Giri from Russia called the moment "the most sacred" of her life. The ongoing Maha Kumbh, occurring once in 12 years, is particularly auspicious due to the rare Triveni Yog, a celestial alignment that happens once in 144 years. The highest single-day turnout so far was on Mauni Amavasya (January 29), when 8 crore devotees took a dip. With Monday's Amrit Snan being the last of the three royal bathing days, two more auspicious snans remain—Maghi Purnima on February 12 and Mahashivratri on February 26—before the Maha Kumbh 2025 concludes.

Varthur Lake Biodiversity Park Plan Stalls as Locals Protest Plantation Drive

TPN | Karnataka

The ambitious project to transform parts of Varthur Lake into a biodiversity park hit a snag just a day after its initiation. On Saturday, local opposition halted a plantation drive that was meant to rejuvenate the 445-acre lake, a collaborative effort between the state government, NGOs, and environmental experts.

The initiative, under an MoU with the NGO 'SayTrees', aimed to plant 10,000 saplings along the lake's banks, with the launch seeing around 1,500 saplings planted by Mahadevapura MLA Manjula Limbavalli on January 31. However, the continuation of this drive was met with resistance from local residents.

A Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) source revealed to The New Indian Express, "A group of locals, potentially driven by influential individuals with vested interests, stopped the planting, claiming the saplings were unscientifically chosen and unsuitable for the lake."

Representatives from SayTrees defended the choice of saplings, stating they were selected after consultations with T.V. Ramachandra, an environmental expert from the Centre for Ecological Sciences at IISc. "The saplings were vetted by him and are part of a CSR ini-



tiative," they explained.

Citizen activist N. Jagadish Reddy, who led the opposition, argued that the move was shortsighted. "Planting on wetlands and shallow areas violates National Green Tribunal orders. The saplings are too closely spaced and not native to the area. We need a Nakshatra park here, not a biodiversity park," he told TNIE. He further emphasized the need to prioritize removing a pipeline

that cuts through the lake, which carries treated water to Kolar, arguing it hampers lake preservation efforts.

Despite the protests, a BDA official maintained that the plantation would go ahead, suggesting that the opposition might be politically motivated. The official stressed the importance of the project for the lake's revival, highlighting the complexities of such rejuvenation efforts.

Man Exonerated After 11-Year Legal Battle in Wife's Rape-Murder Case

TPN | BENGALURU

A bank employee from Bengaluru, who was wrongfully imprisoned in connection with the brutal rape and murder of his wife, has finally been cleared after an 11-year ordeal, as reported by the Indian Express.

In 2013, the city was rocked by the grim discovery of a 43-year-old woman's body in a eucalyptus grove along the Bengaluru-Doddaballapur highway. The woman's husband had reported her missing when she did not return from work, only for her body to be found days

later. Initial investigations pointed to sexual assault, confirmed by a post-mortem examination.

The husband was arrested based on bloodstains found in their home, but the case against him was weak. After 73 days in jail, he was released due to a lack of conclusive evidence linking him to the crime. The case was officially closed in 2015, leaving him and his family without closure or justice.

Unwilling to let the matter rest, in 2022, the husband took his case to the Karnataka High

Court, which then mandated that the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) reopen the investigation.

The CID's diligent work led to a significant breakthrough when they analyzed call detail records. This led them to Narasimha Murthy, the victim's former manager, who had frequent contact with her on the day she disappeared. Advanced forensic techniques like brain mapping and polygraph tests implicated Murthy, along with Deepak Channappa and Hariprasad, in the crime. It was revealed that

they had raped and then strangled the victim, disposing of her body afterwards. Murthy had also sold his car post-crime, where forensic tests later found traces of the victim's blood. Currently, the case is in trial, with the prosecution relying on a comprehensive 1,277-page chargesheet backed by scientific evidence and the testimonies of 84 witnesses. This legal vindication marks the end of a long and harrowing journey for the accused husband, highlighting the persistence needed to achieve justice when the system initially fails.

Ban Google Reviews!!

Open Letter to the Prime Minister – Ban Google Reviews?

A medical professional has written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, urging an immediate ban on Google Reviews. He alleges that the review system is being misused for blackmail and extortion, harming Indian entrepreneurs and professionals. Given his regular contributions to our publication, we are reproducing his letter in full.

– Editor

Sri Narendra Modi ji
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
South Block, New Delhi

Subject: Urgent Request to Ban Google Reviews in India, Google is another east India company in hatching.

Respected Sir,

I write to seek your urgent intervention in banning Google Reviews in India. This platform is being exploited as a tool for manipulation, blackmail, and extortion, seriously harming Indian entrepreneurs and professionals.

For years, I have witnessed a disturbing pattern: individuals—often linked to Google representatives—post fraudulent negative reviews against businesses, only to later offer "package deals" to remove them in exchange for payment. This is nothing short of blackmail, allowing a foreign entity to exploit Indian professionals for financial gain.

As a medical professional, I have personally suffered due to these unethical practices. Fake reviews from people who have never visited my facility have damaged my reputation, causing financial loss and eroding public trust. Despite lodging complaints with both Google and the local cybercrime police, no action has been taken.

It is imperative that the Indian government does not remain passive while a multinational corporation engages in such misconduct within our borders. Furthermore, in light of these unethical practices, I urge the government to reconsider the Padma Bhushan award granted to Google CEO Sundar Pichai. Honoring corporations that engage in predatory tactics sends the wrong message about our nation's commitment to protecting its citizens and businesses.

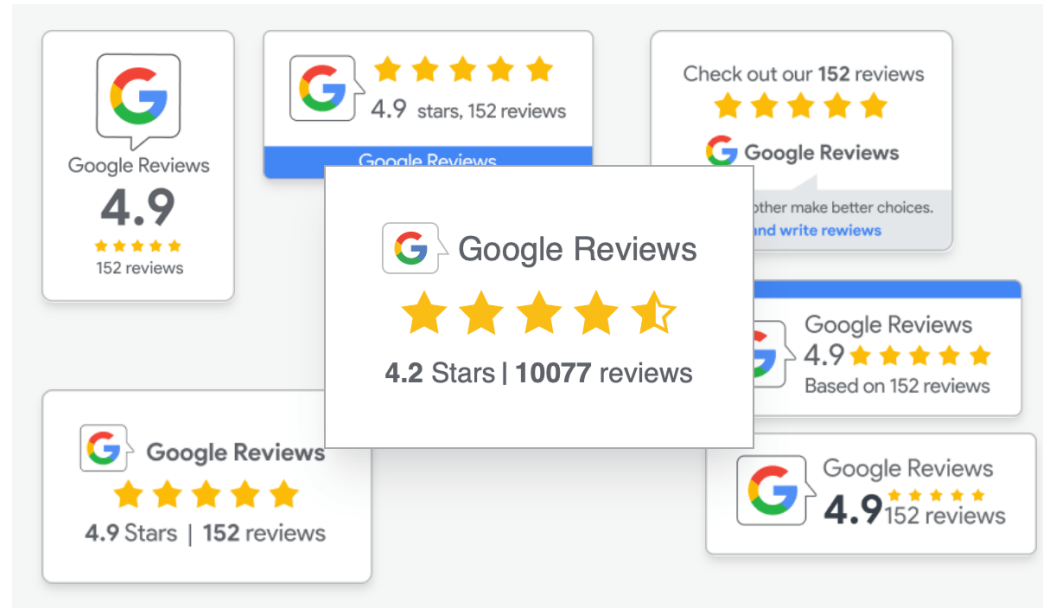
I urge you to take decisive action—either by banning Google Reviews or implementing strict regulations to prevent misuse. Protecting Indian professionals from exploitation should be a priority to maintain a fair and trustworthy business environment.

Google represents a multifaceted and intricate Frankenstein monster creation that, despite its vast capabilities and technological advancements, struggles to effectively control the misuse that arises from its fundamental elements. The platform, while designed to enhance connectivity and access to information, inadvertently becomes a breeding ground for various forms of cybercrime. Our nation is already grappling with the serious repercussions of these cybercrimes, which manifest in alarming ways, including digital arrests and fraudulent loan applications that exploit unsuspecting individuals.

Elon Musk and Donald Trump Target USAID, Sparking Controversy Over Government Oversight

Elon Musk and Donald Trump have launched a coordinated attack on the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), accusing the agency of corruption and overreach. Musk went as far as labeling it a "criminal organization," while Trump described USAID as being "run by radical lunatics." This marks a notable shift in the Trump administration's stance on government agencies, as the duo seeks to challenge what they perceive as wasteful and unchecked operations within the U.S. government.

Trump, speaking publicly on Sunday, criticized USAID's leadership, hinting at a potential overhaul of the agency. He suggested that the current leadership would be removed and that a future reassessment of USAID's role would take place, though he provided no specific details. This comment fueled speculation that Trump may be considering a significant restructuring or even



The consequences of these cybercrimes extend far beyond mere financial loss; they have devastating effects on mental health and community well-being. Tragically, we are witnessing an increasing number of young individuals who, overwhelmed by the pressures and challenges posed by the digital landscape, are taking their own lives. This heartbreaking trend highlights the urgent need for more robust safeguards and support systems to protect vulnerable populations from the darker sides of technology.

Moreover, families across the nation are facing severe economic hardships as a result of these digital threats. The financial strain caused by identity theft, scams, and other cyber-related crimes can lead to a cascade of difficulties, affecting not only individual households but also the broader economy. The emotional toll on families dealing with the aftermath of such crimes cannot be overstated, as they navigate the complexities of recovery and rebuilding their lives.

In this context, Prime Minister Modi's advocacy for the "Make in India" initiative aims to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and self-reliance within the country. However, it appears that Google's pervasive influence and the challenges associated with its platform may undermine this vision from the outset. The reliance on foreign technology gi-

ants can stifle local innovation and entrepreneurship, as domestic businesses struggle to compete in an environment dominated by powerful multinational corporations.

Furthermore, the potential for misuse of technology can deter investment and growth in homegrown solutions, as entrepreneurs may hesitate to enter a market fraught with risks associated with cybercrime and data breaches. To truly realize the goals of the "Make in India" initiative, it is essential to create a balanced ecosystem that empowers local businesses while also addressing the challenges posed by global tech giants like Google.

In conclusion, while Google has revolutionized the way we access information and connect with one another, it is imperative to recognize and address the complexities and challenges that accompany its influence. As we navigate this digital age, we must prioritize the protection of individuals and families from cyber threats, support mental health initiatives, and foster an environment that encourages local innovation and entrepreneurship. Only then can we hope to build a resilient and thriving society that aligns with the aspirations of the "Make in India" Before independence, British entity, the East India Company, controlled Indian commerce. Today, once again we find ourselves under the control of foreign companies like Google, which now exerts significant control over Indian businesses. Are we to remain subservient to these profit-driven foreign companies? Google's overarching aim appears to control of the Indian enterprises, ranging from micro, small, and medium enterprises in villages to major businesses in urban centers.

We, Indians should not remain captive in hands of these profit making unethical companies

I trust you will consider the severe implications of this issue and take appropriate steps. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Dr. Buragadda Srinadh, MD
Director, Asian Institute of Fetal Medicine and Reproductive Genetics
Hyderabad

This rhetoric from Musk and Trump comes after the former president's administration previously froze aid spending, sparking concerns that USAID could face major cuts or a complete restructuring. While waivers were issued to allow humanitarian aid to continue, there are rumors that Trump plans to integrate USAID into the State Department, although no official comments have been made by his team.

Musk's involvement in the matter is linked to his leadership of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a temporary body tasked with reviewing government operations. However, DOGE does not hold official status as a federal agency, and Musk's authority to make sweeping decisions remains unclear. Reports surfaced suggesting that DOGE staff attempted to access classified USAID materials, leading to forced leave for two senior USAID officials.

The attacks on USAID have sparked significant backlash from Democratic lawmakers. Senator Chris Murphy and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have voiced strong concerns about the dismantling of the agency and the involvement of an unelected billionaire in governmental affairs. Critics argue that Musk's actions could pose a serious threat to national security and undermine the integrity of U.S. institutions.

How China Allegedly Contributes To Fentanyl Crisis



The United States continues to grapple with a devastating opioid epidemic, and fentanyl—a synthetic opioid 50 times more potent than heroin—is at the center of the crisis. The drug, which is cheaper and easier to produce than heroin, has claimed tens of thousands of American lives each year. Fentanyl is now the leading cause of death among individuals aged 18 to 45, and its rapid spread has been a point of contention between Washington and Beijing.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has accused China of being the primary source of fentanyl-related substances trafficked into the U.S. While China tightened its controls on fentanyl production in 2019, U.S. authorities assert that this only shifted the trafficking methods. Chemical components required to produce fentanyl are shipped to Mexico, where the drug is manufactured and then smuggled into the United States. Many of these precursor chemicals are legal in China and have legitimate medical uses, complicating prosecution efforts.

In response, Beijing has denied responsibility, asserting that there is no illegal trafficking of fentanyl between China and Mexico. However, the Chinese government has vowed to strengthen its regulations, pointing to some of the world's harshest drug laws. Despite these efforts, U.S. authorities argue that drug manufacturers continue to develop new variants of synthetic precursors faster than Chinese authorities can identify and regulate them.

The Biden administration has ramped up its efforts to curb the fentanyl crisis by targeting Chinese entities and individuals allegedly linked to the trade. In October 2023, sanctions were imposed on over two dozen Chinese firms accused of facilitating the shipment of fentanyl precursors to the U.S. and Mexico. These actions include individuals from both mainland China and Hong Kong, with U.S. officials attributing a significant portion of fentanyl-related deaths to the global supply chain that begins with Chinese chemical manufacturers.

China's cooperation in addressing the fentanyl trade remains uncertain. While U.S. and Chinese leaders agreed to restart counternarcotics talks following a summit in 2023, the effectiveness of these negotiations is still in question. Analysts note that cooperation between the two nations often hinges on the state of bilateral relations, and Chinese authorities may be less inclined to cooperate with countries with whom they have strained relations.

Learning from Past: The Importance of Disaster and Mitigating Modern Catastrophes



The devastating wildfires that ravaged Southern California in 2025 echo the destructive power of the Great Fire of 1910, which consumed over 3 million acres across Montana, Idaho, and Washington. Descriptions from that historic fire—such as "The forests staggered, rocked, exploded, and then shrieked under the holocaust" and "Great red balls of fire rolled up the mountainsides"—are chilling reminders of the recurring nature of such natural disasters. Similarly, the tragic events of the Wayanad disaster in July-August 2024 resonate with the accounts of a 1924 landslide in the region, highlighting the vulnerability of isolated communities in the face of natural calamities and the historical struggles of rebuilding economies after disasters.

While history may seem to repeat itself, there are valuable lessons to be learned by examining past disasters closely. Analyzing specific cases and their impacts, both immediate and long-term, can shed light on effective strategies for future disaster management and recovery. It is especially important to study historical disaster patterns and their socio-economic consequences to improve preparedness in today's world.

Disaster history has long played a crucial role in shaping how regions and nations deal with calamities. Although it has been an essential aspect of human experience, the study of disasters from a historical perspective has not always been systematically pursued. Pioneering studies, such as those on the 1755 Great Lisbon Earthquake and the 1920 dynamite explosion in Halifax, Canada, have provided insight into the multifaceted impacts of disasters, including their religious significance, social dynamics, and recovery processes. These early works laid the foundation for modern disaster studies, which have gained momentum since World War II, especially in the context of Cold War tensions.

India, Indonesia share motto of 'unity in diversity': PM Modi inaugurates Murugan temple

- Modi praises acceptance of diversity as key to harmony in India and Indonesia.
- Stresses deep-rooted cultural and historical ties beyond geopolitics.
- Highlights common spiritual connections, including Lord Murugan, Ram, and Buddha.



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the deep cultural and spiritual connection between India and Indonesia, noting that the acceptance of diversity is a key reason why people of different faiths coexist harmoniously in both countries. Addressing the Maha Kumbabhishagam in Shri Sanathana Dharma Aalayam in Jakarta on Sunday, Modi underscored that the relationship between the two nations goes beyond geopolitics and is grounded in thousands of years of shared culture and history.

In his virtual address, Modi highlighted the profound historical and cultural ties that

have shaped the bond between India and Indonesia. He pointed out that this connection is not only about heritage but also extends to science, faith, shared beliefs, and spirituality. Modi further elaborated on the importance of this relationship, noting that it encompasses common reverence for figures like Lord Murugan, Lord Ram, and Lord Buddha, who are significant to both countries' religious and cultural landscapes.

The event was attended by Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, who had recently visited India as the Chief Guest for the Republic Day celebrations. The participation of both leaders in such a significant religious and cultural event further symbolizes the

strong ties between the two nations. Modi's address at the ceremony emphasized how the cultural and spiritual exchanges between India and Indonesia have played a crucial role in fostering a deep and lasting bond between their peoples.

Modi's comments also reaffirmed the importance of shared values, such as respect for diversity and religious tolerance, which have been central to the harmonious coexistence of different faith communities in both countries. The Prime Minister's remarks reflect the broader vision of strengthening Indo-Indonesian relations, rooted not only in modern-day diplomacy but also in the enduring legacy of mutual respect and cultural affinity.



Did Manipur Chief Minister Stoke Violence? Supreme Court Seeks Government Lab Report

TPN Correspondent | Manipur

In a significant development, the Supreme Court of India has ordered the submission of a forensic report on audio clips that allegedly feature Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh instigating ethnic violence. The court has instructed that the forensic findings from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) be submitted in a sealed cover.

The request for the forensic examination follows the presentation of audio tapes by advocate Prashant Bhushan, who is representing the petitioner in the case. The tapes, which were verified by Truth Labs with over 93 percent certainty, purportedly feature Singh's voice. In the recordings, Singh is reportedly heard discussing the protection of Meitei groups and their involvement in looting the state armoury during the ethnic clashes in Manipur. The tapes are alleged to have been recorded during a private meeting and leaked afterward, with Bhushan suggesting that the Chief Minister may have been instigating and abetting the violence.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the state, raised preliminary objections, arguing that the petitioner should first approach the High Court. He also informed the court that an FIR had already been filed, and an investigation was underway. Mehta further stated that the investigating agency had contacted the Twitter accounts that uploaded the audio clips for verification and sent the tapes for forensic analysis. He also accused the petitioner of having a "separatist mindset" that could be influencing the case.

The Supreme Court bench, led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, pressed for the timely submission of the forensic report. However, Mehta suggested that the results might not be available immediately. The case highlights the ongoing ethnic tensions in Manipur, which have led to widespread violence, including the involvement of militant groups.

In a related development, a militant from the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (People's War Group) was arrested in Imphal West district for alleged extortion activities targeting government employees and the public. This arrest further underscores the volatile situation in the region.

BJP MPs' privilege motion against Sonia Gandhi for calling President 'poor thing'



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

BJP MPs in the Rajya Sabha have filed a privilege notice against senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi for her controversial "poor thing" comment about President Droupadi Murmu. The MPs have called for exemplary action, accusing Gandhi of displaying an elitist and anti-tribal mindset. The notice, addressed to Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, claims that Gandhi's remark shows a lack of understanding of the struggles faced by tribal communities and poor individuals.

The BJP MPs argue that such a statement is a violation of the established rules of conduct and Parliamentary ethics, which demand respect for constitutional offices. They emphasized that the Parliament, as the highest legislative body in India, holds the responsibility of maintaining decorum and respect for all constitutional authorities. Any deviation from this, they said, undermines the credibility and trust that citizens place in the institution.

The notice also stresses that Sonia Gandhi's comments undermine the dignity of the office of the President. The BJP MPs called her actions "disparaging" and "contemptuous," noting that they are inconsistent with the principles of mutual respect and decorum that are essential for the functioning of a healthy democracy.

India Reevaluates Cryptocurrency Stance Amid Global Shifts

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India is reconsidering its position on cryptocurrencies, with the country's growing interest aligning with global trends as other nations adjust their approaches to virtual assets. A senior government official revealed this development on Sunday, noting that the shift in stance comes in the wake of crypto-friendly policy announcements, notably in the United States.

Ajay Seth, India's Economic Affairs Secretary, explained in an interview that the government is revisiting its stance on cryptocurrency, especially after witnessing changes in how various jurisdictions are embracing or regulating digital assets. As a result, the planned release of a discussion paper on cryptocurrencies, initially set for September 2024, may be delayed. Seth emphasized that cryptocurrencies, by their very nature, do not adhere to borders, meaning that India cannot adopt a unilateral approach toward the evolving global landscape of virtual assets.

Though Seth did not directly reference the United States, the timing of his remarks coincides with recent moves by U.S. President Donald Trump. Last week, Trump ordered the creation of a cryptocurrency working group to propose regulations for digital assets and explore the possibility of creating a national cryptocurrency reserve, signaling a more favorable regulatory environment for virtual currencies in the U.S.

Despite India's historically cautious stance toward cryptocurrencies, marked by high trading taxes and regulatory hurdles, the nation has seen a surge in crypto investment from its citizens. As the sector expands, the Indian government is increasingly forced to reevaluate its policies. In December 2023, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) issued show-cause notices to nine offshore cryptocurrency exchanges for failing to comply with local regulations. In a related move, Binance, the world's largest crypto exchange, was fined 188.2 million rupees (\$2.25 million) in June 2024 after registering with the FIU to resume operations in India.

While some regulators in India have expressed openness to managing cryptocurrency trade, the Reserve Bank of India has consistently warned that private digital currencies pose a macroeconomic risk. This ongoing tension between government bodies signals the challenges India faces as it navigates its stance on the rapidly evolving world of digital finance.



Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Passes 50-Point Resolution, Rejects CAA, NRC, and UCC

TPN Correspondent | Jharkhand

The ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) passed a 50-point resolution during its 46th foundation day celebration at Gandhi Maidan in Dumka on Sunday night. Among the key points, the party strongly rejected the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), stating that these measures should not be implemented in Jharkhand.

The resolution also called for the strict enforcement of the Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act and the Santal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Act, both of which aim to protect tribal land rights. Additionally, the party demanded that the central government release the "Rs 1.36 lakh crore dues" owed to the state government immediately, emphasizing the need for financial justice for the state.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren addressed a large gathering during the event, where he lashed out at the Centre for allegedly ignoring the state's needs. He claimed that the people of Jharkhand had been "cheated" in the Union budget, as the state's concerns had been overlooked. Soren criticized those with a "feudal mindset," suggesting that they did not want the residents of the tribal-majority state to become self-reliant.

Soren also pointed out that despite Jharkhand contributing significantly to the nation's economy, particularly through its mineral resources, the state remains one of the most backward regions in the country. He voiced his frustration over the continued neglect of Jharkhand's development needs and emphasized the importance of financial justice for the state's growth and empowerment.

The resolution passed by the JMM and Soren's comments underscore the ongoing tensions between the state government and the central authorities, particularly regarding issues related to tribal rights, state finances, and the controversial national policies like the CAA, NRC, and UCC.



Rahul Gandhi's Remarks on Foreign Policy Spark Heated Debate in Lok Sabha

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Lok Sabha witnessed a tense exchange on Monday as Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks on India's foreign policy led to strong objections from the ruling BJP benches. Gandhi, while addressing the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, claimed that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar was sent to the inauguration of US President Donald Trump to secure an invitation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the United States. This statement quickly provoked BJP MPs, including Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who strongly objected, calling Gandhi's claim baseless and unfounded.

Gandhi began his speech by criticising the President's Address, claiming that it was repetitive, with the government listing the same achievements as in previous years. He also raised concerns about the rising unemployment in the country, asserting that neither the UPA government nor the current NDA administration has provided a satisfactory solution for the nation's youth regarding jobs.

On India's economic situation, Gandhi pointed out that despite the government's 'Make in India' initiative, the share of manufacturing in the country's GDP has decreased from 15.3% in 2014 to 12.6% today. He said that while the concept of 'Make in India' was a good one, the government has failed to implement it effectively. He further accused India of relying heavily on China for production, stating, "Every time we use a phone or wear Chinese products, we pay a tax to China."

In a controversial statement, Gandhi referenced the Trump inauguration, saying, "If we had a production system and were working on technologies, the US President would come here and invite the Prime Minister." This remark sparked protests from the treasury benches, with Rijiju demanding an apology for such "unverified" statements. Gandhi responded sarcastically, apologising for "disturbing their peace of mind."

Trump Slams Democrats for Delaying Nominees, Urges GOP to Act Tough

Trump claims Democrats are purposefully delaying his nominees, urging the GOP to respond.

- Trump accuses Democrats of deliberately delaying his nominees.
- Calls for Republicans to take swift action against confirmation delays.
- Claims nominee delays threaten national safety and governance.

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Former President Donald Trump has accused Democrats of deliberately delaying the approval of his nominees, claiming that they are holding up the process for political reasons at the expense of the country's safety and well-being. In a post on his social media platform, Truth Social, Trump voiced his frustration with the ongoing nomination process for his administration picks.

"Democrats are purposefully delaying virtually all of my nominees. No matter how good and well-qualified someone is, they are taking maximum time for approval — and laughing about it. They're having a good time at the country's expense and safety," Trump wrote, sharing a Fox News clip in which host Mark Levin discussed how Democrats were allegedly undermining the Constitution.

Trump further criticized Democrats, claiming that even if figures like George Washing-



ton or Abraham Lincoln were nominated, they would still be delayed until the last moment. He blamed their actions on their inability to accept the results of the previous presidential election, warning that their obstructionist tactics would only increase the Republican Party's strength. "Republicans must GET TOUGH —

AND MUST GET TOUGH VERY FAST. We need our nominees NOW, for the safety and good of our country!" he added.

As of now, only eight of Trump's 114 nominees have been confirmed by the Senate, with 68 still under consideration and 38 awaiting votes, according to The Washington Post. Among those confirmed are key figures like Marco Rubio as Secretary of State, John Ratcliffe as CIA Director, and Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense. Notably, other high-profile picks like Pam Bondi for Attorney General, Elise Stefanik for UN Ambassador, and Doug Collins for Veterans Affairs Secretary are still waiting for Senate votes.

In response to the delays, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., defended the right to delay nominations for candidates lacking broad support in the Senate. Schumer cited concerns over certain nominees, including Ratcliffe's qualifications to lead the Office of National Intelligence.



Panama drops Belt and Road deal with China amid Donald Trump's warning

TPN Correspondent | Panama

Panama has officially announced its decision to withdraw from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), signaling the country's intention not to renew the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that tied it to China's global infrastructure project. This decision comes as Panama reaffirms its sovereignty over the Panama Canal, rejecting any foreign influence or claims over the strategic waterway. President Jose Raul Mulino emphasized that Panama's control over the canal, the world's second busiest waterway, is non-negotiable.

The move comes amid growing tensions with the United States, as former President Donald Trump and US officials have voiced concerns over China's involvement in the region. Trump has repeatedly suggested that the US should regain control of the Panama Canal, a vital maritime route. "China's running the Panama Canal... that was given to Panama, foolishly, but they violated the agreement, and we're going to take it back, or something very powerful is going to happen," Trump said previously.

In response to these concerns, President Mulino clarified that Panama's neutrality treaty with the US, which governs the canal's use, remains intact. "Sovereignty over the canal is not in question," Mulino stated. The Panama Canal, which was originally built by the US in the early 20th century, was handed over to Panama in 1999. Since then, the canal has remained under Panama's control, despite ongoing disputes over its strategic importance.

Homes Blacked Out, Bridge Torn Into Two: Rising Floodwaters In Australia Wreak Havoc

TPN Correspondent | Australia

Rising floodwaters have wreaked havoc across northeastern Australia, forcing evacuations, cutting off communities, and causing extensive damage to infrastructure. Storms that began over the weekend have dumped more than a metre (39 inches) of rain in parts of Queensland, submerging homes, businesses, and roads under muddy waters.

In Townsville, a popular coastal tourist spot near the Great Barrier Reef, authorities have declared certain areas a "black zone" due to the severity of the floods. The state's premier, David Crisafulli, warned that the region could face additional rain and more flooding, including both flash floods and riverine flooding. "We remain prepared for the ongoing prospect of more rain," Crisafulli said during a news conference. Emergency services reported conducting 11 "swift water rescues" overnight.

More than 2,100 people were ordered to evacuate Townsville over the weekend, but about 10 percent of residents refused to leave, according



to emergency officials. Tragically, one woman in her 60s lost her life when a rescue boat capsized in the flood-hit town of Ingham, located about 100 kilometres from Townsville.

The floods also caused significant damage to infrastructure, including the collapse of a critical bridge over Ollera Creek, which severed the main coastal road, the Bruce Highway. "It's not every day you see a bridge torn in two," Cris-

afulli remarked, highlighting the scale of the destruction.

Nearly 11,000 properties remain without power across northern Queensland, with no immediate timeline for restoration, according to Ergon Energy. Townsville's acting mayor, Ann-Maree Greaney, said that communities were isolated due to road closures, and efforts were underway to deliver food and restore power.

Deadly Wildfires in Argentina's Patagonia Force Evacuations, Destroy 3,000 Hectares

TPN Correspondent | Argentina

A deadly wildfire has ravaged around 3,000 hectares of land near El Bolson, a popular tourist destination in Argentina's Patagonia region, prompting the evacuation of hundreds of residents. The fires, which broke out on Thursday in the Cajon del Azul hiking area in Amprale, have caused widespread devastation. High summer temperatures and strong winds helped the fire spread rapidly, leaving destruction in its wake.

The fire has claimed the life of one individual, who suffered a cardiac arrest from inhaling smoke while inside his residence, as reported by Bruno Pogliano, the mayor of El Bolson. "This disaster left one fatal victim, devastated thousands of hectares and caused enormous damage to our community," said Alberto Weretilneck, governor of Rio Negro province, where the fires are burning.

Over 800 people have been evacuated from the affected areas, as authorities work to contain the spread of the flames. The provincial government of Rio Negro has declared a state of emergency, imposing a ban on open fires and strengthening surveillance and prevention measures, which will remain in place until April 30.

Firefighters are facing a challenging task in battling the blazes, with the ongoing threat of the fires being fueled by dry conditions and unpredictable weather patterns. The region has been experiencing extreme summer temperatures, exacerbating the risk of wildfires in an already vulnerable landscape.

In response to the disaster, authorities are mobilizing resources to assist in firefighting efforts and support the affected communities. While the situation remains dire, officials are hopeful that these measures will help control the fires in the coming days.

Zelenskyy Warns Against Excluding Ukraine from US-Russia Talks on War

TPN Correspondent | Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned on Saturday that excluding Ukraine from talks between the United States and Russia about the ongoing war would be "very dangerous." He stressed the importance of Ukraine being directly involved in any discussions aimed at ending the conflict, especially as both sides work toward a potential ceasefire.

Zelenskyy expressed concern over Russia's reluctance to engage in meaningful ceasefire talks, pointing out that Moscow views any form of concessions as a loss, particularly with the current military advantage on the battlefield. He argued that the Kremlin's stance has made negotiations difficult, and he emphasized that the war could not be resolved without Ukraine's active participation in the dialogue.

In the interview, Zelenskyy highlighted that US President Donald Trump could play a key role in bringing Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiation table by leveraging sanctions targeting Russia's energy and banking sectors, in addition to continuing military support for Ukraine. "I think these are the closest and most important steps," Zelenskyy said, referring to the need for a strategic and coordinated approach involving Ukraine, the US, and its allies.

Zelenskyy's comments came after Trump's remarks on Friday, in which the former president indicated that US and Russian officials had already begun talks about ending the war. However, Trump did not provide further details on the discussions. Zelenskyy expressed that while Russia may have its own diplomatic channels, excluding Ukraine from the conversation would be detrimental to global stability. "Talking about Ukraine without us — it is dangerous for everyone," he concluded, emphasizing the crucial role his country plays in shaping the outcome of the war.

Trump Threatens EU Tariffs, Cuts Funding to South Africa Amid Trade War Escalation

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

US President Donald Trump has announced plans to impose tariffs on goods from the European Union, following his recent moves to target Canada, Mexico, and China. Trump said on Sunday that tariffs on the EU would be implemented "pretty soon," accusing the bloc of taking advantage of the United States. This statement adds to his ongoing criticism of the EU's trade practices, which he claims have been unfair to the US.

Trump's comments on tariffs come on the heels of his recent actions, including 25% tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods and a 10% tariff on Chinese imports. While Trump has previously threatened to impose tariffs on the EU, this latest declaration marks a potential escalation of the trade war. He reiterated his grievances over the US trade deficit with the 27-nation bloc, stating, "The European Union has treated us so terribly."

The European Union has vowed to retaliate if Trump follows through on his tariff threat. A spokesperson for the EU stated that it would "respond firmly" to any unfair tariffs imposed by the US. In addition to the EU, Trump's trade war has sparked backlash from key allies, including Canada and Mexico, who have already pledged retaliatory measures. China has also said it plans to challenge Trump's tariffs at the World Trade Organization.

In a related development, Trump also criticized South Africa, accusing the country of "confiscating" land and mistreating certain classes of people. He announced that the US would cut off all future funding to South Africa, pending an investigation into these claims.

Stock Markets Decline on Global Uncertainty; IT and Healthcare Limit Losses



Domestic stock markets closed lower on Monday. The Nifty opened with a gap-down of 162 points in the morning on negative signals from global markets. Donald Trump's decision to stop funding to South Africa, preparations to impose tariffs on other countries, signals from those countries to impose tariffs in retaliation, and international uncertainty contributed to this. After that, there was a slight recovery as investors took up some buying. However, the further weakening of the rupee against the dollar increased the negative sentiment. Nifty ended with a loss of 121 points and Sensex 319 points on support from IT and healthcare shares.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 77,505 in the previous session, opened at 77,063 today. It touched an intraday low of 76,756. It reached an intraday high of 77,260. It ended at 77,186, down 319 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,319 on Monday, touched

a low of 23,222 and a high of 23,381. It lost a total of 121 points and closed at 23,361. The Nifty Bank fell 296 points to settle at 49,210.

In the Nifty50, 16 companies gained while 35 lost. Bajaj Finance, Shriram Finance, M&M, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv were the top gainers. IT, Tata Consumer, Hero Moto, Coal India, BEL were the biggest losers. Today, all sectoral indices, except IT, healthcare, auto, pharma, and consumer durables, were in the red. Bank, FMCG, metal, oil and gas indices fell the most.

Market breadth on NSE today completely shifted in favor of sellers. Out of a total of 2928 stocks traded, 2063 lost. Only 787 gained. Shares of 34 companies reached 52-week highs



while 79 reached 52-week lows.

Rupee weakened by 58 paise to settle at 87.19 against dollar. Jefferies reduced GMR Airports target to Rs.92 from Rs.100. Nomura maintained buy rating with a target price of Rs.870 for Five Star Business Finance. Kamat Hotels and Sky Gold ended in the upper circuit. Railways, defense and infra shares were volatile today due to reduced capex spending. Stove Craft's net profit in the third quarter rose 79% from Rs 6.7 crore to Rs 12 crore. Alembic Pharma's net profit fell 23% to Rs 138 crore from Rs 180 crore. Poly Medicare's net profit rose 31% from Rs 65 crore to Rs 85 crore. The heads of the respective companies believe that India will register double-digit growth in the financial year 2026. Mahindra Life Space has won a project worth Rs 950 crore for the redevelopment of residential societies in Mumbai. Sky Gold's net profit rose from Rs 9 crore to Rs 37 crore. Hero MotoCorp's January exports rose 140.8%. Swan Energy won an order worth Rs 111 crore. Divis Laboratories' profit rose from Rs 358 crore to Rs 589 crore.

1. Bajaj Finance (BAJFINANCE) – NBFC Leader

Bajaj Finance is a market leader in the Indian non-banking financial company (NBFC) space, offering consumer loans, SME loans, and commercial lending. It has a strong digital lending platform



and a growing customer base. Bajaj Finance remains a strong long-term bet due to its consistent earnings growth, high return ratios, and leadership in digital lending. Valuations are on the higher side, but growth potential remains strong.

2. Wipro (WIPRO) – IT Services Giant

Wipro is one of India's largest IT services firms, providing consulting, cloud computing, and digital transformation solutions globally. It has a significant presence in the BFSI, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors. Wipro's growth has lagged behind peers like TCS and Infosys due to weaker deal wins and margin pressures. However, the company is focusing on improving execution efficiency and large deal acquisitions. Suitable for long-term investors seeking stability.

3. Bharti Airtel – Telecom & Digital Services Leader

Bharti Airtel is one of India's leading telecom providers, offering mobile, broadband, and enterprise solutions. It is expanding its 5G network and increasing ARPU (Average Revenue Per User) with premium offerings. Bharti Airtel is benefiting from strong subscriber growth, premiumization, and tariff hikes. Its high P/E suggests premium valuation, but



long-term growth potential remains strong due to rising data consumption and enterprise business expansion.

4. Cholamandalam Investment & Finance (CHOLAFIN) – Leading NBFC in Vehicle Finance



Cholamandalam is a Murugappa Group NBFC, focusing on vehicle finance, home loans, and SME loans. It has a strong rural and semi-urban lending presence. Cholamandalam is well-positioned to benefit from rising demand for auto and rural credit. While valuations are high, its consistent profitability and strong loan growth make it a solid long-term NBFC play.

5. TVS Motor Company (TVSMOTOR) – Two-Wheeler & EV Leader

TVS Motor is a leading two-wheeler manufacturer in India with a growing presence in electric vehicles (EVs) and premium motorcycles. It competes with Hero MotoCorp and Bajaj Auto. TVS is rapidly expanding its EV portfolio and premium segment motorcycles. Strong brand loyalty and international expansion support long-term growth. A good pick for investors looking for a blend of stability and growth in the auto sector.



Rupee hits an all-time low to go past Rs 87 against US dollar



The Indian rupee plunged to a record low of Rs 87.07 against the US dollar on Monday, following new trade tensions triggered by fresh tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump. The rupee's sharp decline, which amounted to a 0.5% drop in early trade, reflects broader instability in the global currency markets as the US dollar strengthened significantly.

The rupee's weakness was largely a result of three executive orders signed by Trump over the weekend, which introduced new tariffs on major trading partners. These measures included 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada, along with a 10% tariff on goods from China, set to take effect on Tuesday. As the US dollar gained strength in response to these tariffs, it placed significant pressure on other currencies, particularly in Asia.

Traders anticipate continued pressure on the rupee throughout the day, with further weakness expected as global markets adjust to the news. The strengthening of the US dollar, spurred by the tariffs, contributed to the rise of the dollar index, which climbed 0.3% to 109.8. This stronger dollar has affected not only the Indian rupee but other Asian currencies as well.



Budget is By the People, For the People, Of the People: says Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln, described the Union Budget as "by the people, for the people, of the people." In her remarks, she highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strong support for tax cuts aimed at easing the burden on the middle class. According to Sitharaman, while the idea for tax cuts was driven by the Prime Minister's vision, it took time to convince bureaucrats to implement the changes.

The newly introduced tax rates are designed to reduce the financial strain on the middle class, leaving more disposable income in the hands of households. This move is expected to stimulate household consumption and support the economy by encouraging spending. Sitharaman emphasized that widening the tax base is an ongoing process, and it is crucial for citizens to understand the importance of tax payment in sustaining government welfare schemes.

Sitharaman acknowledged the concerns of the middle class, which had long been expressing dissatisfaction about their unmet aspirations despite being honest taxpayers. She explained that the government's decision to provide tax relief was a response to their calls for assistance, especially amid rising inflation.

However, while Prime Minister Modi was quick to approve the tax cuts, convincing the officials in the Finance Ministry and the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), responsible for ensuring revenue collection, required more effort. Sitharaman shared that the process took some time but ultimately led to the announcement of the tax relief, which has been in the works for several months.

Adani Power Plans Major Expansion to Boost Capacity by 1.7x by 2030

Adani Power Ltd (APL), India's second-largest thermal power generation company, is on track to significantly expand its power generation capacity. According to a report by Jefferies, APL aims to increase its capacity from 17.6 GW to 30.7 GW by 2030, marking a 1.7 times growth.

The company's strategic expansion plan comes with strong backing in terms of land acquisition and financing. APL is working closely with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for the delivery of necessary equipment. Additionally, APL's in-house engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) team is ensuring that capital expenditure progresses according to schedule, driving the company's expansion forward.

Jefferies highlighted that India's peak power deficit situation, combined with APL's exposure to the merchant power market, provides a positive outlook for the compa-



ny. The report projects a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10% in EBITDA between FY24 and FY27. As new power capacity comes online, EBITDA growth is expected to accelerate, with a 19% CAGR forecasted between FY27 and FY30. Overall, the report estimates a 2.2x increase in EBITDA from FY24 to FY30.

In terms of funding the expansion, APL will

require an incremental capital expenditure of Rs 1.6 trillion to add 13 GW of capacity. The company plans to manage this investment through operational cash flows of Rs 1.4 trillion between FY25 and FY30. However, APL's debt-to-equity ratio is expected to peak at 1.4x during FY26-FY27 before declining post-FY27 as new plants begin generating revenue.



Araku Chali Festival Concludes with Grand Success

TPN Correspondent | Araku

The three-day Araku Chali Festival concluded on a grand note, attracting large crowds who enjoyed the celebrations in the scenic valley. The festival, which featured trekking, cultural performances, traditional competitions, and adventure activities, showcased the rich heritage and natural beauty of Araku.

Trekking to Instill Enthusiasm in Tourists
Many youths enthusiastically participated in the trekking program organized to instill joy and courage in tourists. On the third day of the festival, participants trekked approximately three kilometers from the Sun-kara Metta Coffee Trail, experiencing the beauty of the region while also contributing to its preservation. In line with the District Collector's vision of making tourist areas plastic-free, trekkers actively removed plastic waste, spreading awareness about the responsibility of respecting nature. The trek was supported by the OP Agarwal team from Madhya Pradesh.

Under the guidance of Visakhapatnam District Judge M Giridhar, Divisional Forest Officer Sandeep Reddy, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer Umamaheswari, and Freedom Fighters Museum Curator P Shankar Rao, the trekking experience became a memorable one. Participants expressed their delight in witnessing diverse bird species, inhaling the fresh aroma of medicinal plants, and immersing themselves in nature's tranquility.
Muggula Competitions Add to the Festive Spirit
A major highlight of the festival was the muggula (rangoli) competitions, which attracted significant participation. Women from tribal and local communities enthusiastically displayed their artistic talents, creating vibrant and intricate rangoli designs. Several women officers also took part, adding to the festival's celebratory atmosphere.

The winners of the muggula competition were:

- **First Prize: B. Devi**
- **Second Prize: L. Madhu Sri**
- **Third Prize: U. Sunitha**
- **Consolation Prize:** Three-year-old Chinmayi, who impressed everyone with her participation.

Government's Commitment to Tourism Development

Special Chief Secretary of the Tourism Department, Ajay Jain, addressed the festival's closing ceremony virtually, emphasizing the government's strong commitment to developing tourist destinations. He noted that after a five-year gap, the Araku Chali Festival was successfully

revived, setting an example for other districts. He announced that next year, a large-scale Alluri Tribal Destination festival would be organized to further promote tourism.

District Collector S. Dinesh Kumar revealed ambitious plans to boost adventure tourism in the region. He stated that nine key destinations had been identified for development, with 20 paragliding setups and cross-country flying planned for April next year. Additional tourism projects in Tajangi and Jolaput areas were also announced, with a focus on enhancing cultural experiences. Notable festival highlights included a 300-person marathon, a 20-member cycling event, and trekking expeditions, alongside mesmerizing performances by artists from Manipur, Nagaland, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. The festival also featured food courts offering authentic tribal cuisine, adding a gastronomic delight to the event.

Celebrity Participation Adds to the Festivities

The Araku Chali Festival 2025 was further enlivened by the participation of notable personalities who added a special charm to the event. A standout moment was when IAS officer M.J. Abhishek Gowda captivated the audience with his rendition of the popular Telugu song Neeli Neeli Aakasam from the movie 30 Rojullo Preminchadam Ela. His performance, along with his participation in traditional dances, garnered widespread praise on social media.

Adding to the festival's allure, popular singer Mangli delivered an electrifying performance on February 2nd, energizing the crowd with her dynamic stage presence.

A Grand Conclusion with Promises for the Future

As the curtains came down on the Araku Chali Festival, it left an indelible mark on the visitors who cherished its cultural and adventurous experiences. The festival successfully brought together nature enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and cultural connoisseurs, setting a new benchmark for tourism events in the region. Officials reaffirmed their commitment to making the 2026 edition of the festival even more spectacular, transforming it into a must-visit event for both domestic and international tourists. With its blend of nature, adventure, culture, and tradition, the Araku Chali Festival has firmly established itself as a premier tourism attraction in Andhra Pradesh.

Anakapalle District Collector Vijaya Krishnan, Joint Collector Dr. M.J. Abhishek Gowda, ITDA Project Officer V. Abhishek, Sub-Collector Sooryaman Patel, Rampachodavaram Sub-Collector Kalpasri, DFO Sandeep Reddy, DRO K. Padmalatha, and other dignitaries graced the event, making it a grand success.



Telangana's Young Cricket Sensation Trisha

- A Journey of Sacrifice and Triumph

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad
Telangana's rising cricket star Gongidi Trisha has become a national sensation after her outstanding performance in the Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup. With her remarkable all-round skills, she played a crucial role in leading Team India to victory in the mega tournament, making her one of the brightest prospects in Indian women's cricket. However, behind Trisha's success lies an extraordinary tale of perseverance, sacrifice, and unwavering parental support, particularly from her father, Gongidi Ramireddy.

The Father's Sacrifice Behind Trisha's Success

Trisha's journey to international cricket is not just a story of talent and hard work but also of immense sacrifice by her father. Similar to fellow Telugu cricketer Nitish Kumar Reddy, Trisha's success was shaped by the dedication and relentless efforts of her father. Gongidi Ramireddy, a native of Bhadrachalam in the erstwhile Khammam district, was a fitness trainer in a private company. A sports enthusiast himself, he envisioned a career in sports for his future child even before she was born. On December 15, 2005, when Trisha was born, Ramireddy did not let the societal mindset about girls in sports deter him. Determined to nurture his daughter's sporting career, he took it upon himself to guide her every step of the way. Initially, he introduced her to different sports, including tennis and badminton, but it was cricket that caught Trisha's interest. She shared her father's passion for the game and often watched matches with him, strengthening his resolve to shape her into a professional cricketer.

Overcoming Hurdles and Relocating for Cricket

Despite facing skepticism from people around him and struggling with financial difficulties, Ramireddy never wavered. He made the life-altering decision to quit his job as a fitness trainer and dedicate himself entirely to his daughter's cricketering



journey. Realizing that opportunities in their hometown were limited, he took another bold step—moving his entire family to Hyderabad to provide Trisha with better training facilities. In Hyderabad, he enrolled her at St. John's Cricket Academy in Secunderabad, one of the finest cricket academies in the state. This shift came with its challenges—balancing her cricket training and education, financial constraints, and the pressure to prove that their sacrifices were not in vain. But Trisha, inspired by her father's dedication, put in relentless effort to hone her skills in both batting and bowling.

Trisha's Rise Through the Ranks

Trisha's hard work soon bore fruit as she began making waves in Hyderabad's cricketering circuit. She gained recognition as a talented all-rounder, earning a spot in Hyderabad's team for the 2017-18 Senior Women's T20 League. Her performances there led to her selection for India B in the Senior Women's Challenge Trophy held in Andhra Pradesh in 2021-22. By 2023, she had secured a place in India's

Under-19 Women's team and played a key role in the Under-19 World Cup that year. She showcased her batting prowess by scoring 24 runs in the final, contributing significantly to India's victory.

A Star Performer in the 2025 Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup

Trisha's defining moment came in the 2025 edition of the Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup, held in Malaysia. She emerged as the highest run-scorer in the tournament, playing a crucial role in India's dominant run.

In the final against South Africa, India chased down the target of 83 runs with ease, losing only one wicket in 11.2 overs. Trisha top-scored with an unbeaten 44, guiding the team to victory. Earlier in the match, she had also played a pivotal role with the ball, taking three crucial wickets to restrict South Africa to a meager total.

Her standout performances extended beyond the final. In the Super Six stage, she smashed a record-breaking 110 runs off just 59 balls against Scotland, hitting 13 fours and four sixes. This innings made her the first cricketer to score a century in the 2025 Women's Under-19 World Cup, further solidifying her reputation as an exceptional talent.

A Dream Yet to Be Fulfilled

Trisha's achievements have brought immense pride to Telangana and to her father, Ramireddy, whose sacrifices have finally paid off. Yet, his ultimate dream remains unfulfilled—seeing his daughter represent the senior Indian Women's team. With her current trajectory, it is only a matter of time before Trisha dons the India jersey at the highest level.

Her story is a testament to the power of perseverance, determination, and parental sacrifice. From a small town in Telangana to the global cricketing stage, Gongidi Trisha has become a beacon of inspiration for aspiring young cricketers across the country.

Praggnanandhaa Defeats Gukesh in Tiebreaker to Win Tata Steel Chess Masters Title



Chennai's chess prodigy, Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa, triumphed over World Champion D Gukesh in a nerve-wracking tiebreaker to claim his first-ever Tata Steel Chess Masters title. The 19-year-old battled exhaustion and immense pressure to overcome his compatriot 2-1 in the final of the tournament's 87th edition on Sunday.

Both players ended the regular rounds with 8.5 points each, forcing a tiebreaker. Gukesh suffered a loss to Arjun Erigaisi, while Praggnanandhaa was defeated by Germany's Vincent Keymer. In the tiebreaker, Gukesh took the lead in the first game due to a blunder by Praggnanandhaa, but the latter bounced back in the second, employing the Trompowsky opening to level the score at 1-1.

The match then moved to sudden death, where Gukesh initially had an advantage, gaining a pawn. However, under pressure, he lost control, first giving away a pawn and later his last remaining knight. Praggnanandhaa capitalized on the errors with his impeccable endgame technique, securing victory.

With this win, Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian since Viswanathan Anand to win the Tata Steel Chess title. Gukesh, unfortunately, faced heartbreak for the second consecutive year, having lost the 2023 tiebreaker to Wei Yi.

After the victory, Praggnanandhaa expressed his excitement, calling it his most stressful day. "I didn't expect to win, but somehow things went my way," he said.

Sift Kaur Samra, Jonathan Anthony Win Gold at National Games 2025

Punjab's Sift Kaur Samra and Karnataka's Jonathan Anthony clinched gold medals in the women's 50m 3 positions and men's 10m pistol events, respectively, at the ongoing 38th National Games on Monday.

Samra, an Asian Games gold medallist, delivered a stellar performance, scoring 461.2 points at the Maharana Pratap Sports College. Her Punjab teammate Anjum Moudgil secured silver (458.7 points), while Telangana's Surabhi Bhardwaj Rapole took bronze (448.8 points).

In the men's 10m pistol final, Karnataka's Jonathan Anthony secured gold with a flawless performance, while SSCB's Ravinder Singh and Gurpreet Singh bagged silver and bronze, respectively.

Expressing her joy, Samra said, "This feels like a comeback after the Olympics. Winning gold today is special." Anthony added, "Competing against top shooters made this victory even more meaningful."

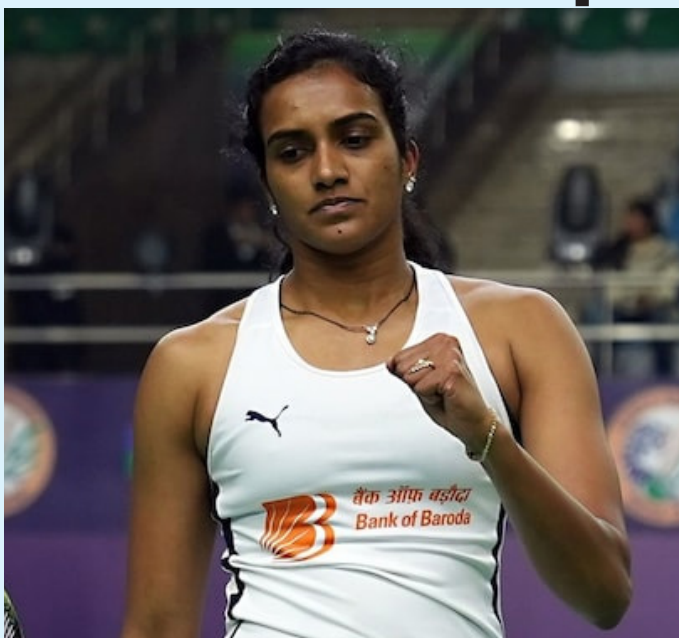


Indian Shuttlers to Attend Preparatory Camp in Guwahati Ahead of Asia Mixed Team Championship

The Indian badminton team, including top players like PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen, will take part in a five-day preparatory camp in Guwahati from Tuesday, ahead of the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships scheduled in Qingdao, China, from February 11-16.

After securing a bronze medal in the 2023 edition, the Indian squad aims to better their performance this time. The team will depart for the tournament on February 8.

Badminton Association of India (BAI) Secretary General Sanjay Mishra emphasized that the camp at the National Center of Excellence would not only en-



hance players' technical skills but also provide exposure to young shuttlers by training alongside India's finest talents.

"In addition to technical training, the camp will focus on discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship, ensuring a well-rounded preparation ahead of this major team event," Mishra said in a release.

The 14-member Indian squad will be spearheaded by PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen, with support from Asian Games gold medalists Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, and World Championship bronze medallist HS Prannoy. The preparatory camp is expected to boost team bonding and refine their strategies ahead of the high-stakes tournament.

La Liga: Lewandowski's Goal Secures Barcelona's Win Over Alaves, Keeps Title Hopes Alive



Robert Lewandowski's decisive second-half goal helped Barcelona secure a crucial 1-0 victory over Alaves on Sunday, narrowing the gap on La Liga leaders Real Madrid to four points. The win came after Real Madrid dropped points against Espanyol, giving Barcelona an opportunity to close in on their rivals.

The match at the Olympic Stadium saw Barcelona struggle to break down Alaves' strong defense in the first half. However, a brilliant cross from Lamine Yamal in the 61st minute allowed Lewandowski to net his 18th goal of the season, making him the league's top scorer.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick praised Lewandowski, calling him "the best number nine in the box." The win places Barcelona three points behind Atletico Madrid, who face Real Madrid next weekend.

Despite Alaves' defensive resilience, Barcelona maintained composure. Substitute Ferran Torres nearly doubled the lead, but his curling shot was saved. With the victory, Barcelona remains in the title race, keeping pressure on their Madrid rivals. Meanwhile, Athletic Bilbao drew 2-2 against Real Betis, while Osasuna secured a 2-1 win over Real Sociedad.



Prabhas' First Look as 'Rudra' from 'Kannappa' Unveiled

The much-awaited first look of Prabhas as 'Rudra' from the epic film 'Kannappa' has been officially revealed. Starring Manchu Vishnu in the lead, the film is being made on a grand scale with a massive star cast. Prabhas plays a crucial role in this ambitious project, which is produced by Manchu Vishnu under his home banner. The first look showcases Prabhas in a powerful and intense avatar, increasing anticipation for the film. Directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh, 'Kannappa' is set to be a visual spectacle and will release worldwide on April 25, 2025. With its grandeur and star-studded lineup, the film is expected to be one of the biggest releases of the year.

'Coffee With a Killer' Movie Review: An Underwhelming Thriller Set in a Coffee Shop

'Coffee With a Killer', directed by CRP Patnaik, is a crime thriller that unfolds entirely in a coffee shop. Released directly on Aha, the film attempts to blend suspense with multiple subplots but struggles with its execution.

The story revolves around a coffee shop where people discuss personal and professional matters. Among them, a contract killer enters, waiting for instructions to eliminate a target. As the film progresses, multiple characters, including a cop, film producers, land mafia members, and lovers, contribute to the chaotic environment. The suspense builds around who the target is and how the events unfold.

Despite an intriguing premise, the film fails to maintain engagement. The screenplay feels disjointed, with subplots like hawala transactions and relationship troubles lacking depth. The humor track involving Srinivasa Reddy and Suresh falls flat, while the excessive number of characters dilutes the tension.

Performance-wise, Ravi Babu, Sathyam Rajesh, and Srinivasa Reddy deliver decent performances, but the weak narrative under-



mines their efforts. The cinematography and background score are passable, but the execution lacks finesse.

With a better screenplay and stronger character arcs, the film could have been a gripping thriller. Unfortunately, it misses the mark, making it a forgettable watch.

Rating: (2/5)

Beyonce Wins First Grammy for Album of the Year with 'Cowboy Carter'

Los Angeles: Beyonce won her first-ever Album of the Year award at the Grammy Awards 2025 on Sunday for her country album "Cowboy Carter." The music icon, who already holds the record for the most Grammy wins, finally secured the prestigious award, beating Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish, and others.

"I just feel very full and very honored. It's been many, many years," Beyonce said in an emotional acceptance speech. Rapper Kendrick Lamar won Record of the Year and Song of the Year for "Not Like Us." Meanwhile, Chappell Roan was named Best New Artist and used her stage time to call for better wages and healthcare benefits for musicians.

The Grammys also served as a fundraiser for victims

of the recent wildfires, which had displaced thousands, including many musicians. The night opened with an all-star performance of "I Love LA" by John Legend, Brad Paisley, St. Vincent, and Brittany Howard.

Hosted by Trevor Noah, the show directed viewers toward donation options while celebrating musical excellence.

Grammy 2025 Highlights

- **Album of the Year:** Cowboy Carter – Beyonce
- **Record of the Year:** Not Like Us – Kendrick Lamar
- **Song of the Year:** Not Like Us – Kendrick Lamar
- **Best New Artist:** Chappell Roan
- **Best Pop Vocal Album:** Short n' Sweet – Sabrina Carpenter
- **Best Country Album:** Cowboy Carter – Beyonce



Grammys 2025: Indian-Origin Chandrika Tandon Wins Big, Beats Ricky Kej and Anoushka Shankar

Indian-American vocalist Chandrika Tandon won the Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album award at the 67th Annual Grammy Awards for her album Triveni, held on Sunday at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles.

Chandrika shared the honor with her collaborators, South African flautist Wouter Kellerman and Japanese cellist Eru Matsumoto. She triumphed over other notable nominees, including Ricky Kej (Break of Dawn), Anoushka Shankar (Chapter II: How Dark It Is Before Dawn), Ryuichi Sakamoto (Opus), and Radhika Vekaria (Warriors of Light).

The Consulate General of India in New York congratulated her via social media, stating: "Congratulations to Ms. Chandrika Tandon @chandrikatandon on winning the Grammy Award @RecordingAcad in the Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album category for Triveni! A mesmerizing fusion of ancient mantras, flute, and cello, Triveni bridges cultures and traditions through the universal language of music."

Apart from Tandon's historic win, the Grammy Awards 2025 had several headline-making moments. Kanye West and his wife Bianca Censori were escorted out by police, while Hollywood star Will Smith made his first major awards show appearance since the infamous 2022 Oscar slap incident. Smith participated in a tribute to Quincy Jones, introducing Herbie Hancock on piano and later welcoming Cynthia Erivo, who performed Fly Me to the Moon.

Tandon's victory marks another proud moment for Indian-origin artists on the global stage.



Ed Sheeran and Armaan Malik Set Stage on Fire with '2Step' at Hyderabad Concert

British pop sensation Ed Sheeran and Indian singer Armaan Malik set the stage ablaze during Sheeran's India Tour concert at Ramoji Film City, Hyderabad, on Sunday. The event witnessed a spectacular musical collaboration as the duo performed the Indian rendition of 2Step, followed by the original English version, leaving the audience in awe.

A video shared by BookMyShow captured the electrifying moment when Ed Sheeran welcomed Armaan Malik on stage, saying, "Can you please make some noise for Armaan Malik?" The crowd erupted in cheers as the two artists delivered a power-packed act.

In another special moment, Armaan Malik performed the hit Telugu song Butta Bomma from Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo, a song that Ed Sheeran had previously grooved to during his Mumbai visit in 2023. Malik took to Instagram to share a clip of his performance, captioning it, "Performing Butta Bomma in Hyderabad is always just 'perfect'."

Ahead of the concert, Ed Sheeran and Armaan Malik also enjoyed a day out in Hyderabad, which Malik documented in a series of Instagram posts. Ed Sheeran's six-city India tour, which began in Pune on January 30, will continue with performances in Chennai, Bengaluru, Shillong, and Delhi in the coming days.

