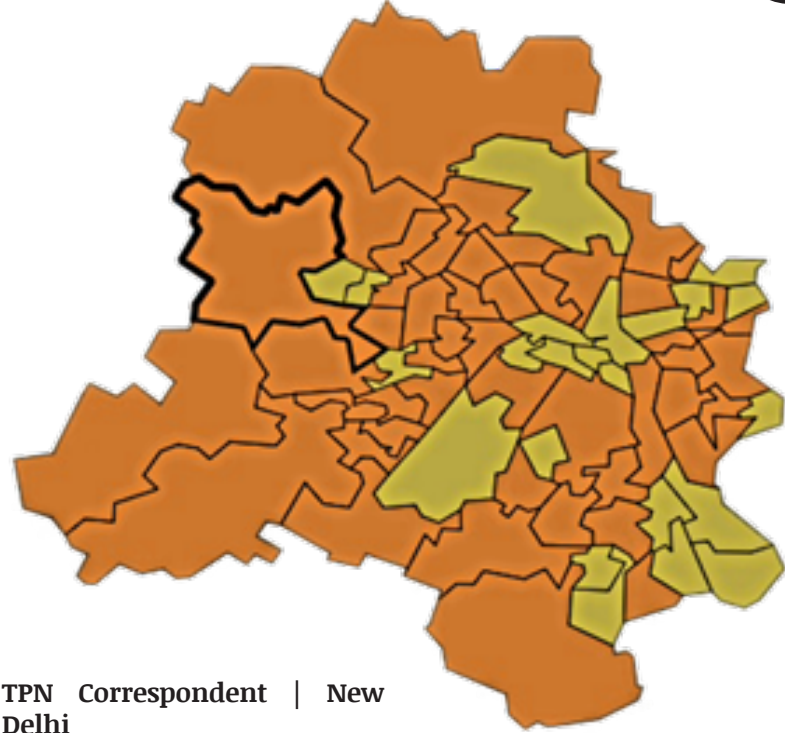




**Weather Forecast**

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

# Capital Gain for **BJP**, **AAP**'s Stage Falls



**BJP wins Delhi after 27 years.**

**AAP drops from 62 to 21 seats.**

**BJP's vote share rises to 45.76%.**

**Congress gains in vote share but got zero seats.**

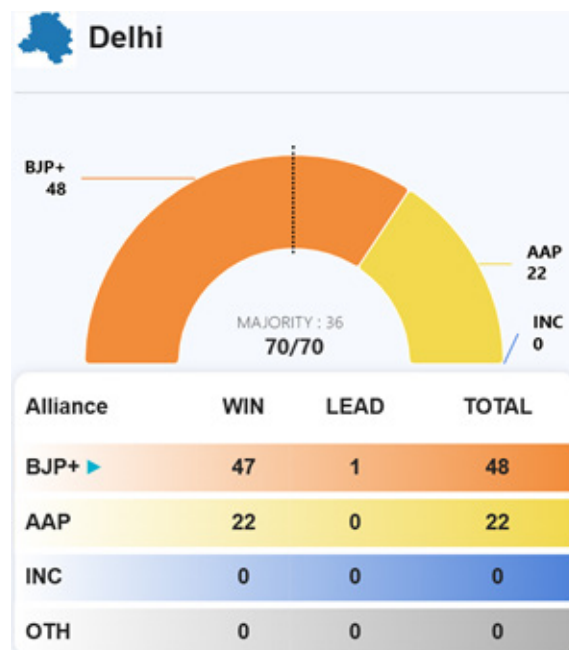
**BJP wins Mustafabad as Muslim vote splits.**

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

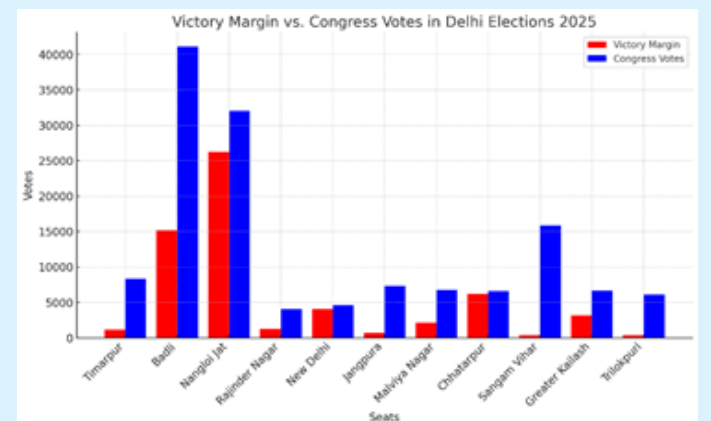
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has secured a decisive victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, marking its return to power in the national capital after 27 years. According to the Election Commission trends by 5:50 PM, the BJP had won 44 seats and was leading in four others, securing a comfortable majority in the 70-member Assembly. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which dominated the previous two elections with massive mandates, was reduced to 21 seats and leading in one more. The Congress, once a formidable force in Delhi politics, failed to win a single seat.

It had won 62 seats, but this time, a sharp drop of nearly 10 percentage points in vote share led to a major electoral setback. The BJP, on the other hand, made significant gains, adding around 40 seats to its tally from the last election when it had won only eight seats with a 38.51% vote share. A key factor in AAP's losses was the division of opposition votes, particularly among Muslim voters. Despite this, AAP managed to hold onto six out of the seven Assembly seats with a significant Muslim population. However, Mustafabad emerged as an exception, where a three-way split between AAP, AIMIM, and the Congress paved the way for BJP's Mohan Singh Bisht to secure a victory by a margin of 17,578 votes.

AAP's decline was particularly stark, as the party lost nearly 40 seats compared to the previous election. In 2020, the Arvind Kejriwal-led par-



The election results reflect a significant shift in voter preference, with the BJP gaining over seven percentage points in vote share compared to the 2020 elections. The party secured 45.76% of the total votes, compared to AAP's 43.55%, which marked a sharp decline from its previous 53.57%. The Congress, which had been largely sidelined in Delhi politics for the past decade, saw a minor resurgence, increasing its vote share from 4.26% in 2020 to 6.36% in 2025.



## PM calls AAP 'corrupt', Cong 'parasite'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, celebrating BJP's landslide victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, called it a triumph of "development, vision, and trust" while taking a sharp dig at the Aam Aadmi Party. Addressing party workers, he said the people of Delhi had rejected "corruption and lies in politics" and had shown they wanted governance, not theatrics. With the BJP winning close to 50 of the 70 Assembly seats, the party is set to form a government in the national capital after nearly three decades. Seen as the driving force behind this historic win, PM Modi assured the people of Delhi of comprehensive development under BJP rule. "It is my guarantee - Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,

and development for all of Delhi," he said. The Prime Minister also highlighted BJP's growing influence in states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Haryana, attributing it to the party's governance model. "Law and order in UP was a concern, but we fixed it. In Maharashtra, we helped farmers fight drought with Jal Yukta Shivr," he said, emphasizing BJP's governance track record. He also acknowledged NDA allies Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu, stressing that the alliance guarantees development and good governance. "Bihar saw transformation under the NDA. Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu has proven his track record. NDA's policies benefit not just the poor but also the middle class, which has strongly backed BJP," he added.



## BJP's Last Delhi CM Served Just 52 Days Before Polls

After nearly three decades, the BJP is set to return to power in Delhi following a fiercely contested election. The party last governed the national capital between 1993 and 1998, with three different chief ministers in a span of five years. The BJP's tenure began with Madan Lal Khurana as the chief minister, but he was forced to resign within 27 months over corruption allegations. He was succeeded by Sahib Singh Verma, the father

of incoming BJP MLA Parvish Verma, who remained in office for 31 months but stepped down amid rising public anger over soaring onion prices. Delhi's last BJP chief minister was Sushma Swaraj, who took charge for just 52 days before elections were called in 1998. Following that, the Congress dominated Delhi politics for three terms under Sheila Dikshit, before AAP emerged as the primary rival to the BJP. With the party now set for a comeback after 27 years, all eyes are on who will lead the new government in the capital.

## Govt Signs MoU with University of Liverpool for Research & Innovation

TPN, FEB 9 Bengaluru:

- MoU signed in the presence of CM Siddaramaiah and other key officials.
- Agreement aims to establish a joint working group for enhanced cooperation.

The Karnataka government on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of Liverpool to foster collaboration in research



**2 PAGE**

## Govt to Resend MFI Ordinance to Governor with Clarifications

TPN, FEB 9 Bengaluru: The Karnataka government is set to resend the Micro Finance (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance 2025 to the Governor after addressing his concerns. The ordinance, aimed at protecting borrowers from harassment by microfinance institutions (MFIs), includes stringent penal provisions such as a jail

term of up to 10 years and a fine of up to ₹5 lakh for violations. The ordinance was initially returned by Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot, prompting the government to review and clarify certain aspects before resubmitting it for his assent.



**2 PAGE**

## HAL to Showcase Indigenous Aircraft and Technologies at Aero India 2025

- HAL to showcase LUH and CATS Warrior at Aero India 2025
- India Pavilion to feature AMCA 1:1 model and ALH NG display
- HAL to sign agreements with global defence partners at the event



**Bengaluru:** Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is set to showcase its latest indigenous aircraft and aviation technologies at Aero India 2025, which begins on February 10 at Air Force Station Yelahanka. With the theme 'innovate. Collaborate. Lead,' HAL will highlight its advancements in both manned and unmanned aviation.

According to HAL CMD Dr. D.K. Sunil, the Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) will be the centrepiece of the company's exhibition. HAL's research and development divisions will also present innovations in avionics, mechanical systems, and aerospace engineering. The Combat Air Teaming System (CATS) Warrior, a futuristic unmanned teaming platform, will be a major highlight at the India Pavilion, alongside the Advanced Light Helicopter Next Generation (ALH NG) and Rotary Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (RUAV).

At HAL's indoor pavilion (Hall E), scaled models of key aircraft, including the LCA MkIA fighter, LCA MkI Trainer, Hindustan Jet Trainer (HJT)-36, HTT-40, LCH, and ALH Mk IV, will be displayed. Additionally, the Hindustan 228 and its amphibian variant will be exhibited. The outdoor static display will feature the LCA MkIA, HJT-36, HTT-40, LUH, Hindustan 228, and Do-228. The flying display will include a special LCA MkIA formation, along with performances by the HJT-36, HTT-40, and LUH.

A key attraction at the India Pavilion will be a full-scale engineering demonstrator of the CATS Warrior. The Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) 1:1 scale model will also make its debut at the event. The exhibit will include sections dedicated to emerging technologies and future HAL projects.

HAL's indoor pavilion will feature cutting-edge avionics systems such as the Mission Management System, Digital Map Generator, Data Lite-Communication System, IFF & CIT, Indigenous Communication Complex, Audio Management System, and Radio Control Panels. Advanced Flight Control Actuators and electro-mechanical systems, including the Active Side Stick Control, will also be on display.

Visitors will also get to see static models of the HTSE-1200 and GTEG-60 engines, showcasing technological advancements in aerospace propulsion. A dedicated aerospace section will highlight HAL's role in space missions, featuring scaled models of the Cryogenic Engine CE-20, GSLV Mk III, and Chandrayaan-3.

In addition to displaying its indigenous platforms, HAL will engage in business meetings with defence delegations, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), and potential customers. The company is also expected to sign multiple agreements and contracts with business partners for future projects.

## Karnataka Aims for 70% Investment Realisation at GIM 2025

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government aims to achieve at least 70% realisation of the Rs 10 lakh crore investment commitments at the Global Investors' Meet (GIM) 2025, improving from the 40-50% success rate of the 2022 edition.

Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil stated that

while previous commitments saw partial realisation, green hydrogen projects worth Rs 2.4 lakh crore from 2022 faced setbacks due to infrastructure challenges, with only a few materialising.

GIM 2025, scheduled from February 12-14 in Bengaluru, will host over 75 business leaders, including Anand Mahindra, Kumar Mangalam Birla, and Sajjan Jindal, amid global geopolitical and sustainability challenges.

To fast-track approvals, the state has introduced an AI-based single-window system developed by Microsoft, reducing



clearance timelines from 100 days to 50. Addressing concerns about semiconductor investments moving to Gujarat, Patil emphasized Karnataka's strong talent pool and focus on the semiconductor value chain.

The government is also pushing for manufacturing expansion beyond Bengaluru, with initiatives like Belagavi's private aerospace park and FMCG parks in other cities. Incentives are being provided to encourage firms to establish units outside the capital, supporting Karnataka's broader industrial growth.

## KSRTCs to Borrow ₹2,000 Crore Amid Delayed Shakti Scheme

₹1,800 crore reimbursement under the Shakti Scheme remains pending.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka's four state-run road transport corporations (RTCs) have decided to secure a ₹2,000 crore bank loan to settle financial liabilities, including pending provident fund contributions, fuel expenses, and gratuity dues. The move comes as reimbursement under the Shakti Scheme continues to be delayed, adding to the RTCs' financial strain.

Among the transport entities, North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) will borrow the highest amount at ₹646 crore, followed by Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) at ₹623 crore, Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) at ₹589 crore, and Kalyana Karnataka Transport Corporation (KKRTC) at ₹141 crore.

A senior RTC official noted that liabilities have exceeded ₹4,000 crore, prompting the government to permit loans from nationalized banks with state backing, ensuring no assets are mortgaged.

The Shakti Scheme, launched on June 11, 2023, has issued 381 crore tickets with operational expenses surpassing ₹9,300 crore. However, RTCs are yet to receive ₹1,800 crore in reimbursements, forcing them to seek alternative funding.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy attributed the financial crisis to the previous BJP-led government, citing unpaid bills and wage revision dues amounting to ₹5,900 crore. He assured that the state is facilitating these loans to clear the backlog while also working on resolving the Shakti Scheme reimbursements.



## Karnataka Government to Fill 25,000 Teacher Vacancies

- Focus on Kalyana-Karnataka Region
- A Hi-Tech Government School for Rural Students

TPN Correspondent | Davangere

In a major push to strengthen government schools, Karnataka School Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa announced that the state government will fill 25,000 teacher vacancies this academic year. The minister stated that a special request would be made to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to allocate the necessary funds for these appointments in the upcoming budget.

Speaking at the inauguration of a government hi-tech school in Huchchangipura, Jagalur taluk, Davangere district, Bangarappa emphasized that this recruitment drive would significantly reduce teacher shortages across government schools. "The previous government had approved 13,000 teacher appointments, and we have completed them. Now, with 25,000 more recruitments, vacancies will drastically come down," he said.

Focus on Kalyana-Karnataka

The minister highlighted that a special focus would be placed on filling vacancies in the Kalyana-Karnataka region, with 80% of the new recruitments being allocated there. Additionally, vacancies in grant-in-aid schools will also be addressed. He pointed out that Karnataka has 1.08 crore students enrolled in various schools, and government institutions are facing infrastructure issues such as insufficient classrooms and toilets, which are now being prioritized for development.

Expressing gratitude to the Azim Premji Foundation for funding the inclusion of eggs in mid-day meals, Bangarappa also acknowledged efforts to improve school facilities.

A Hi-Tech Government School for Rural Students

The newly inaugurated hi-tech school at Huchchangi-



pura, constructed on a 2.20-acre campus, resembles a "mini university" with a built-up area of 10,000 square feet on the ground floor and 8,000 square feet on the first floor. It includes 16 classrooms, each spanning 600 square feet, and a 48,000-square-foot playground, adhering to Union Government guidelines.

The school was funded through various contributions, with BJP MLC N Ravikumar allocating ₹2.05 crore from his local area development fund. Ravikumar, an alumnus of the school from the 1980s, played a key role in securing funds, including ₹25 lakh from Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's local area development fund. Additional contributions came from Rajya Sabha members K Narayana and Veeranna Kadadi, along with CSR initiatives. The total cost of the project stands at ₹3.10 crore.

Ravikumar stated that his goal was to provide quality education for students in his village and nearby areas. "Many students from SC, ST, and OBC communities in these villages struggle to continue their education beyond SSLC or PUC. This school may inspire them to pursue further studies and secure better job opportunities," he said.

With the government's new teacher recruitment plan and initiatives like this hi-tech school, Karnataka is taking significant steps toward strengthening its public education system.

## Tier-2 Cities in Karnataka Emerging as Investment Hubs

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka's investment landscape is expanding beyond Bengaluru, with Tier-2 cities like Mysuru, Hubballi-Dharwad, Belagavi, and Mangaluru attracting increasing investor interest. The state government is actively working to convert these opportunities into concrete investments, said Major Industries and Infrastructure Development Minister MB Patil ahead of the Global Investors' Meet (GIM).

"Our target is to convert 70% of every expression of interest into real investment, and we are committed to making it happen," Patil stated. With competition from states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, he asserted that

Karnataka's strong legacy gives it a distinct edge.

Patil highlighted Bengaluru's world-class infrastructure and premier institutions like IISc, IIM, and major defence hubs such as ISRO and BEL as key advantages. While acknowledging concerns about employability among graduates, he stressed that Karnataka still boasts a highly skilled workforce.

Reflecting on the last GIM in 2022, he admitted that only 45% of investment proposals materialized, partly due to election-related delays in 2023. However, he emphasized the government's determination to achieve better results this time.

1st Page Cont..

## Govt Signs MoU with University of Liverpool for Research & Innovation

and innovation activities. This partnership is seen as a strategic move to enhance cooperation between Karnataka and global academic institutions. The signing ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Industries Minister M. B. Patil, Higher Education Minister Dr. M. C. Sudhakar, University of Liverpool Vice-Chancellor Tim Jones, and Pro Vice-Chancellor Tariq Ali. Their presence un-

derscored the significance of the agreement in advancing Karnataka's higher education and research landscape. Karnataka and the University of Liverpool aim to strengthen collaboration in research and innovation across various disciplines while promoting educational cooperation. As part of this initiative, a joint working group will be established to facilitate the effective implementation of the partner-

ship. Government officials have hailed the MoU as a vital step in aligning Karnataka's academic institutions with leading global universities, paving the way for advanced research, knowledge exchange, and innovation-driven progress. This collaboration is expected to open new avenues for students and researchers, fostering a global outlook in Karnataka's education sector.

## Govt to Resend MFI Ordinance to Governor with Clarifications

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara stated on Saturday that the government is committed to preventing coercive recovery methods employed by some MFIs and will ensure the necessary modifications are made. The ordinance is crucial to safeguarding borrowers from undue pressure and harassment. We will review the Governor's observations and make necessary clarifications before sending it back for approval," said Parameshwara.

The Karnataka government drafted the ordinance in response to increasing complaints of aggressive and unethical recovery practices by microfinance companies. Many borrowers, especially in rural areas, have reported facing threats and coercion from loan recovery agents, pushing the government to take strict measures. With the ordinance proposing severe legal consequences for violators, it is expected to bring much-needed relief to borrow-

ers. However, concerns remain about the potential impact on the microfinance sector, as stricter regulations could lead to reduced lending, affecting financial inclusion in the state. The government is now preparing to incorporate the necessary clarifications before presenting the ordinance once again to the Governor, hoping for a swift approval to ensure borrower protection and regulation of microfinance activities in Karnataka.

## Businessman Duped of ₹25.5 Crore in Casino Scam



- Businessman Vivek Hegde lost ₹25.5 crore in a casino investment scam.
- Key accused Rahul Tonse and his family lured him with fake profits.
- Main accused Ramakrishna Rao arrested Investigation underway.

**BENGALURU:** Businessman Vivek Hegde has been defrauded of ₹25.5 crore in an alleged investment scam linked to casinos. The prime accused, Rahul Tonse—previously named in the Sandalwood drug case—has now been implicated in this fraudulent scheme. An FIR has been registered at the Basaveshwara Nagar po-

lice station against five people, including Tonse and his family members. The case involves Rahul Tonse, his father Ramakrishna Rao, mother Rajeshwari, and two others. The main accused, Ramakrishna Rao, has been arrested and placed in police custody for further investigation.

Hegde was introduced to Ramakrishna Rao through mutual friends and was lured with promises of high returns from investments in Sri Lanka and Dubai-based casinos. To gain his trust, Rao introduced his daughter Raksha, son-in-law Chetan, and son Rahul as key figures managing these businesses. The businessman initially transferred ₹30 lakh to Rahul's bank account as an investment.

To build further credibility, the accused arranged a trip for Hegde and his associate Naveen Chandra Kothari to Sri Lanka. They were taken to Jio Casino and shown fabricated profits to mislead them into believing the investments were yielding high returns. Convinced by the false assurances, Hegde invested further, leading to a total loss of ₹25.5 crore.

When he demanded a refund, the accused blocked his calls and cut off communication. Realizing he had been deceived, Hegde filed a complaint at the Basaveshwara Nagar police station. Following the complaint, police registered a case and arrested Ramakrishna Rao, who has been remanded to 10-day custody for further questioning.

Authorities are continuing their investigation to track down the remaining accused and recover the defrauded amount.

## Metro Fare Hike from Today: BMRCL Issues Official Order



Revised Metro Fare Structure	
0-2 km	₹10
2-4 km	₹20
4-6 km	₹30
6-8 km	₹40
8-10 km	₹50
10-15 km	₹60
15-20 km	₹70
20-25 km	₹80
25-30 km	₹90
Above 30 km	₹90

**TPN, FEB 9 Bengaluru :** The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has announced an official fare increase, effective from 7 AM on Sunday. The decision, approved by the central government, has come as a shock to daily commuters. Under Section 34 of the Metro Railway Act, 2002, the central government constituted a fare revision committee on October 7, 2024, headed by a former High Court judge. The committee submitted its recommendations on December 16. As per Section 37 of the Metro Railway (Operation and Man-

agement) Act, 2002, these recommendations are binding on metro authorities. Following the approval of the BMRCL Board of Directors, the revised fares will be implemented. Smart card users will continue to receive a 5% discount on fares. However, the minimum balance required on smart cards has been increased from ₹50 to ₹90, marking a ₹40 hike. The fare increase, combined with recent hikes in parking fees at metro stations, has sparked concern among daily commuters who rely on the metro for affordable travel.

## Karnataka Shortlists Sites for Bengaluru's Second Airport



- Government to submit proposal to AAI before February 17.
- Nelamangala and Kanakapura Road identified as potential sites.
- Final selection to be based on technical feasibility, not politics.

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**

The Karnataka government has shortlisted two potential sites for Bengaluru's proposed second airport and will send the proposal to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) before February 17, Infrastructure Minister M B Patil announced on Saturday. The selection process will be based on "merit" rather than political considerations, Patil emphasized. Reports indicate that the government has identified Nelamangala and Kanakapura Road as the possible locations.

Patil stated that the government has already briefed the Chief Minister once regarding the site selection and will hold another round of discussions before submitting the proposal. He mentioned that if possible, the proposal will be sent either before or shortly after the Global Investors Meet. He assured that the process is being closely monitored to ensure a well-planned decision. The state government may submit one or two proposals

for AAI's review. AAI will then evaluate them to determine the most viable site. If both sites receive approval, the final decision will be based on the state's interests, land availability, and investment feasibility. The estimated cost of acquiring the required land alone is expected to be around Rs 10,000 crore. With Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport at Devanahalli projected to reach its full capacity of 100 million passengers by 2030, the government is proactively planning for the second airport. Given that the development of a new airport takes around 7-8 years, early preparations are considered essential to meet the future demands of air traffic. Patil assured that the final selection will be made transparently, with the criteria and reasons for selection being publicly disclosed. He emphasized that the decision will be based on various technical and logistical parameters, ensuring that political influences do not impact the selection process.

## Bengaluru Man Books Porter Ride to Reach Office Amid Ride-Hailing Struggles

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
In a display of Bengaluru's infamous traffic woes and ride-hailing struggles, a commuter found a unique solution after failing to book an Uber or Ola—he ordered himself a ride through Porter, an app designed for transporting goods. A man named Pathik, who shared his experience on social media, posted a now-viral photo of himself riding pillion on a Porter two-wheeler, with the delivery partner in front and the app's branding visible on the helmet. Captioning the moment, he wrote, "Had to porter myself to office today because no Ola, Uber."  
The post, shared on February 6, has since garnered over 32,000 views, sparking amusement

and admiration online. Many users called it a "genius Bengaluru moment," with some admitting they had considered the idea but never acted on it. Others suggested shifting work hours to avoid peak congestion. **Rapido Alerts Commuter Stuck in Traffic**  
In another instance highlighting Bengaluru's traffic situation, a man stuck on a flyover received an unexpected message from Rapido enquiring about his safety after his auto-rickshaw remained stationary for too long. Many app-based ride services automatically trigger safety alerts when vehicles remain idle for extended periods, and in this case, the severe traffic jam prompted the notification.

## Bengaluru Civic Body Seeks Public Input on Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill



- BBMP seeks public suggestions on the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill-2024.
- The Bill proposes up to ten city corporations and stronger ward committees.
- Citizens can participate through zonal-wise discussions announced by BBMP.

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike

(BBMP) has invited public feedback on the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill-2024,

aiming to restructure urban governance for improved efficiency and transparency.

A Joint Scrutiny Committee formed by the Karnataka Legislative Assembly is reviewing the Bill, which proposes the creation of up to ten city corporations, stronger ward committees, and enhanced political accountability in public service authorities. The objective is to establish a decentralized, participatory governance framework that improves the quality of life for Bengaluru residents.

As part of the consultation process, residents, welfare associations, and organizations are encouraged to share their views. A zonal-wise schedule has been planned to facilitate discussions, with details available in BBMP's official circular. The Bill also aims to create the Greater Bengaluru Authority to oversee city development while ensuring ward committees play a key role in decision-making. By fostering a transparent and inclusive urban governance model, the legislation seeks to address Bengaluru's urban challenges effectively.

## Bengaluru to Get City's Longest Double-Decker Flyover and Metro Corridor



**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**

The city is set for a major infrastructure upgrade with the construction of a 32.15-km double-decker road and metro corridor between JP Nagar and Hebbal. Additionally, an 8-km elevated road is planned along Magadi Road to ease congestion.

The project, modeled after the Ragigudda-Silk Board stretch, will be Bengaluru's longest flyover and aims to decongest the western section of the Outer Ring Road (ORR). The estimated cost for these developments stands at ₹9,800 crore. Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who reviewed key locations including Hebbal, BEL Road, Summanahalli, and Goraguntepalya, confirmed that future metro expansions will incorporate elevated roads to reduce land acquisition costs. Officials stated that both metro corridors under Phase III—spanning over 40 km—will feature a double-decker structure, though this inte-

gration has slightly delayed the tendering process despite central approval in August last year.

"We are planning with a long-term vision of 30-40 years, and the costs will be equally shared by BBMP and Namma Metro," Shivakumar said.

A major design change is planned at Goraguntepalya for the 32.15-km metro line between JP Nagar 4th Phase and Kempapura. Instead of an interchange at Peenya, officials are considering a new metro station near Goraguntepalya junction, reducing construction costs and shortening the metro line by 300 meters. To ensure connectivity, dedicated travelators will link the new station to Peenya and Goraguntepalya. While this redesign may cause some inconvenience for metro users, officials believe it will significantly improve vehicular movement at Goraguntepalya. The corridor will facilitate seamless travel between Dr. Rajkumar Memorial and BEL Circle, eliminating major bottlenecks. Plans also include acquiring land from the Defence Ministry and the Central Manufacturing Technology Institute to develop a direct surface road, further minimizing detours.

## BEL to Showcase Latest Innovations at Aero India



**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a Navratna Defence PSU, will display its latest defence technologies and systems at Aero India. The exhibition, set up at Hall E4.1, will highlight BEL's advancements across 14 clusters, including Defence Communication, Electro Optics, Avionics, Airborne and Shipborne Systems, Weapon Systems, and Artificial Intelligence. Among the key products on display are software-defined radios, high-capacity radio relays, and electro-optic devices like uncooled thermal imager sights and passive night

vision goggles. BEL will also present its latest innovations in 5G solutions for defence, quantum cryptography, unmanned warfare technology, space situational awareness, and theatre command systems. Other notable displays include AI-driven solutions such as Generative AI-based Virtual Assistants, AI-enabled speech analysis, and language translation tools. BEL's Global Collaborations and Domestic Partnership clusters will feature advanced systems developed with Indian MSMEs and international OEMs, reinforcing its commitment to defence modernization.

## Defence Min Rajnath Singh, Rahul Gandhi to attend Global Investors Meet 2025



- Rajnath Singh, Rahul Gandhi, and Union Ministers to attend
- Karnataka targets ₹10 lakh crore in investments
- Invest Karnataka Awards to honor top industries
- SME Awards to recognize small enterprises

TPN Correspondent  
| Bengaluru

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi are set to participate in Karnataka's Global Investors Meet 2025, which will be inaugurated on February 11. Karnataka Industries Minister M B Patil announced that the state aims to attract ₹10 lakh crore in investments across key sectors, positioning Karnataka as a

major industrial and innovation hub.

The event, scheduled from February 12-14, will bring together global investors and industry leaders. Governor Thawarchand Gehlot will attend the inaugural session, while Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will preside over the event. The Minister's Office confirmed the participation of Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal,

Union Minister of Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi, and Union Minister of Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy. Rahul Gandhi will inaugurate the single-window portal aimed at streamlining investment processes.

Karnataka will also introduce the Invest Karnataka Awards to recognize 14 pioneering industries contributing to the state's growth, covering aerospace and defence, electric vehicles, biotechnology, and life sciences. The state will also launch the first-ever SME Awards, honoring over 35 enterprises for district-level excellence, women entrepreneurship, and sectoral achievements.

Additionally, the Future of Innovation Expo will showcase over 60 companies and startups displaying cutting-edge technologies in manufacturing, mobility, and clean energy, featuring advancements in autonomous systems, UAVs, and advanced robotics. The summit will feature business, finance, and innovation leaders shaping Karnataka's industrial future.

## HC Ruling in MUDA Case a Relief for Siddaramaiah, Setback for Opposition



TPN Correspondent  
| Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court's dismissal of a petition seeking the transfer of the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case probe to the CBI has come as a major relief for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The verdict, which arrives amid ongoing discussions within the Congress regarding a potential leadership change in Karnataka, strengthens Siddaramaiah's position within the party while dealing a blow to the Opposition's efforts to corner him over alleged irregularities.

The ruling is also expected to weaken the BJP and JDS, who have been demanding the CM's resignation and had even launched a padayatra from Bengaluru to Mysuru, citing alleged irregularities in MUDA

and the ST Corporation. Political analysts believe this judgment serves as a breather for the Congress high command, as it reduces the uncertainty surrounding the Karnataka government and reinforces Siddaramaiah's leadership.

Siddaramaiah's Cabinet colleagues have rallied behind him, hailing the court's decision as a validation of the Lokayukta's investigation. Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara emphasized that the verdict reaffirmed confidence in the Lokayukta's probe. "The court has upheld the Lokayukta's investigation, showing faith in its process. Those dissatisfied with the ruling can still approach the Supreme Court," he stated. He further asserted that the legal team would review any further developments, emphasizing that the judiciary's decisions remain fair and independent.

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President DK Shivakumar questioned the demand for a CBI probe, pointing out that both the Lokayukta and the Enforcement Directorate

(ED) were already investigating the matter. "Why should a third agency be involved when two agencies are already probing the case? There are multiple court judgments on similar issues," he said, adding that he had personally appealed a similar case against him in the Supreme Court.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre welcomed the verdict, stating that it reaffirmed the principle that "truth will always prevail." Social Welfare Minister Dr. HC Mahadevappa criticized the politicization of the MUDA case, asserting that the Congress respects the law but opposes the use of legal cases for political vendettas.

Meanwhile, Industries Minister MB Patil and Higher Education Minister Dr. MC Sudhakar termed the HC order a significant setback for the Opposition, accusing them of spreading false propaganda to damage Siddaramaiah's reputation. The ruling, they said, reaffirmed that political allegations would not stand in the face of a fair legal process.

## "People Voted for Change, They Were Fed Up": Priyanka Gandhi on Delhi Polls



TPN Correspondent | Wayanad

Congress general secretary and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra reacted to the Delhi Assembly election results, stating that people voted for change as they were fed up with the existing situation.

Speaking to reporters during her visit to Kerala, Priyanka said that it was evident during Congress meetings ahead of the Delhi elections that voters were looking for a shift. "They were fed up with the way things were and wanted change. I suppose they voted for change. My congratulations to all those who have won," she said.

She further added that for those who did not succeed, the results serve as a reminder to work harder, remain on the ground, and stay responsive to people's concerns.

As per the latest trends from the Election Commission of India (ECI), the BJP is leading in 45 out of 70 assembly seats, while AAP is ahead in 21. The BJP and AAP have won two seats each so far. The Congress, however, is on track to face another setback, failing to secure a seat for the third consecutive assembly election.

Priyanka Gandhi is currently on a three-day visit to Kerala.

## Rahul Gandhi Accepts Congress's Defeat in Delhi, Vows to Continue Fight

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

After suffering a complete wipeout in the Delhi Assembly Election 2025, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the party accepts the public mandate with humility. He thanked party workers and voters, emphasizing that Congress would continue to fight for the capital's progress and the rights of its residents. "We accept Delhi's public mandate with humility. I thank all Congress workers for their dedication and all voters for their support. Pollution, price rise, and corruption—the fight for Delhi's progress and Delhiites' rights will continue," Rahul Gandhi posted on X.

The BJP registered a resounding victory, winning 48 out of the 70 Assembly seats, while the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) secured 22. The Congress, however, failed to win a single seat, marking its third consecutive defeat in Delhi elections after similar results in 2015 and 2020.

Despite forming an alliance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the AAP and Congress contested separately in Delhi's



Assembly polls due to local political rivalries. This division in Opposition votes played a crucial role in the BJP's victory. In at least 11 constituencies, Congress candidates secured more votes than the BJP's winning margin, suggesting that a united front might have altered the outcome. However, Congress leaders dismissed any re-

sponsibility for ensuring AAP's success in the election.

The Delhi debacle comes as a setback for the Congress, especially following its recent losses in the Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly polls, despite a strong performance in last year's Lok Sabha elections.

## Karnataka Minister Defends Microfinance Ordinance, Says It Safeguards Borrowers



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Law Minister HK Patil has defended the Karnataka Micro Finance (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance 2025, stating that it does not violate basic rights or restrict legitimate loan

recovery. He emphasized that the ordinance targets unregistered lenders engaging in harassment and illegal practices while ensuring protection for borrowers.

Patil clarified that the ordinance does

not prevent registered agencies from issuing or recovering loans. He argued that allowing unregistered lenders to operate would mean safeguarding illegal activities under the Constitution. "We are protecting the Constitution. Nowhere does the ordinance say registered agencies cannot lend or recover loans," he asserted.

The minister also justified the penalty of ₹5 lakh, which had been objected to by Governor Thawarchand Gehlot. He explained that the fine is imposed for harassment, not based on loan amounts. The ordinance was issued urgently to curb borrower exploitation and had been discussed at various levels, including with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Patil further stated that the law does not violate natural justice and is not limited to microfinance institutions. "This will not impact self-help groups taking loans. Our aim is to protect the lower strata of society," he said.

## BJP Targets Mamata Banerjee After Delhi Victory, Eyes Bengal in 2026

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Following its resounding victory in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, the BJP has set its sights on West Bengal, with leaders Suvendu Adhikari and Sukanta Majumdar issuing strong warnings to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Adhikari, buoyed by the party's win, declared, "Delhi ki jeet hamari hain... 2026 mein Bengal ki baari" (We have won Delhi, in 2026 it's Bengal's turn). The BJP secured 48 of Delhi's 70 Assembly seats, marking a major turnaround from its previous tallies of eight in 2020 and three in 2015. The defeat was particularly crushing for AAP, with its leaders Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia losing their respective contests.

With the Bengal elections scheduled for March-April 2026, the

BJP is preparing for a fierce battle against the Trinamool Congress, which has successfully resisted the saffron party in three major elections—2019 and 2024 Lok Sabha polls and the 2021 state elections. However, the Trinamool government has faced controversies, including the Sandeshkhali assault case and the murder of a doctor in Kolkata, which the BJP has aggressively used against Banerjee. The situation is further complicated by Mamata Banerjee's support for AAP in Delhi, which strained her relations with the INDIA bloc. As questions over the Congress' leadership persist, Banerjee's growing prominence within the opposition alliance could pose additional challenges for the BJP in both Bengal 2026 and the 2029 general elections.

# PM Modi Attacks Congress, Calls It a 'Parasite Party' That Destroys Allies

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a fiery speech at the BJP headquarters on Saturday after the party's victory in the 2025 Delhi elections, targeting the Congress for its decline and its alleged strategy of undermining allies. He accused the party of "finishing its allies one by one" by stealing their political agendas and eroding their voter base, calling it a "parasite party" that survives at the cost of regional parties.

"I have said before... the Congress is a parasite party. They take other parties with them whenever they are drowning. Their method is unique... they steal their allies' agendas and then target their voters. In Uttar Pradesh, they are targeting Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party voters. They are doing the same in Tamil Nadu, Bengal, and Jammu and Kashmir," Modi said. He warned that any party aligning

with the Congress would eventually collapse, stating, "Whoever holds Congress' hand, their end is inevitable." Modi further ridiculed the Congress for its repeated failures in Delhi elections, noting that the party has been unable to win a single seat in six consecutive major elections—both state and national. He also accused it of adopting "urban Naxal politics" to create instability, linking it to AAP, which he mocked as "AAP-da" in his speech.

His attack on the Congress comes at a time when the opposition's INDIA bloc, led by the party, is struggling to stay relevant. Formed in 2023 to challenge the BJP, the alliance has been unable to make a significant impact in most elections. The only notable exception was the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, where the BJP was held below the 300-seat mark. However, Modi pointed out that internal conflicts within the opposition had prevented them from posing

a serious challenge. The Congress, in particular, has faced backlash for failing to finalize seat-sharing agreements with its allies. The most visible cracks were seen in its relationship with AAP, which initially allied with Congress for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Delhi but failed to repeat the arrangement in Haryana and later in the Delhi Assembly elections. In both cases, combined vote shares of AAP and Congress could have surpassed BJP's, yet their inability to coordinate resulted in losses.

Modi's remarks underline the BJP's growing dominance in the national political landscape, where even a united opposition struggles to make a dent. While analysts believe a stronger and well-coordinated opposition could make elections more competitive, they acknowledge that Modi's political machinery remains formidable.



## DK Shivakumar's Daughter Aisshwarya Takes

Holy Dip at Maha Kumbh, Calls It an 'Unforgettable Experience'



**TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj**  
Aisshwarya DKS Hegde, daughter of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, recently participated in the Maha Kumbh festival in Prayagraj, describing it as an event filled with "sheer energy, unity, and spiritual depth." She shared her experience on Instagram, calling the grand gathering mesmerizing and an unforgettable moment in her life.

In a video posted online, Aisshwarya is seen taking a dip in the sacred waters, exploring the festival, and delivering a talk at The Sacred Shift Conclave, where she spoke about transformation and purpose. She also expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to share the

stage with Grammy-winning musician Ricky Kej, calling it a humbling experience. The Maha Kumbh has already witnessed an enormous turnout, with over 397.4 million devotees taking a holy dip in the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mystical Saraswati rivers as of February 6. The festival has drawn global attention, with several prominent personalities participating in the sacred ritual.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also took a holy dip at Sangam Triveni in Prayagraj earlier this week, accompanied by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on a boat tour of the Yamuna River. Other political figures who

attended include Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal. Apart from political leaders, celebrities and sports personalities have also been part of the festival. Bollywood actors like Hema Malini, Anupam Kher, Bhagyashree, and Milind Soman, along with poet Kumar Vishwas, cricketer Suresh Raina, and wrestler Khali, have participated in the holy dip.

The Maha Kumbh has also received praise for its seamless management, with devotees appreciating the arrangements for security, sanitation, and other essential services.

## Five New Airstrips Identified Under UDAN in Karnataka



**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
The Ministry of Civil Aviation has tentatively identified five airstrips in Karnataka for development under the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS). In response to a query by former CM and Haveri MP Basavaraj Bom-

mai in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol stated that Ballari, Kolar, Kushalnagar, Raichur, and Hassan have been listed for bidding under the scheme. An Airports Authority of India (AAI) official confirmed that the tendering process has begun for these airstrips, with projects at different stages. Mohol emphasized that RCS is market-driven, with airline operators bidding based on route feasibility. Additionally, nine unserved airports were earlier identified for UDAN operations in Karnataka—Bidar, Mysuru, Vidyanagar, Hubballi, Kalaburagi, Shivamogga, Belagavi, Vijayapura, and Karwar. Except for Vijayapura and Karwar, all these airports have already been operationalized under the scheme.

## 1BHK Rentals Surge in Bengaluru as Demand Rises Among Students, Young Professionals



The demand for 1BHK apartments in Bengaluru has surged by over 20%, with students and young professionals driving the trend despite soaring rental prices. In prime areas like Indiranagar and Koramangala, rents for 1BHK units range from ₹25,000 to ₹30,000 per month, brokers say.

"Every day, I get over 10 queries for 1BHKs in Indiranagar and Koramangala. These are typically 300-550 sq. ft. units with six to nine months' security deposit," said Sunil Singh, director of Realty Corps. He noted that while 1BHKs were rare in Bengaluru a decade ago, newer units are smaller but

command significantly higher rentals. **Peripheral Areas Offer Affordable Options** For those seeking lower rents, north Bengaluru locations like Hennur Road, Jakkur, Yelahanka, and Hebbal have become popular. A 1BHK in a gated society in these areas costs around ₹25,000, while similar units in prime areas like Indiranagar or Koramangala can go up to ₹30,000 if fully furnished. Additionally, terrace studio apartments near the city center are available at ₹15,000-₹20,000 per month, typically in fully furnished setups.

## Bengaluru Police Bust ATM Theft Ring, Six Arrested



**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
The Mahalakshmi Layout police have arrested six individuals, including five employees of a cash management firm, for allegedly siphoning money from ATMs in a meticulously planned operation.

According to police reports, the arrested individuals have been identified as Sameer S (26), Manohar K (29), Girish S (26), Jaggesh (28), Shivu K (27), and Jaswant V (27). While Jaswant is a resident of Laggere, the rest hail from Nandini Layout. Officials confirmed that none of them had prior criminal records.

Acting on a tip-off, police detained the suspects on January 25 at a tea shop in Kempegowda Layout after receiving information about a dispute over a large sum of money. Upon arrest, authorities seized a car and ₹43.76 lakh in cash. Further interrogation revealed that the group had been discreetly diverting funds from ATMs over the past two years by skimming small amounts while refilling machines, escaping detection in audits.

**Inspired by Telugu Film** Investigators disclosed that the accused were inspired by the Telugu film Lucky Baskhar and had planned to invest the stolen money. A follow-up search led to the recovery of an additional ₹8 lakh and three more vehicles, taking the total seized amount to ₹90 lakh.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayananda confirmed that the group exploited their access to ATM passwords. Authorities are now expanding their probe to determine how many ATMs were targeted and whether more individuals were involved.

## Rahul and congress eclipse from Delhi electoral battle, penalty for Hindu bashing

The last emperor of the last Congress empire, Mr. Rahul Gandhi, has faced significant backlash for his criticisms of Hindu beliefs and deities, which have proven to be counterproductive to him and to the congress party's credibility in the minds of many voters.

His comments are disrespectful, have alienated a substantial segment of the electorate that holds these beliefs dear. This situation underscores the importance of sensitivity and respect in political discourse, particularly in a diverse nation like India, where religion plays a pivotal role in the lives of millions.

In view of this backlash, it is essential for Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party to start self introspection and soul searching and reconsider their approach to political communication and engagement with Hindus.

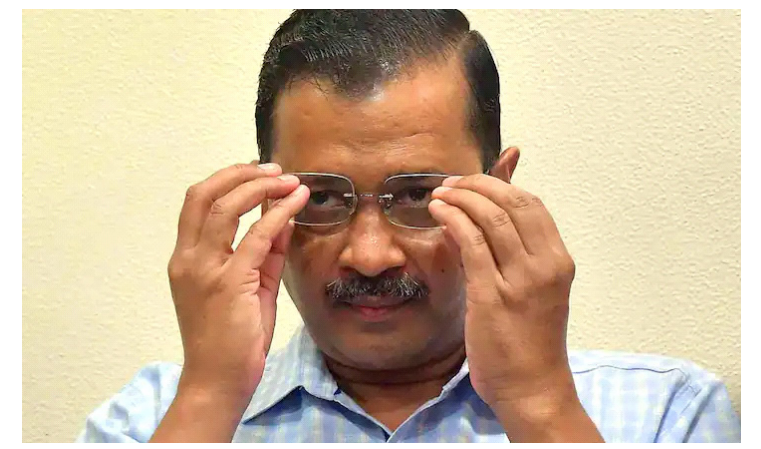
Acknowledging the significance of Hinduism and its followers is not merely a matter of political strategy; it is a fundamental aspect of fostering an inclusive and harmonious society. The Congress party must strive



to create an environment of equality, where all beliefs are respected and valued, and any disparagement of Hinduism or any other religion must be strongly discouraged.

Moreover, Rahul Gandhi and congress eclipse from the current political election landscape, particularly in the context of the Delhi elections, is notably felt. His leadership and presence could have provided a counterbalance to the dominant narratives and strategies employed by rival parties. The lack of his engagement raises questions about the Congress party's ability to connect with voters and present a compelling alternative to the ruling party. As the political dynamics evolve, it is crucial for the Congress party to reassess its strategies, embrace a more inclusive dialogue, and work towards rebuilding trust with the electorate, especially among those who feel marginalized by previous statements and actions.

In conclusion, the path forward for Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party lies in a commitment to respectful engagement with all communities, a willingness to learn from past missteps, and a proactive approach to addressing the concerns of a diverse electorate. Only through such efforts can they hope to regain relevance and support in the competitive political arena of India.



## Delhi Elections: Is It Time to Write AAP's Obituary?

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has faced a massive defeat in the Delhi elections, leaving many wondering if it's time to write the party's obituary. While this outcome marks a dramatic shift for the party, it may be too hasty to declare its end. The loss reflects a journey from ambition to downfall for both the AAP and its leader, Arvind Kejriwal. However, it is also a result of self-inflicted wounds, and the responsibility lies with Kejriwal and his party to accept their mistakes.

Kejriwal, who once emerged as a radical reformist promising to change the country's politics, has been gradually transformed by politics itself. Twelve years in power have diminished his moral authority and charisma. His defeat from the New Delhi constituency, once considered his stronghold, is symbolic of the arrogance that often overtakes politicians who think they are bigger than their party.

### Several factors contributed to AAP's defeat:

**1. Same Old, Same Old:** AAP, once known for its moral integrity and promises of change, gradually lost its unique edge. The party, which once stood as an alternative to traditional politics, sacrificed its core values, causing its most loyal supporters to drift away. In essence, AAP's moral capital, which played a key role in its previous successes, was eroded over time.

**2. Losing the Moral Edge:** Kejriwal's image suffered from corruption allegations, particularly the liquor scam that led to his arrest, along with other leaders like Manish Sisodia. Furthermore, the controversy surrounding his lavish home renovation, dubbed the 'Sheesh Mahal,' damaged his credibility. His attempt at damage control by resigning and moving to more modest accommodation came too late. The middle-class voters, who were once the AAP's core support, became disillusioned.

**3. Policy Paralysis:** The third term of the AAP government from 2020 to 2025 saw little progress. While the first term saw significant achievements in education, healthcare, and public services, the latter part of Kejriwal's tenure was marked by constant power struggles with the Lieutenant Governor and poor governance. Broken infrastructure and delayed policies alienated the electorate.

**4. When Theatrics Don't Pay Off:** After a decade in power, anti-incumbency inevitably set in, but the AAP failed to address it effectively. Rather than focusing on governance, Kejriwal indulged in theatrics, focusing more on drama than real solutions. This approach, while gaining attention, failed to win voter trust. **5. Volunteers Were Tired:** In its early years, AAP's selfless volunteer force was its biggest asset. However, over time, volunteers felt ignored, exploited, and disheartened. The lack of a solid organizational structure left AAP reliant on paid workers, which proved insufficient compared to the robust BJP organization.

## Can Improved Connectivity Reduce Emotional Distance Between Delhi And Kashmir?

Leo Tolstoy's question, "How can one be well...when one suffers morally?" resonates deeply when considering the relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India, particularly Delhi. The emotional and political divide between the two regions has long been complex, and while infrastructure projects aim to close this gap, the emotional disconnect remains significant.

True unity is not achieved solely through physical connections, such as roads or railways. While these advancements offer economic and practical benefits, they cannot heal the deep emotional rift that many Kashmiris feel towards Delhi. The historical trauma, emotional detachment, and a sense of being ignored by the Central government remain unresolved. This sentiment is powerfully echoed in the words of Kashmiris who have suffered: "How can we prioritize development when our emotions are disregarded?" said Wali Mohammad, a resident of Kashmir. His statement underscores how material progress cannot replace the need for emotional recognition and healing.

The relationship between physical connectivity and emotional distance in Kashmir is more nuanced than simply improving infrastructure. Noor-Din, 56, a local Kashmiri, voiced his frustration: "Do you think expanded railways and enhanced road networks can replace our losses?" This highlights the critical issue—emotional dissonance. The emotional scars from years of conflict and alienation cannot be erased by mere projects or policies. Kashmiris feel unheard and disconnected, leading to growing resentment and mistrust.



Furthermore, technology, particularly social media, plays a role in facilitating connections among the youth of Kashmir and India. Despite the ongoing trauma, these platforms allow for dialogue and the breaking of stereotypes. Mohd Furkan, 30, expressed the psychological burden faced by Kashmiris when traveling outside their region: "I often hide my identity out of fear." His experience illustrates how the emotional wounds of the past continue to shape the region's interactions with the rest of India.

Ultimately, the efforts to integrate Kashmir through infrastructure and digital connectivity must go hand in hand with addressing historical grievances and fostering inclusivity. Althusser's theory of ideology suggests that the imposition of government policies cannot foster unity without a deeper understanding of the region's emotional and cultural struggles. Only through genuine empathy, dialogue, and acknowledgment of Kashmir's history can the true distance both physical and emotional be bridged. True unity will only emerge when the hearts of Kashmir and Delhi are connected.

## The China-Pakistan Fallout

China's long-touted "all-weather" partnership with Pakistan is now encountering significant hurdles, as the once-promising China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) faces mounting economic, political, and security complications. Initially envisioned as a cornerstone of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC aimed to create direct access to the Arabian Sea and bolster both countries' strategic ties. However, Pakistan's deteriorating internal situation—including a collapsing economy, political instability, and a rising insurgency—has forced China to rethink its investments in the region.

CPEC's promise of transforming Pakistan's infrastructure and economy has been overshadowed by delays and security risks. Pakistan's political dysfunction and financial mismanagement have severely hindered the project's progress. Beijing's frustration grew after Pakistan's failure to meet its financial and security obligations, leading China to freeze funding in

2022. Pakistan's \$110 billion debt, including substantial commitments to Chinese firms in the energy sector, further complicates the situation.

The security landscape in Pakistan has become an even greater concern. Attacks on Chinese workers and interests in Balochistan, a key region for CPEC, have underscored Pakistan's inability to protect Chinese assets. Despite the establishment of a Special Security Division with 15,000 troops, the insurgency continues to target Chinese nationals. This failure has caused Beijing to reconsider its reliance on Pakistan's security apparatus.

Amid these setbacks, China has focused on securing Gwadar, a vital port city that offers significant geopolitical leverage. The port's proximity to the Persian Gulf, home to a significant portion of the world's oil reserves, makes it critical to China's energy security. Recently, China took control of Gwadar International Airport operations and declared Chinese as the



official language, signaling a stronger foothold in the region. China has also explored expanding its naval presence, with plans to establish a ship repair dock and submarine facility in Ormara.

However, Pakistan remains reluctant

to cede too much control to China, especially regarding security arrangements. Despite Beijing's pressure, Islamabad has resisted forming a joint security force, raising doubts about the long-term sustainability of their partnership.

Compounding the issue, Pakistan has

recently sought to rebuild ties with the United States. After years of strained relations, Islamabad recalibrated its foreign policy in 2022, securing military aid and loans from the US and international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank. This shift has fueled further frustration in Beijing, which sees Pakistan's pivot to the West as a threat to its strategic interests.

As CPEC falters and China faces mounting security concerns, the future of the China-Pakistan relationship remains uncertain. China's strategic ambitions in the region may force it to deepen its hold over Gwadar and other key assets, but any aggressive moves risk damaging its already fragile relationship with Pakistan. For Islamabad, the challenge is existential: balancing its mounting debt obligations to China with growing domestic unrest and external pressure from the US. The "all-weather" friendship between the two nations is facing its most severe test yet.

# PM Modi Hails BJP's Historic Delhi Victory as Win for Development

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday, following the party's significant return to power in the city after a 27-year hiatus. The Prime Minister described the victory as historic and attributed it to the people's strong will for development and change.

Modi began his speech by chanting "Yamuna maayi ki jai," a reference to the river that holds cultural significance for Delhiites. He acknowledged the enthusiastic support from the electorate, expressing gratitude for giving BJP's 'guarantees' a chance to be fulfilled. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of the 'double engine government'—a reference to BJP-led governments both at the center and in Delhi—which he promised would ensure accelerated development in the capital.

In his address, Modi declared, "Delhi is enthusiastic and relieved. Delhi is relieved to be free of 'Aapda,'" suggesting that the city had rid itself of the challenges and mismanagement faced under the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). He further



hailed the victory as a win for development and noted that the people of Delhi had decisively rejected the previous government's approach.

Modi also took a sharp jibe at AAP, saying, "This is a historic win and not ordinary. The people of Delhi have ousted 'Aapda'... Delhi is free of a decade of 'Aapda.'" He pointed out that the electoral mandate had made it clear that there are no shortcuts in politics and accused AAP of employing 'shortcut politics' that the people

had outright rejected. According to him, the mandate reflected the people's desire for a government that treated Delhi as a resource for progress, rather than a personal asset.

As he concluded his speech, Modi reaffirmed that this victory was not just a political success but a victory for the people of Delhi who had chosen the path of development, ensuring that the city's future would be shaped by governance focused on growth and prosperity.

# Akhilesh Yadav Challenges BJP After Milkipur By-Election Win

TPN Correspondent | Delhi



Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav has raised concerns over alleged electoral malpractices following the BJP's victory in the Milkipur by-election in Uttar Pradesh. Yadav accused the BJP of misusing election machinery, claiming that such "fraud" could occur in a single Assembly seat but would not be possible across the entire state in the upcoming 2027 elections.

The Milkipur seat, which had been vacated after the sitting MLA, Awadhesh Prasad of the Samajwadi Party, was elected to Parliament, became a key battleground. The BJP fielded Chandrabhanu Paswan, who emerged victorious in the by-election, defeating the Samajwadi Party's candidate, Ajeet Prasad.

In a post on X, Yadav asserted that the BJP's win was a result of manipulation and alleged that such actions could be carried out in one constituency but would not succeed across the entire state in future elections. He described the BJP's victory as a "lie," claiming that the party would face consequences for their actions in the long term. Yadav further stated that those involved in such fraud would eventually face punishment, and that nature and the law would not spare them.

The Milkipur bypoll became a focal point of attention with both Akhilesh Yadav and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath leading their respective parties' campaigns. Despite the loss, the Samajwadi Party had pushed hard to secure a win, especially with the stakes high in Faizabad, a region with significant political significance, including Ayodhya.

Following the BJP's victory, party MP Ravi Kishan took a dig at Yadav, commenting on the loss, and pointing out the work done by Yogi Adityanath in the region. The Milkipur by-election now remains a key talking point as the battle for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh elections heats up.

# BJP's Delhi Win Due To "Magic" Of PM Modi's Guarantees: Eknath Shinde

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

As the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) looks poised to form the government in Delhi, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has credited the party's impressive performance in the assembly elections to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. On Saturday, Shinde expressed that the victory is a testament to the guarantees provided by PM Modi and declared that "falsehood" has been defeated.

In a post on X, Shinde, who is also the chief leader of the ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, stated that after securing a win in Maharashtra, voters in Delhi have also placed their trust in the BJP's leadership. He attributed the party's success to PM Modi's promises, saying the results reflect the people's belief in the Prime Minister's vision.

The Deputy CM didn't miss the opportunity to target the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP),



led by Arvind Kejriwal, saying that the obstacles in Delhi's development have now been cleared. Shinde claimed that voters have sent a strong message to the AAP, which had made "false claims" about the Constitution being under threat.



# No glitches in SpaDex, we are going step by step: ISRO chief

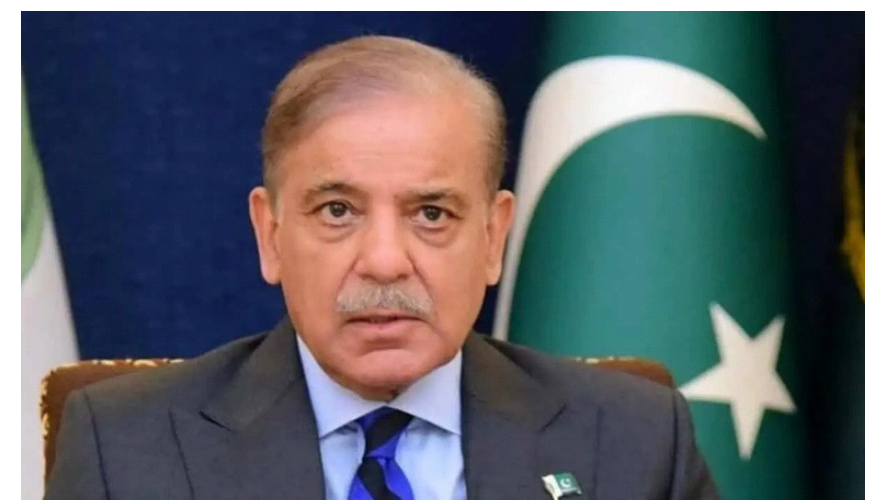
TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V. Narayanan has addressed concerns about potential issues with the space agency's maiden space docking mission, SpaDeX. Speaking on the sidelines of the 15th Biennial Aero India International Seminar on Saturday, Narayanan clarified that there were no glitches in the mission and assured that ISRO is proceeding with a step-by-step approach.

"Right now, it is docked. We are going step by step, studying the data, and planning to conduct several experiments," Narayanan, who is also the Secretary of the Department of Space, stated. His remarks came in response to reports suggesting technical challenges during the mission.

The SpaDeX mission, which saw the successful docking of satellites on January 16, 2025, was hailed as a major achievement for ISRO. The NVS-02 navigation satellite was successfully placed into its intended Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO), marking a milestone for the agency.

However, on February 2, ISRO issued a statement revealing that the planned orbit-raising operations could not be completed due to malfunctioning valves, which hindered the firing of the thrusters. These technical difficulties led to speculation that the docking process may face delays. Despite these reports, Narayanan reassured the public that the space agency was still reviewing the undocking process and that any delays were part of the ongoing assessment.



# Shehbaz Sharif Calls for Pakistan's Victory Over India in ICC Champions Trophy

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasized the importance of Pakistan's upcoming match against arch-rivals India in the ICC Champions Trophy, scheduled for February 23 in Dubai. Speaking at the inauguration of the newly renovated Gaddafi Stadium on Friday night, Sharif stated that while winning the Champions Trophy is a significant achievement, defeating India in the crucial match holds a special place for the nation.

The Prime Minister expressed his confidence in the strength of Pakistan's cricket team, noting their recent success. However, he underscored that the real challenge would be overcoming India. "We have a very good side and they have done well in recent times, but the real task now is to not only win the Champions Trophy but also defeat our arch-rival, India in the upcoming match in Dubai. The entire nation stands behind them," Sharif declared.

The rivalry between Pakistan and India on the cricket field is legendary, with India traditionally holding the upper hand in ICC events. Pakistan's last victory over India in an ICC tournament came during the 2021 T20 World Cup in Dubai, where Pakistan secured a historic win. With India opting not to send their team to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy due to strained relations between the two countries and cricket boards, the February 23 encounter is expected to be highly charged, with both teams looking to assert dominance. Pakistan will enter the Champions Trophy as the defending champions, having won the last edition in 2017 in England. Sharif expressed pride in the opportunity to host the prestigious event in Pakistan after nearly three decades. "It is a big occasion for Pakistan that we are hosting a big ICC event after nearly 29 years," he said, highlighting the significance of the event for the nation.

# Aur lado aapas mein: Omar's jibe at Congress and AAP after rout

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, in a pointed social media post, took a jab at the Congress and AAP amid the BJP's strong lead in Delhi's Assembly elections. With early leads indicating a significant win for the BJP, Abdullah shared a GIF that read, "aur lado, jee bhar ke lado, samapt kar do ek durre ko" (fight some more, fight to your heart's content, finish each other off). He captioned the GIF with the message, "aur lado aapas mein" (fight each other some more), which many interpreted as a critique of the infighting between Congress and AAP.

The National Conference leader's post came after the BJP appeared poised to win nearly 50 of Delhi's 70 Assembly seats. The Congress and AAP, despite both parties being part of the larger INDIA alliance at the national level, had chosen to contest the Delhi Assembly elections separately. This decision had led to sharp attacks between the two parties, with both accusing the other of acting as a "B-team" of the BJP.

Omar Abdullah, who had earlier been critical of the INDIA alliance, had questioned its leadership and purpose. He

remarked that the alliance should be wound up if it existed only for the Lok Sabha elections. Referring to the confusion around the leadership and agenda of the INDIA bloc, Abdullah pointed out that no meetings were being held and there was a lack of clarity on the alliance's future.

Abdullah's comments also came at a



time when the Congress faced criticism from its allies following its disappointing performance in Haryana. Despite being expected to perform well in the state, the Congress's decision to not partner with AAP led to a poor showing. The Congress only managed to win 37 seats, falling short of expectations. Abdullah had previously stated that Congress should not take its leadership of the opposition alliance for granted, given the growing dissatisfaction among some of its allies.

# Trump Likely to Meet Zelenskiy Next Week Amid Ukraine Conflict

- Talks may focus on security, rare earth assets, and U.S. support
- Seeks discussions on Ukraine's security and rare earth minerals.
- U.S. envoy Keith Kellogg to visit Ukraine for further talks.



TPN Correspondent | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump indicated on Friday that he would likely meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the coming week to discuss Ukraine's ongoing struggle to defend itself against Russian invaders. During a brief interaction with reporters in the Oval Office, Trump mentioned that the meeting could take place either in person or via video conference, but did not elaborate on the specifics of the format.

Trump was speaking to the press as he welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba to the

White House. While answering questions about Ukraine, Trump expressed a strong desire to see an end to the conflict, referring to the nearly three-year-long Russian invasion as "a ridiculous war" that he would like to see resolved on a humanitarian basis. He emphasized that the situation had dragged on for far too long, and his ultimate goal was to end the suffering caused by the war.

In addition to discussing the conflict itself, Trump also mentioned that he hoped to talk to Zelenskyy about securing Ukraine's valuable resources, such as rare earth minerals. He suggested that the U.S. might expect something in return for its continued

support of Ukraine in its fight against Russia. Trump noted that he wanted to "equalize" the situation, implying that both sides should come to a fair agreement on security and other matters related to the war.

Trump also reiterated his interest in meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom he said he has always maintained a "good relationship." However, when asked about the possibility of a face-to-face meeting with Zelenskyy, Trump clarified that it would take place in Washington, as he would not be traveling to Ukraine.

As Ukraine continues to seek U.S.

support for its war efforts, Zelenskyy's administration is looking forward to a visit this month from Trump's special envoy for the region, Keith Kellogg. According to Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andy Yermak, Kellogg's visit will include discussions on the battlefield situation, the safety of Ukrainian civilians, and potential meetings at the Munich Security Conference later this month.

This diplomatic activity underscores the ongoing international focus on Ukraine's struggle against Russian aggression and the complex geopolitical conversations surrounding U.S. involvement in the region.



## Federal Judge Blocks Musk's Department from Accessing Treasury Data

TPN Correspondent | Washington

A federal judge has issued a ruling that prevents Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) from accessing sensitive records within the U.S. Treasury Department. The decision, made early on Saturday, came after 19 Democratic attorneys general filed a lawsuit against President Donald Trump's administration.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in New York City, claims that Musk's team was given access to the Treasury Department's central payment system, which handles critical government operations such as tax refunds, social security benefits, and veterans' benefits. This system processes trillions of dollars each year and contains a vast amount of sensitive personal data, including social security numbers, bank account details, and other private financial information of millions of Americans.

US District Judge Paul Engelmayer's decision blocks Musk's team from accessing these records, which have been protected by strict federal privacy laws. The lawsuit argues that the Trump administration violated federal law by allowing DOGE to tap into these systems without appropriate safeguards in place to protect Americans' private information.

Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, also known as DOGE, was established to identify and eliminate what the Trump administration deems wasteful government spending. The department's efforts are part of a broader initiative to reduce the size of the federal government and streamline operations, a focus that has included proposals to shut down agencies like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which Musk has criticized as inefficient.

Despite the department's focus on cost-cutting, critics have raised concerns about its access to sensitive government data. The lawsuit filed by the attorneys general argues that the Trump administration's actions may not only violate privacy protections but also place the personal information of millions of Americans at risk.

In his ruling, Judge Engelmayer noted that the Treasury Department's data systems must be safeguarded from misuse, especially in instances where the potential for abuse or harm is high. While DOGE has been tasked with eliminating wasteful spending, the judge's decision emphasizes the need to balance efficiency with the protection of citizens' privacy and financial security.

The ruling is a significant step in the ongoing legal battles surrounding the Trump administration's push for government reform, highlighting tensions between reducing federal spending and ensuring adequate safeguards for sensitive personal data.

# Meta To Start Layoffs Globally From Next Week

TPN Correspondent | Newyork

Meta Platforms, the parent company of Facebook, is set to carry out company-wide layoffs next week, while simultaneously focusing on expedited hiring for machine learning engineers, according to internal memos shared with Reuters on Friday. The layoffs, which are part of the company's restructuring efforts, will begin on Monday at 5 a.m. local time in most countries, including the U.S.



The memo, written by Meta's Head of People, Janelle Gale, informed employees that notices for job terminations would be issued on Monday. However, employees in Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands will be exempt from these cuts due to local labor laws. Employees in other regions, including parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, will be notified of their status between February 11 and Feb-

ruary 18. Meta had previously announced that it planned to reduce its workforce by about 5%, targeting "the lowest performers" across the company. The layoffs are being referred to internally as "performance terminations." Gale's memo also stated that the company would continue to operate its offices on Monday and would not provide any further updates on the layoffs until after the notifications

have been made. The cuts come as part of Meta's ongoing efforts to streamline operations and refocus its priorities as it looks ahead to 2025. Despite these layoffs, the company is also pushing forward with its hiring initiative, specifically targeting machine learning engineers and other "business-critical" technical roles. This effort will be fast-tracked between February 11 and March 13, according to a sep-

arate memo from Peng Fan, Meta's VP of Engineering for Monetization. Fan's post emphasized the importance of this expedited hiring process in helping the company better align with its long-term goals.

The juxtaposition of layoffs and strategic hiring highlights the company's attempt to balance cost-cutting measures with the need to remain competitive in the rapidly evolving tech landscape. Meta's focus on hiring machine learning engineers reflects its commitment to staying at the forefront of emerging technologies, even as it reduces its overall workforce. While the layoffs may affect employees across various departments, Meta remains focused on its vision for the future, with a particular emphasis on critical engineering roles that are expected to play a major role in the company's growth over the coming years.

## Japan and U.S. Agree to Leave Currency Matters to Finance Ministers: Ishiba

TPN Correspondent | Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and U.S. President Donald Trump have agreed to leave matters related to foreign exchange rates in the hands of their respective finance ministers, maintaining a collaborative approach to currency policy. Following a meeting between the two leaders on Friday, Ishiba confirmed that discussions regarding currency exchange would continue to be handled by finance experts, as was the case during Trump's first administration.

Ishiba emphasized the importance of close coordination between the Japanese and U.S. finance officials, noting that both countries have consistently worked together on currency matters through their finance ministries. "As was the case during the first Trump administration, we decided to continue close discussions between the Japanese and U.S. finance leaders, who are the experts," Ishiba stated at a press conference following the meeting.

In line with this approach, Japanese Finance Minister Katsunobu Kato and U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent held a



video conference last month, where they agreed to continue cooperating on currency issues. This cooperation aims to ensure stability in the global financial markets and maintain transparency in the management of exchange rates.

Ahead of the summit, some analysts had speculated that President Trump might express concerns about the weakening yen. A weaker yen can push up the value of the dollar, making U.S. exports more expensive and less competitive in international markets. However, Japanese policymakers have been cautious about the potential for Trump to make public statements regarding the yen, fearing that such remarks could cause market volatility and negatively impact Japan's fragile economic recovery.

## Trudeau Warns of Trump's Real Desire to Annex Canada Over Critical Minerals

TPN Correspondent | Canada

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has raised concerns over former U.S. President Donald Trump's persistent rhetoric about annexing Canada, warning that it is not merely idle talk but a serious issue tied to the country's vast natural resources, particularly its critical minerals.

Speaking at a business and labor summit in Toronto on Friday, Trudeau emphasized that Trump's focus on Canada is closely linked to the country's rich reserves of essential minerals, which are vital for modern technologies such as electric vehicles, batteries, and renewable energy systems. These minerals have become increasingly sought after as nations strive to secure resources for their technological industries. Trudeau suggested that the Trump administration is acutely aware of Canada's abundance of these minerals and that this could be a driving force behind the former president's repeated remarks about the possibility of making Canada the "51st state."

The prime minister's comments were a direct response to Trump's long-standing statements about the idea of annexing Canada, which Trump has brought up several times over the years. Though these remarks have often been dismissed as hyper-



bole, Trudeau's latest remarks underscore the gravity with which he views the issue. He indicated that the fixation on Canada's resources is not just about the minerals themselves but also about the geopolitical significance they hold for the future of global industries.

Trudeau's warning is a reflection of ongoing concerns in Canada about the increasing pressures on the country's sovereignty and its resources. The country's vast mineral wealth, including critical elements like lithium, cobalt, and nickel, is seen as crucial to the global transition to cleaner energy. The U.S. has long been a key trade partner for Canada, but Trudeau's remarks suggest that the current geopolitical environment is making Canada more vulnerable to potential external pressures, especially from a neighbor with significant political and economic power.



## RBI Poised for Potential Rate Cut in April Amid Stable Inflation Trends



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining long-term price stability and fostering sustainable economic growth. Following a series of successful policy measures, analysts are now predicting the possibility of another interest rate cut as early as April, assuming inflation continues to show favorable trends. This forecast is based on research conducted by the State Bank of India (SBI), which has stated that "April could see the next rate cut again" if the inflationary conditions remain under control.

The RBI's monetary policy has consistently emphasized the importance of balancing economic growth with price stability. Its

data-driven approach and clear communication strategy have helped bolster market confidence while ensuring that regulatory scrutiny remains robust. Analysts have been closely monitoring inflation trends, and the recent positive data has encouraged expectations that further easing could be on the horizon.

A key aspect of the RBI's policy framework is its focus on flexible inflation targeting (FIT). The RBI has reiterated that the FIT approach strikes a balance between strict adherence to rules and the flexibility to make discretionary decisions based on real-time economic data. This allows the central bank to adjust its regulatory measures in response to chang-

ing economic conditions, ensuring that the policy remains both effective and adaptable to evolving circumstances.

The RBI's approach to inflation targeting has garnered praise for its ability to maintain stability in the face of shifting global and domestic challenges. By using a combination of clear guidelines and flexible decision-making, the RBI has been able to navigate periods of economic volatility while still keeping inflation within manageable levels. This policy framework has been a cornerstone of India's monetary strategy, allowing the RBI to respond quickly and effectively to changes in inflationary pressures.



## Income tax relief, repo rate cut to boost recovery in consumption: Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman expressed confidence that the combination of income tax relief provided in the Union Budget and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) repo rate cut will boost consumption and drive economic recovery. Addressing the media on Saturday after her post-Budget meeting with the RBI's Central Board of Directors, Sitharaman emphasized that industry is beginning to see signs of consumption recovery in the economy.

Sitharaman pointed out that her post-Budget discussions with business leaders and journalists had given her a positive outlook on the consumption sentiment. According to the inputs received from industry leaders, orders for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) for the April to June period are already being booked. This, she said, is a clear indication of potential recovery in consumption. Furthermore, she noted that several businesses are reviewing their capacity utilization, a sign that demand is picking up.

The Finance Minister also highlighted that the RBI's recent decision to reduce the repo rate by 25 basis points, from 6.5% to 6.25%, would further align with the positive trends in the economy. This rate cut, the first in about five years, is expected to lower lending rates and reduce equated monthly installments (EMIs), making borrowing cheaper for consumers and businesses alike.

Sitharaman also addressed the significant tax relief announced in the Union Budget for 2025-26, which includes raising the income tax exemption limit to Rs 12 lakh, up from Rs 7 lakh previously. This measure is expected to provide substantial relief to middle-income taxpayers, with an estimated one crore individuals no longer falling under the tax net. The government expects that the savings generated from the tax relief will be reinvested in the economy through consumption, savings, or investments. However, this tax relief will lead to a revenue foregone of about Rs 1 lakh crore in direct taxes and Rs 2,600 crore in indirect taxes.

## Macro effects of proposed US tariffs are negative: S&P Global Ratings

A recent report by S&P Global Ratings' economics team has raised concerns about the potential negative impact of tariffs proposed by the Trump administration, warning of slower GDP growth, higher unemployment, and rising inflation. The report, titled "Macro Effects of Proposed U.S. Tariffs Are Negative All-Around," suggests that while the U.S. would experience some adverse effects, the consequences for trading partners would be far more significant.

The Trump administration has quickly moved to implement a 25% tariff on goods imported from Canada and Mexico, along with an additional 10% tariff on imports from China. However, last-minute negotiations have provided a temporary reprieve, granting a one-month delay in the tariffs for both North American trading partners. Despite the temporary pause, the report notes that uncertainty regarding the direction of U.S. policy remains high, with potential long-term impacts on decision-making by firms and households.

S&P Global Ratings highlights that the overall effects of these tariffs are expected to be overwhelmingly negative. While the U.S. economy may experience some immediate challenges, such as higher costs for imported goods and potential trade retaliation, the tariffs are expected to have more pronounced consequences for countries involved in global trade with the U.S. Specifically, the tariffs would reduce global trade



and slow economic growth, potentially leading to rising unemployment in both the U.S. and its trading partners.

The report also notes that the proposed tariffs could result in inflationary pressures, particularly if U.S. consumers face higher prices on a range of imported goods. This would further strain household budgets and reduce purchasing power. Additionally, the stronger U.S. dollar, which could result from these tariff measures, may negatively affect

the international competitiveness of U.S. exports, potentially limiting the benefits of these tariffs for American businesses.

In early February, just two weeks after taking office, President Donald Trump invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to announce sweeping new tariffs. The White House justified the move by citing the threat posed by illegal immigration and the importation of drugs, such as fentanyl, from foreign countries.

## Union Bank of India sees lower inflation for FY25 and FY26 than MPC estimates



Union Bank of India (UBI) has forecasted that inflation in FY25 may be lower than the revised forecast of 4.4% set by the Monetary

Policy Committee (MPC), with the bank predicting Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation to track at around 4% in Q4 FY25. For FY26,

UBI projects inflation to be slightly lower than the MPC's estimate of 4.2%, forecasting it at 4.0%. While these projections signal a more favorable inflationary environment, the bank has raised concerns about the risks to India's growth and inflation outlook in the coming years.

The bank highlighted that the MPC had revised its FY25 growth forecast down to 6.4% from an earlier 6.6%. Despite this, the MPC anticipates a recovery to 6.7% growth in FY26. UBI expressed caution regarding the FY25 growth projection, citing downside risks to the forecast. According to the bank, the MPC's growth assumption for the December 2024 quarter, which expects growth to surpass 6.5%, appears overly optimistic as current trends suggest growth is closer to 6%.

UBI further noted that it was still maintaining an FY26 growth estimate of 6.5%, slightly higher than the expected growth of 6% to 6.2% for the current fiscal year. However, the bank remains wary of the MPC's optimism about a 7% growth rate in Q2 FY26, especially in light of the ongoing global economic challenges. The international economic environment, including uncertainties regarding global trade, inflation, and geopolitical tensions, could have an impact on India's growth prospects, the bank cautioned.

## New Hampshire man successfully receives Pig kidney in groundbreaking transplant



Tim Andrews, a 66-year-old man from New Hampshire, has become the second person known to live with a genetically-edited pig kidney transplant. On January 25, 2025, surgeons at Massachusetts General Hospital successfully transplanted the pig kidney into Andrews, marking a significant milestone in the field of xenotransplantation. Just a week after the procedure, Andrews was able to leave the hospital, signaling the transplant's early success. Andrews, who had been battling kidney failure for two years, had struggled with dialysis complications and heart is-

issues, which made his survival prospects grim. Although he had been on the kidney transplant list, the wait for a suitable donor could take upwards of seven years. Faced with limited options and a poor prognosis, Andrews volunteered to participate in a pilot study for a highly experimental pig kidney transplant. In preparation for the transplant, Andrews underwent extensive physical therapy to improve his overall health, losing 30 pounds and becoming healthier, which made him a suitable candidate for the procedure. His decision to pursue the experimental transplant has

already proven to be a life-changing one. After the transplant, doctors were thrilled to observe that the pig kidney began functioning immediately, producing urine and carrying out normal kidney functions without signs of rejection. Andrews, who had long struggled with diabetes and the complications of dialysis, is now free from the constant need for dialysis and recovering well. "When I woke up in the recovery room, I was a new man," Andrews said in an interview with The Associated Press. The success of this transplant is a significant achievement in the field of xenotransplantation, which involves transplanting animal organs into humans. Previous attempts with animal organs have had mixed results, with many transplants failing quickly. However, recent advances in gene editing have made animal organs more compatible with human bodies, providing hope for the future of transplants. Andrews' recovery is fueling optimism for patients who, like him, have little chance of receiving a human kidney transplant due to their poor health. This breakthrough is helping to pave the way for more research into animal-to-human transplants, a development that could one day solve the organ shortage crisis and save countless lives.

## Milk And Paneer Are Non-Veg? Indian Doctor's Claim Makes Internet Angry



An Indian doctor's recent comments declaring paneer and milk to be non-vegetarian foods have sparked a heated debate online, especially among vegetarians. Dr. Sylvia Karpagam's claim that these dairy products are not vegetarian due to their animal origin has upset many social media users who adhere to vegetarian diets. The controversy began after a photo of a vegetarian thali, shared by another doctor, Sunita Sayammagaru, was posted on X (formerly Twitter). The thali included a variety of items such as unsweetened kheer, paneer, moong dal, and a salad with carrots, cucumber, onions, raw coconut, and walnuts. Sunita had captioned

the image, saying it was a "vegetarian meal" rich in protein, good fats, and fiber. The post quickly gained traction, with over 1.2 million views since its upload on February 4. Dr. Karpagam's response to the post took many by surprise, as she asserted that dairy products like paneer and milk should not be classified as vegetarian. She argued that since these foods come from animals, they do not meet the criteria of vegetarianism, which typically excludes all animal-derived products. Her comments have stirred a storm on social media, with many vegetarians expressing their disapproval. While some agree with her perspective, a majority of users have rejected the idea, emphasizing that dairy is an essential part of vegetarian diets in India. This debate underscores the ongoing divide in how vegetarianism is understood and practiced, with varying interpretations of what qualifies as "vegetarian food."

## People in UK Using human ashes in community garden for a bizarre reason



A dedicated team of gardeners in Cornwall, England, is grappling with an unexpected and distressing issue—people scattering human ashes in the flower beds of a riverside spot they have been working to restore. The Friends of Sunny Corner, a volunteer group, has been focused on beautifying a scenic stretch along the River Truro since 2016. However, their efforts have unintentionally turned the area into a popular location for mourners seeking to lay their loved

ones to rest. Paul Caruana, the chairman of the organization, revealed that volunteers have encountered at least 15 incidents of human ashes being scattered without permission. The problem escalated when one volunteer, caught off guard by the wind, inadvertently swallowed a mouthful of ashes while tending to the area. "One volunteer actually got a level of mouthful of ashes because the wind

caught him, and suddenly when you get a mouthful of human ashes, it is quite distressing," Caruana, 71, shared. He emphasized how unsettling the experience was, stating, "It's not funny at all. People say 'well, it's only ashes.' Well, you get a mouthful yourself and tell me if it is a pleasant experience—it is an awful thing to happen."

In an effort to stop the growing problem, Friends of Sunny Corner has issued a public plea for people to respect their wishes and refrain from scattering human ashes across their flower beds. The group highlighted the issue in a recent statement, expressing their frustration upon arriving at the site to find a large area covered in ashes despite previous requests to cease the practice. This troubling situation has left the gardening volunteers disturbed, as they aim to maintain the beauty of the space for the community while respecting those who wish to memorialize their loved ones. The group is now appealing for understanding and cooperation from the public to preserve the sanctity of the site.

## Viral Pic Of 95-Year-Old British Indian Passport Leaves Internet Amazed

A rare, almost 95-year-old British Indian passport has gone viral on social media, leaving the internet in awe. The post, shared by a user on X (formerly Twitter) under the handle features a picture of the old passport belonging to a person named Kartar Singh. The passport, though a little worn, is royal blue in color and prominently displays the monogram of the British monarch.

The vintage passport has captured the attention of thousands as it provides a rare glimpse into the colonial past of India before independence. According to the caption accompanying the post, this passport was discontinued after India gained independence in 1947.

The image has since garnered over 1.3 million views, with many social media users expressing their fascination with the historical document. As users on the internet have begun to share similar artefacts and documents from India's past, this British Indian passport has sparked conversations around history, heritage, and the evolution of the country's identity.

For many, such items serve as tangi-



ble links to a bygone era, offering valuable insight into the period before India gained independence from British rule. Collecting and preserving these pieces of history has become an important way for people to connect with their roots and learn about the experiences of their ancestors. The viral post has reminded

many of how much history is embedded in the objects we may overlook in our day-to-day lives. As social media continues to spotlight such fascinating relics, the post has reignited the trend of sharing historical documents that link present generations to their ancestors' lived experiences.

## The AI Arms Race: Who Will Win the Race to Artificial General Intelligence?



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is evolving at an unprecedented pace, opening up new possibilities across industries and everyday life. The release of OpenAI's ChatGPT in late 2022 marked a turning point, sparking what can only be described as an AI arms race. Since then, major tech companies have raced to develop the most advanced AI systems, from sophisticated chatbots to APIs that can revolutionize numerous sectors. The competition has expanded beyond conversational AI, as tech giants like Google, Meta, OpenAI, and billion-dollar-backed startups are now setting their sights on a much larger goal: Artificial General Intelligence (AGI).

AGI refers to AI that can perform intellectual tasks at a human-like level, excelling across a wide variety of activities, much like how human cognition works. While the concept of AGI has generated heated discussions and speculation about its potential, it remains an elusive target. Despite significant advancements, no company has yet crossed the threshold to develop AGI.

This intense race, fueled by vast investments and cutting-edge research, raises several important questions: How close are we to AGI? What does the timeline look like for its development? And, perhaps most importantly, who will ultimately "win" this race?

While many companies are investing heavily in AGI, the reality is that this journey is filled with challenges. Developing an AI that mimics human-level intelligence requires breakthroughs in multiple areas, including reasoning, problem-solving, creativity, and learning adaptability. Each player in the field—whether it's an established tech giant or a nimble startup—brings a unique approach and expertise to the table.

At this stage, it's unclear which company or research lab will be the first to successfully develop AGI. But the race is on, and the stakes couldn't be higher. As AI continues to advance, the developments in this race will shape the future of technology and human interaction in ways we can only begin to imagine.

## Virat Kohli Declared Fit for 2nd ODI Against England, Confirms Batting Coach Sitanshu Kotak



Team India received a massive boost ahead of the second ODI against England as Virat Kohli has been declared fit to play at the Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on Sunday. The veteran batter had missed the first ODI in Nagpur due to a sore right knee, but batting coach Sitanshu Kotak confirmed that Kohli has returned to full fitness and attended practice sessions. "Virat Kohli is fit to play. He has come for practice and is good to go," Kotak told mediapersons on Saturday. Who Will Make Way for Kohli?

With Kohli set to return, the biggest selection dilemma for captain Rohit Sharma and coach Gautam Gambhir is who to drop between Shreyas Iyer and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

- Shreyas Iyer, who replaced Kohli in the first ODI, impressed with a 36-ball 59, making it difficult to leave him out.
- Yashasvi Jaiswal, who opened the innings with Shubman Gill, had an underwhelming performance, which could see Gill reuniting with Rohit at the top, while Kohli slots in at No. 3.

**Kohli Eyes Major Milestone**  
Kohli will be eager to regain form, especially after a low-scoring Ranji Trophy outing and struggles in Australia. The 36-year-old is just 94 runs away from joining the elite 14,000-run club in ODIs, a milestone only achieved by Sachin Tendulkar (18,426) and Kumar Sangakkara (14,234). With India leading 1-0 in the three-match series, Kohli's return could further strengthen the batting lineup as the hosts aim to seal the series in Cuttack.

## Indian Athletes Rally Behind PM Narendra Modi's Call to Combat Obesity



Indian athletes and fitness influencers have come together to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to fight obesity, made during the 38th National Games opening ceremony in Dehradun. Hockey legend PR Sreejesh emphasized the importance of dietary awareness, stating, "Eating well is the first step towards a healthier, happier life. Let's make Fit Food India a lifestyle, inspired by PM Modi ji's commitment to fitness." Table tennis star Manika Batra also promoted mindful eating, urging people to make nutritious choices a habit. "The food we eat shapes our health. Let's commit to Fit Food India and contribute to PM Modi ji's mission for a fitter India," she posted on X.

MMA champion Sangram Singh reinforced the urgency of prioritizing health. In a video message, he said, "At the end of life, wealth and luxuries won't matter—only our body will carry us forward. Let's stay fit and take the country ahead." The Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative at Major Dhyanchand Stadium saw Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya lead a 250-member group of doctors and nutritionists, advancing the PM's call to action. With strong backing from athletes and fitness influencers, India's fight against rising obesity rates is gaining momentum across the nation.

## Sanjay Bangar Advises Rohit Sharma to Revisit Old Success Amid Lean Patch

Former India batting coach Sanjay Bangar has urged Rohit Sharma to simplify his approach and avoid excessive technical analysis as he struggles with a prolonged dip in form. Bangar believes that rather than overcomplicating his batting or indulging in rigorous practice, Rohit should reflect on his past performances to regain his rhythm. Speaking on Star Sports, Bangar emphasized the importance of self-assessment, advising the India captain to watch old videos of his most successful innings and recall the habits and routines that worked for him in the past. "A phase has come in his career where he hasn't scored runs. Sometimes practicing too much isn't beneficial. He can probably spend a little time alone and watch the phase where he enjoyed a lot of success," Bangar said. Rohit's struggles continue. Rohit's struggles were evident once again in the first ODI against England in Nagpur, where he was dismissed for just two runs. This follows a disappointing Test season, where he managed only 164 runs in eight innings at an average of 10.93. With the Champions Trophy just weeks away, concerns over Rohit's form have grown, as India will need their skipper to fire in crucial matches. The second ODI



against England in Cuttack presents another opportunity for Rohit to break free from this lean patch and regain confidence ahead of the marquee tournament.

## D Gukesh Begins Freestyle Chess Grand Slam with Mixed Results

- World Champion D Gukesh started his campaign at the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam with three draws and one loss, showing signs of adaptation to the new format.
- The Freestyle Chess format, introduced by Magnus Carlsen and German entrepreneur Jan Henric Buettner, is an evolved version of Fischer Random Chess (or Chess 960), where the starting positions of pieces are randomly generated. This format is seen as a challenge to FIDE, the world's governing chess body, sparking controversy in the chess world.
- Gukesh drew his first game against Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan, but suffered a loss to Alireza Firouzja of France in the second round. He then secured two more draws against Levon Aronian (USA) and Javokhir Sindarov (Uzbekistan).
- With five rounds remaining, Gukesh must finish in the top eight out of ten participants to qualify for the next stage.
- Meanwhile, Magnus Carlsen also struggled, scoring two points from four games (two wins, two losses), while Fabiano Caruana and



Sindarov lead with 3.5 points each.

- Amid the ongoing dispute between FIDE and Freestyle Chess promoters, the new format boasts a prize fund of \$750,000 per tournament—a rare figure in professional chess. Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand withdrew from the event, possibly due to his role as FIDE Deputy President.

## Kevin De Bruyne's Late Strike Saves Manchester City from FA Cup Upset

Manchester City narrowly avoided an FA Cup upset against third-tier Leyton Orient, securing a 2-1 victory to progress to the fifth round. Kevin De Bruyne, coming off the bench, scored the winner 11 minutes from time, ensuring Pep Guardiola's side dodged an embarrassing exit. The match saw Leyton Orient take a surprising early lead when Jamie Donley's powerful shot rebounded

off the crossbar and deflected in off City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega. The League One side held onto their 1-0 advantage until the 56th minute, when Rico Lewis' shot deflected off Abdukodir Khusanov for his first-ever goal in a City shirt. With City's struggles continuing, Guardiola turned to his star substitutes, bringing on Phil Foden and De Bruyne in pursuit of a winning goal. The Belgian maestro deliv-

ered in the 79th minute, finishing off Jack Grealish's pass to seal City's place in the next round. Despite the win, City's recent form remains a concern as they prepare for a crucial Champions League clash against Real Madrid at the Etihad on Tuesday. Guardiola's men, currently fourth in the Premier League, will need a significant improvement to maintain their European ambitions.





## Critics Choice Awards 2025: Citadel: Honey Bunny Loses to Squid Game

**N**ew Delhi: The Critics Choice Awards 2025 proved to be a disappointing night for Indian fans as Varun Dhawan and Samantha Ruth Prabhu's highly anticipated series, Citadel: Honey Bunny, failed to win in the Best Foreign Language Series category. The high-stakes Hindi-language spy action series, created by Raj and DK, lost to the globally popular Korean show Squid Game.

The category featured several strong contenders, including Acapulco (Apple TV+), La Maquina (Hulu), The Law According to Lidia Poet (Netflix), My Brilliant Friend (HBO Max), Pachinko (Apple TV+), and Senna (Netflix). Despite high expectations, Citadel: Honey Bunny couldn't secure a victory. Adding to the disappointment, Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light also lost in the Best Foreign Film category to Emilia Perez.

About Citadel: Honey Bunny

Citadel: Honey Bunny serves as both a prequel and spin-off to Amazon Prime Video's international hit Citadel, which starred Priyanka Chopra. The Hindi-language series focuses on the adventurous lives of Honey and Bunny, the parents of Nadia Sinh (Priyanka's character in the original



show).

Featuring Varun Dhawan and Samantha Ruth Prabhu in lead roles, the series also stars Kay Kay Menon, Simran, Sikandar Kher, Saqib Saleem, Soham Majumdar, Shivankit Singh Parihar, and Thalaivaasal Vijay.

Premiering on November 6, 2024, on Amazon Prime Video, the show explored the origins of key characters within the Citadel universe. Despite critical appreciation, it failed to clinch an award at the Critics Choice Awards 2025.

## Shruti Haasan's The Eye to Open 5th Wench Film Festival in Mumbai



**T**he British psychological thriller The Eye, starring Shruti Haasan, has been selected as the opening film for the 5th Wench Film Festival in Mumbai. The festival, founded by filmmaker Sapna Bhavnani, is India's first horror film festival and will take place from February 27 to March 2, 2025. Directed by Daphne Schmon, The Eye also features Mark Rowley in a pivotal role. The film follows Diana (played by Haasan), who visits an island where her husband Felix drowned and is tempted by a dark choice that could bring him back.

The festival will conclude with the screening of Schirkoa—In Lies We Trust, starring Iranian-French actress Golshifteh Farahani. A Platform for Women and Non-Binary Filmmakers

The 2025 Wench Film Festival will showcase 42 films, including 35 by women filmmakers. The event also features films created by LGBTQ women and non-binary filmmakers, emphasizing inclusivity in the horror genre.

The festival will present films in three categories:

- Blood Thirsty (feature films, 60+ minutes)
- Dwarves (films of 10-40 minutes)
- Elves (short films under 10 minutes) The jury includes Chris Orgelt, Harini Laxminarayan, Aruna Raje Patil, and Carolyn Mauricette, who will evaluate films in their respective categories. With The Eye headlining the festival, Shruti Haasan continues to make a global impact in cinema.

## Thandel Box Office Collection Day 1: Naga Chaitanya's Film Opens Strong

**T**handel, starring Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi, has made a strong impact at the box office on its opening day. The film, which was released on February 7, earned ₹10 crore on its first day, according to Sacnilk.

The Telugu version contributed ₹9.8 crore, with the remaining revenue coming from the Hindi and Tamil markets. Directed by Chandoo Mondeti, Thandel saw an impressive 53.58% occupancy in Telugu, while Hindi and Tamil registered 9.13% and 9.08% occupancy, respectively. Sobhita Dhulipala's Support for Naga Chaitanya

Ahead of the film's release, Sobhita Dhulipala extended her support to Naga Chaitanya by wearing a black hoodie featuring the film's title. Sharing the picture, Chaitanya wrote, "Giving me all the positive vibes I need!"

At a promotional event in



Vizag, Naga Chaitanya expressed his deep connection to the city, sharing, "Vizag is so close to my heart that I fell in love with a Vizag ammayi (girl) and married her. Now, there's a piece of Vizag at my home too. So, brothers, I have a small request... The box office collection of Thandel in Vizag should

be staggering; otherwise, I'll lose my honour at home." Film's Plot and Production Produced by Bunny Vasu, Allu Aravind, and Koppineedi Vidya, Thandel revolves around Raju, a fisherman from Srikakulam, played by Naga Chaitanya, who gets captured by Pakistan forces in international

waters. The film's emotional depth and gripping narrative are further elevated by Devi Sri Prasad's music, adding intensity to the survival drama. With a promising start, the film is expected to continue its strong performance in the coming days.

## Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan Attend Screening of Aamir Khan's Son Junaid's Film 'Loveyapa'



**B**ollywood superstars Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan attended the special screening of "Loveyapa", the upcoming romantic-comedy featuring Junaid Khan, son of Aamir Khan. This marks Junaid's first theatrical release, following his debut in the Netflix film "Maharaj". The film, also starring Khushi Kapoor, is directed by Advait Chandan, known for "Laal Singh Chaddha" and "Secret Superstar". Aamir Khan hosted the special screening at Excel Entertainment's office for his close friends in the industry. Shah Rukh Khan arrived in a blue shirt and den-

im jeans, warmly embracing Aamir and praising his weight loss. He also congratulated Junaid before posing for pictures with the father-son duo. Salman Khan, dressed in a green polo T-shirt and ripped jeans, attended the event with his security team.

The screening also saw the presence of Ayushmann Khurrana and wife Tahira, Imran Khan, and rapper Honey Singh.

"Loveyapa", produced by Phantom Studios and AGS Entertainment, delves into modern-day relationships and is set to hit theaters this Friday.

## Lisa Mishra to Perform with Ed Sheeran in Delhi's Biggest International Concert

**S**inger-actress Lisa Mishra is set to create history as she performs alongside global music icon Ed Sheeran in Delhi on February 15. This highly anticipated event is being touted as the biggest international show ever held in the capital.

Lisa Mishra, known for her chart-topping tracks and acting prowess, is stepping into the global music spotlight with this prestigious collaboration. Fans can also expect an exclusive treat, as she might unveil some of her unreleased music during the concert.

Expressing her excitement, Lisa said, "Performing with Ed Sheeran is nothing short of a dream come true. He has been one of my biggest inspirations, and to share the same stage with him is surreal. This is a defining moment in my career, reinforcing my belief in the power of music and hard work."

This collaboration marks a significant milestone in Li-



sa's career, solidifying her place in the international music scene. With an electrifying atmosphere expected at

the concert, fans are eagerly waiting for this historic musical moment in Delhi.