



**Weather Forecast**

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

# BJP Sweeps Haryana Mayoral Elections, Congress Faces Crushing Defeat



**BJP wins 9 out of 10 mayoral seats in Haryana**

**Independent candidate Inderjit Yadav claims victory**

**Congress suffers major defeat, failing to secure any mayoral positions**

**Voter turnout remains low at 41%, signaling local election apathy**



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged victorious in the Haryana mayoral elections, securing 9 out of 10 mayoral positions, including major urban centers like Gurugram and Rohtak, the stronghold of senior Congress leader Bhupinder Hooda. An independent candidate, Dr. Inderjit Yadav, a former BJP leader, won the mayoral seat in Manesar, making it a near clean sweep for the ruling party.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini celebrated the BJP's triumph, attributing the win to the endorsement of the "triple-engine" government. "The people have given their stamp of approval, and this victory will play a key role in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a 'Viksit Bharat,'" he said.

Education Minister Mahipal Dhanda also promised greater development for the state, crediting the "full public mandate."

The Congress party, which had only once before contested local polls under its own symbol, saw a resounding defeat in this round. Despite fielding several candidates, including for the mayoral position in Gurugram, the Congress faced a tough challenge from the BJP, which deployed prominent state leaders to campaign aggressively. Despite efforts, the Congress failed to secure any significant wins.

In Gurugram, the BJP's Raj Rani defeated Congress candidate Seema Pahuja by over one lakh votes. In Rohtak, BJP's Ram Avtar triumphed in a five-way contest, se-

curing over one lakh votes, leaving Congress' Surajmal Kiloil trailing by more than 45,000 votes. The loss in Rohtak was particularly painful for Congress, as it is considered Hooda's political stronghold.

Other significant victories for the BJP included wins in Ambala, Hisar, Karnal, Panipat, and Yamunanagar. In Ambala, BJP's Shailja Sachdeva defeated Congress' Amisha Chawla by over 20,000 votes. The BJP also claimed victories in Sonipat and Faridabad, cementing its dominance across the state.

Voter turnout was recorded at a disappointing 41%, significantly lower than the 68% turnout during the Assembly elections, highlighting voter apathy in local elections.

# Sambhal mentioned in scriptures that predate Islam

**Temple was destroyed in 1526: U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath**

TPN Correspondent | Lucknow

In the wake of the ongoing Sambhal mosque controversy, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath spoke out on Wednesday, emphasizing that forcibly imposing one's faith or disregarding historical beliefs is "unacceptable." He pointed to the long-standing historical significance of Sambhal, which predates the arrival of Islam in India, as an important context for the ongoing dispute.

The Chief Minister also brought up the historical destruction of religious sites in the region, stating, "In 1526, a Vishnu temple in Sambhal was demolished, and two years later, in 1528, the Ram temple in Ayodhya met the same fate." He connected these events to a broader historical context, suggesting that the same individual was responsible for both acts.

Tensions have been rising in Sambhal since November 2024, after a court-ordered survey at a mosque led some to believe that it may be situated on the site of a previously demolished temple. This ongoing legal and social dispute has sparked widespread debate and unrest in the region.

At a special event titled 'Manthan: Kumbh and Beyond' held in Lucknow and organized by the RSS-linked Organiser magazine, Adityanath explained that Sambhal has been mentioned in scriptures dating back over 5,000 years, well before the advent of Islam 1,400 years ago. He added that references to Lord Vishnu's future incarnation can be found in these ancient texts, highlighting that the region's cultural and religious history stretches much further back than the arrival of Islam in India.

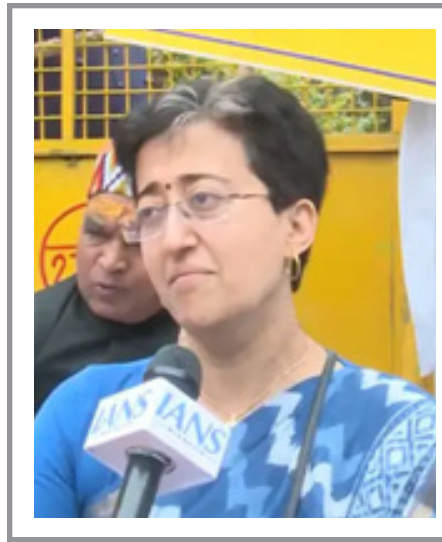
Adityanath's statements reflect the deepening of the religious and cultural narrative around the controversy, with calls for protecting what is seen as an essential part of India's ancient history and heritage. As the matter continues to unfold, the Chief Minister's remarks suggest that the government intends to support the preservation and recognition of these ancient faith-based sites.



# "When Will We Get Free Cylinder" : AAP Protests Against Delhi Government

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers staged a protest on Wednesday against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for failing to deliver on its promise of providing free LPG cylinders to women during Holi. The protest, which took place in Delhi, saw AAP members holding up empty cylinders while demanding the BJP fulfill its commitment. Following the protest, several workers, including AAP leader Rituraj Jha, were detained by the police.



feel let down by the BJP's unfulfilled promises.

Atishi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, also criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP for their failure to deliver on multiple promises made to the women of Delhi. She pointed out that the Rs 2,500 financial aid and free LPG cylinders, which were part of the BJP's election manifesto, had not been implemented. "The promise of Rs 2,500 has turned out to be a 'Jhumla,' and women in Delhi are still waiting for their free cylinders," Atishi told ANI, adding that protests were taking place in various parts of Delhi with women holding empty cylinders.

Speaking after the detainment, Jha said, "Freedom of expression is a right of the people. We are simply asking, when will we get the free cylinders, Modi ji? You had promised." His comments echoed the sentiment of many Delhi residents who

# CM Rekha Gupta-Led BJP Government Moves To Withdraw Cases Against Lt Governor

Filed By Previous AAP Govt



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In a significant shift, the new BJP-led government in Delhi has initiated the process of withdrawing several legal cases, signaling an end to the ongoing legal disputes between the Lieutenant Governor (LG), who represents the Centre, and the Delhi government. Sources confirmed on Wednesday that the move aims to resolve long-standing confrontations and pave the way for smoother governance.

Among the cases being withdrawn are those related to the

Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) chairman's appointment, funding for the Delhi Jal Board, the appointment of lawyers for Delhi riot cases, teacher training abroad, and the high-level committee for addressing Yamuna pollution. These legal battles had been a major source of tension between the Delhi government, led by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and the LG's office during the tenure of LGs Najeeb Jung, Anil Baijal, and VK Saxena.

**2 PAGE**

# NEP a saffron policy, delimitation exercise for BJP's benefit: Tamil Nadu CM Stalin

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has once again expressed strong opposition to the National Education Policy (NEP), calling it a "saffron policy" aimed at promoting Hindi at the expense of regional languages. Speaking at a party rally in Chennai, Stalin argued that the NEP would severely damage Tamil Nadu's education system and hamper its growth. He further

claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), through its proposed delimitation exercise, was attempting to consolidate its political power in northern states, thereby enhancing its influence and the number of MPs in its favor. Stalin asserted that the DMK would stand against such attempts.

The Chief Minister also criticized the NEP

for its stance on reservation, accusing it of undermining social justice. He argued that the policy, in the name of vocational education, was trying to introduce caste-based educational segregation. Stalin reiterated that his party would resist any move that would harm the state's educational landscape or its social justice measures.



**2 PAGE**

## Boat Rides In Delhi Soon? Government Plans Water Tourism On Yamuna

- Plan aims to decongest roads, promote eco-friendly transport
- CM Rekha Gupta envisions cultural, artistic ghats like Varanasi
- LG Saxena emphasizes sustainable development, charging stations
- PPP model under consideration for expanding water transport



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi government and the Centre have taken a significant step toward enhancing water tourism in the capital by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday to develop boat rides along the 4-kilometer stretch of the Yamuna, from Sonia Vihar to Jagatpur. The initiative was launched at an event in Asita Park, with Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena emphasizing the importance of expanding this facility in the future. The project aims to decongest Delhi's roads while offering better travel options for its residents.

Saxena noted that this project is a part of the broader vision to integrate river, road, and metro transportation, with plans to explore a public-private partnership (PPP) model to further develop water transport along the Yamuna. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta also expressed her enthusiasm for the initiative, highlighting how it would contribute to a fresh, modern identity for the city. She emphasized that the focus would be on cleanliness, beautification, and sustainable development.

The Chief Minister addressed past challenges, mentioning that the previous government had hindered progress, but the people of Delhi had overcome those

obstacles. She introduced the concept of eco-friendly, electric-solar hybrid boats to promote sustainable travel. Gupta envisions the Yamuna ghats transforming into a cultural and artistic hub, similar to Varanasi, and emphasized the government's ongoing efforts to clean and develop the river.

LG Saxena also spoke about the development of charging stations and other commuter facilities to enhance the boating experience. He reiterated that this project is just the beginning, with plans for further improvements in the condition of the Yamuna and the expansion of the waterway system. Saxena commended the accelerated progress under the current administration, particularly in terms of solar energy adoption and sustainable transport solutions.

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, PWD Minister Pravesh Verma, and Delhi Capital Minister also attended the event, with officials expressing commitment to clearing pending projects and continuing the city's transformation.

## Sitharaman attends breakfast meeting with Kerala CM, Governor at Kerala House in Delhi

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Union Minister for Finance, Nirmala Sitharaman, visited Kerala House in New Delhi on Wednesday, March 12, for a key meeting with Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. This meeting came after Governor Arlekar assured Chief Minister Vijayan on Tuesday that he would advocate for Kerala's concerns with the Central government.



The meeting also included Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) MPs from Kerala, who pledged to work alongside Left Democratic Front (LDF) MPs to lobby for the state's issues at the federal level. The growing cooperation between political factions in Kerala highlights the urgency of addressing the state's needs in the face of strained relations with the Centre.

The state's economic hopes were recently dashed when Kerala's request for a ₹24,000-crore economic package was not addressed in the Union Budget 2025. The state had also been seeking financial support for various programs, including the rehabilitation of Wayanad, but those concerns remain unresolved.

The meeting between Sitharaman, Vijayan, and Arlekar, which also included K.V. Thomas, Kerala's special representative in New Delhi, signaled a potential thaw in the historically strained relationship between Kerala and the Centre. Tensions have risen over multiple issues, including federal funding for Wayanad's rehabilitation, state borrowing limits, the discontinuation of GST compensation, and the Centre's reluctance to support Kerala's substantial honorarium for ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists), who are central to the state's health care system.

Despite these ongoing disputes, the recent meeting is being seen as a step toward addressing Kerala's concerns at the federal level, offering hope for improved dialogue and cooperation between the state and Central government.

## Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar discharged from AIIMS-Delhi, advised rest

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar was discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi on Wednesday, after being admitted for cardiac-related ailments earlier this month. Dhankhar had been hospitalized on March 9 for heart issues and underwent necessary treatment.



The news of his discharge has brought relief to his well-wishers, and the Vice-President's health is now stable. Dhankhar's prompt recovery from the cardiac condition reflects the effectiveness of the medical attention he received at one of the country's premier healthcare institutes.

A medical bulletin issued by AIIMS stated that the Vice-President had received appropriate care during his stay and had made a full recovery. However, the medical team has advised him to take rest for the next few days to ensure complete recovery.

In a message shared on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Dhankhar expressed his gratitude to the medical professionals at AIIMS for their care and attention. "Deeply appreciate the exemplary care and professionalism of the medical team at AIIMS, New Delhi, from my admission on March 9 to discharge on March 12. Their dedication and meticulous attention ensured a smooth recovery," Dhankhar wrote.

The 72-year-old leader's hospital stay had sparked widespread concern, and his swift recovery marks a positive turn for his health. It also serves as a reminder of the importance of proper medical care and the expertise available in India's healthcare system.

With the Vice-President now recuperating at home, the public is hopeful that he will return to his official duties soon, as advised by his doctors.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has issued new instructions to officials, urging them to make "all attempts" to link Aadhaar numbers with electoral roll data. This directive, detailed in a note circulated to Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) across all states and Union Territories, marks a shift from the ECI's previous stance that linking Aadhaar with electoral rolls was not mandatory.

The instruction, shared during the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar's opening remarks at the CEOs conference on March 4, emphasized the importance of accurate voter identification and communication. The document stressed that linking Aadhaar and mobile numbers would help achieve

## Election Commission Directs Efforts to Link Aadhaar with Electoral Roll Data

this goal. Kumar further stated that elections were a "first step" in national service and assured that the ECI would take all necessary actions to fulfill its constitutional duties.

The directive also highlighted the need for officials to work closely with birth and death registration authorities to ensure regular updates of the electoral roll. Kumar urged the booth-level officers to conduct door-to-door surveys and ensure that every Indian citizen above the age of 18 is enrolled as an elector, in line with the Constitution.

This latest directive appears to contradict the ECI's earlier position, which

maintained that linking Aadhaar with the voter ID database was not mandatory. While the commission has repeatedly stated that the Aadhaar linkage was voluntary, the new instructions indicate a significant push to link the two data sets in an effort to strengthen the electoral process.

The move is likely to stir debates on privacy concerns, especially with growing discussions around the use of Aadhaar for various government-related services. However, the ECI maintains that these steps are necessary for the proper identification of electors and to ensure the integrity of the electoral system.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court, on Wednesday, directed tech giants Google, X, and YouTube to take down controversial content posted by YouTuber Shyam Meera Singh about Isha Foundation, founded by spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev. The content in question included a video and tweets titled "What's Happening in Sadhguru (Jaggi Vasudev)'s Ashram?" which were posted by Singh on February 24. Justice Subramonium Prasad, who was presiding over the case, also issued an order restraining Singh from publishing the video on any other social media platforms. The court instructed the defendants—Google, X, and YouTube—to remove the video and prevent its fur-

## Delhi High Court Orders online platforms to remove controversial video on Isha Foundation

ther dissemination. The defamation suit was filed by Isha Foundation, which claimed that the video and tweets were defamatory, scandalous, and had severely harmed the foundation's reputation. According to the foundation's plea, the video garnered 9.5 lakh views on YouTube and generated over 13,500 comments, spreading the controversial claims. The foundation argued that Singh's allegations were baseless and maliciously timed just before Maha Shivratri, when Union Home Minister Amit Shah was scheduled to attend an event at the foundation's headquarters.

Senior advocate Manik Dogra, representing Isha Foundation, argued that Singh had intentionally sensationalized the issue to gain more views on his YouTube channel. The foundation also sought ₹3 crore in damages, emphasizing that Singh had targeted the foundation with the intent to create unnecessary public uproar. The court's ruling has now put an immediate stop to the further publication and circulation of Singh's controversial video, addressing concerns over the impact on the reputation of Isha Foundation.

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## CM Rekha Gupta-Led BJP Government Moves To Withdraw Cases Against Lt Governor

Under the AAP government, the Delhi administration and the LG frequently clashed, with accusations from AAP that the LG was obstructing the implementation of policies. In contrast, the LG's office contended that AAP was not cooperating with the Centre. This ongoing discord, especially over issues like the control of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission and the appointment of public prosecutors in the Delhi riots cases, contributed to the AAP's electoral defeat in last month's Delhi Assembly elections. The AAP was reduced to 22 seats, while the BJP, led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, secured 48 seats, marking the return of BJP rule after over 25 years. The disputes also extended to the

approval process for sending Delhi teachers abroad for training. The AAP accused the LG of placing unnecessary conditions on the program, while the LG countered that the Delhi government had failed to provide adequate documentation on previous training programs.

Sources within the Delhi government have indicated that the withdrawal of these cases is part of a broader effort to prioritize governance and smoothen relations with the LG's office and the Centre, signaling a potential end to the legal confrontations that dominated the previous administration.

## "When Will We Get Free Cylinder" : AAP Protests Against Delhi Government

The BJP had promised to provide monthly financial aid of Rs 2,500 under the Mahila Samridhi Yojana and offer LPG cylinders at a reduced price of Rs 500 to low-income women. Additionally, the party had pledged to give one free cylinder to women on Holi and Diwali. With Holi just around the corner, many women are expressing frustration at the unfulfilled promise.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta reassured the public that the BJP-led

government would fulfill all its promises, including those related to women's welfare. She emphasized that Modi's government was the only one to approve 33% reservation for women, pledging that women's welfare and security would remain a top priority.

However, AAP MLA Gopal Rai accused the BJP of engaging in a "blame game" to avoid fulfilling their electoral promises, including the tabling of key reports in the Assembly.

## NEP a saffron policy, delimitation exercise for BJP's benefit: Tamil Nadu CM Stalin

The political rift between the DMK-led Tamil Nadu government and the Centre over the NEP has deepened in recent weeks, with the issue of the three-language policy at the forefront of the debate. Stalin's statements came amid protests by DMK members in the Lok Sabha, triggered by comments from Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, which accused the

Tamil Nadu government of dishonesty regarding the implementation of the PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme.

The battle over the NEP and its implications for Tamil Nadu's educational future remains a point of contention between the state government and the Centre.

## Atishi Demands Fair and Impartial Budget Session from Delhi Assembly Speaker



- Accuses Speaker Vijender Gupta of favoring BJP MLAs
- Claims BJP got 190 minutes while opposition got only 33
- Says AAP received just 14% of speaking time instead of 32%
- Urges impartiality to ensure balanced legislative debates

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Atishi has strongly criticized the management of speaking time in the Delhi Assembly and demanded that the upcoming budget session, scheduled for March 24, be conducted in a "fair and impartial" manner. In a letter to Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta, Atishi expressed her concerns over what she claimed were significant disparities in the amount

of speaking time allocated to opposition members during previous sessions.

Atishi alleged that BJP MLAs were given ample time to speak, with some even being allowed to talk uninterrupted for over 20 minutes, while opposition MLAs, including herself, were limited to just 3-4 minutes each. She cited the discussion on the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report as an example, where 18 BJP MLAs were allotted a total

of 190 minutes, while only five opposition members were given a mere 33 minutes.

In her letter, Atishi pointed out that, based on the proportion of seats, the AAP should have been allotted 32% of the speaking time, but in practice, the party was given only 14%. She argued that this imbalance severely undermines the opposition's ability to participate meaningfully in legislative debates.

The former Delhi Chief Minister also condemned the conduct of previous sessions, accusing Speaker Gupta of fostering a "biased environment" that sidelined opposition voices. Atishi called for the upcoming budget session to be conducted with fairness, ensuring that all parties, regardless of their affiliation, have an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussions.

## Shashi Tharoor's Selfie with Pinarayi Vijayan Sparks Speculation Amid Congress Rift

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has shared a selfie with Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, a rare display of camaraderie despite their long-standing political rivalry. The post, shared on Tharoor's X handle, has raised eyebrows, especially coming just days after his praise for the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government caused a stir within his party.

Tharoor posted three images on Wednesday morning, including two selfies with CM Vijayan and Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar. These photos were clicked during a dinner hosted by Governor Arlekar to discuss the challenges faced by Kerala. Tharoor expressed his appreciation for the dinner, calling it a positive step toward collective action to address the state's issues.

"Greatly appreciate the gesture of @KeralaGovernor Rajendra Arlekar in hosting all Kerala MPs to a dinner discussion last night on the problems being faced by the state and the need for collective action. @CMOKerala @pinarayivijayan also attended and spoke briefly," Tharoor wrote. He added that this gesture augured well for efforts to develop the state beyond political differences.

Tharoor's recent remarks praising the LDF government's handling of Kerala's economy and industrial growth sparked backlash from the Congress,



which has been the most vocal critic of the Vijayan government. Some state Congress leaders accused him of presenting a "distorted" political view, prompting speculation of a rift between Tharoor and his party's leadership.

Tharoor defended his comments, explaining that he was simply highlighting Kerala's progress. However, controversy intensified when reports surfaced about the closure of over 42,000 MSMEs in Kerala, leading Tharoor to express disappointment about the state's startup landscape.

To quell the rift rumors, Congress attempted to show unity, with Rahul Gandhi sharing videos and photos featuring Tharoor and other senior leaders, underscoring their collective stance.

## "Don't Need Hindu Certification...": Mamata Banerjee vs BJP In Bengal Assembly

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) engaged in a heated exchange in the state Assembly on Wednesday, trading accusations of communalism and making provocative statements. The confrontation, which included angry protests by BJP lawmakers outside the Assembly, came amid rising political tensions ahead of the 2026 state elections.

Banerjee, in a fiery speech, responded to BJP's Suwendu Adhikari, who had labeled her government as "anti-Hindu." The Chief Minister strongly refuted these claims, stating, "I'm a Hindu... I don't need certification from the BJP." She also accused the BJP of targeting Muslims during the holy month of Ramzan, accusing them of trying to distract from the country's economic troubles by making com-

munal statements.

Emphasizing India's secularism, Ba-



nerjee reminded the Assembly that sovereignty, secularism, and pluralism are foundational to the nation's democracy. She reaffirmed that every citizen has the right to practice their religion, whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, or Parsi, and her responsibility as Chief Minister is to protect and serve all communities. "Do not play the 'Hindu card'," she warned the BJP.

The clash escalated when BJP MLA Shankar Ghosh from Siliguri interrupted Banerjee, recalling controversial remarks made by senior Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Firhad Hakim in July 2024. Hakim had reportedly made an offensive comment about non-Muslims, which the TMC condemned, and he later apologized. Banerjee defended her actions, claiming that she had personally warned Hakim about his comments.

## Amit Shah to visit Mizoram on March 15



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to visit Mizoram on March 15, where he will attend a significant event marking the shifting of Assam Rifles establishments from Aizawl to Zokhawsang, located approximately 15 kilometers from the state capital. The event is part of a broader plan to improve the infrastructure and security arrangements in the region, an official confirmed on Wednesday.

Shah, who will be on a three-day tour of Assam from March 14 to March 16, will make a brief stop in Mizoram for this day-long visit. The relocation

of the Assam Rifles establishments is part of the government's efforts to enhance the operational efficiency of security forces in the Northeast and improve the logistical framework for the region's security operations.

The shifting of the Assam Rifles establishments is expected to bolster the forces' presence in the region, allowing for better coordination and faster response to security concerns. Zokhawsang's proximity to Aizawl will also ensure ease of access and improve the overall effectiveness of Assam Rifles operations.

Amit Shah's visit to Mizoram

is part of a series of high-profile engagements that reflect the government's continued focus on enhancing security infrastructure in India's northeastern states. This visit also underscores the central government's commitment to addressing regional concerns and improving the welfare of residents in Mizoram and the wider Northeast region.

The shift of Assam Rifles establishments, which has been a topic of discussion for some time, holds significant strategic value and is expected to contribute to the overall stability of the area. Shah's visit will likely involve discussions about the broader security framework in Mizoram and neighboring regions, reinforcing the central government's support for regional development and security priorities.

This trip follows the Union Home Minister's recent focus on strengthening relations with the northeastern states, ensuring that local concerns and national security issues are addressed comprehensively.

## Yogi Adityanath's Photo At Pro-Monarchist Rally Sparks Controversy In Nepal



TPN Correspondent | Kathmandu

A controversy has erupted in Nepal after photographs of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were displayed at a pro-monarchist rally held to welcome former king Gyanendra Shah. The rally, organized by the pro-monarchist Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), took place on Sunday when Gyanendra, aged 77, landed at Tribhuvan International Airport after a religious trip to various parts of the country.

Hundreds of Gyanendra's supporters, including members of the RPP, greeted him outside the airport. The rally, aimed at showing support for the reinstatement of the monarchy in Nepal, featured motorcyclists carrying Gyanendra's photo and national flags. Howev-

er, some supporters also displayed photographs of Yogi Adityanath alongside Gyanendra, which sparked immediate criticism.

The inclusion of Adityanath's image in the rally did not sit well with several political factions and the general public, with many voicing their displeasure on social media. Following the backlash, RPP spokesperson Gyanendra Shahi alleged that the display of Adityanath's photograph was a deliberate attempt to undermine the pro-monarchist movement, accusing the K.P. Oli-led government of orchestrating the move.

Shahi claimed that the display of Adityanath's photo was directed by Bishnu Rimal, the chief advisor to Prime Minister K.P. Oli, who allegedly suggest-

ed the move. However, Rimal denied the accusations, calling it disinformation. Prime Minister Oli, without directly naming Adityanath, clarified that his government does not use photographs of foreign leaders in rallies.

Gyanendra's supporters have been increasingly vocal about reinstating the monarchy, particularly since his comments during Democracy Day in February, where he said, "The time has come for us to assume responsibility to protect the country and bring about national unity." The pro-monarchist movement has gained traction following the abolition of the monarchy in 2008 after the People's Movement, with Gyanendra's loyalists rallying in Kathmandu and Pokhara in recent days.

## Delhi To Host 20-Nation Security Meet, Ukraine, Gaza Wars To Top Agenda



- India-Canada tensions over Khalistani issue to loom over discussions
- Focus on intelligence-sharing against terrorism and cyber threats
- US intelligence chief Tulsi Gabbard to attend Raisina Dialogue

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Top intelligence officials from around the world are set to convene in India this weekend for a crucial security conclave focused on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the escalating conflict in the Middle East. Chaired by India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, the high-profile meeting will see the participation of intelligence heads from 20 nations, including Tulsi Gabbard, the US Director of National Intelligence, Daniel Rogers, the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and Richard Moore, the head of Britain's MI6.

The timing of the conclave is notable, as it coincides with a diplomatic rift between India and Canada following the 2023 killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Vancouver. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had accused Indian agents of being involved in the murder, a claim New Delhi has strongly rejected. As a result, tensions between the two countries have flared, culminating in the expulsion of diplomats by both sides.

A key focus of the conclave will be enhancing intelligence-sharing to combat terrorism, transnational crimes, and terror financing, along with addressing crimes in the digital space. Officials are also expected to discuss ways to improve collaboration on these issues in the context of emerging global security threats.

While in India, Gabbard is also set to attend the Raisina Dialogue, an important forum for geopolitical discussions, and meet with Indian leaders, including NSA Doval. During her visit, she is expected to emphasize the need for deeper Indo-US cooperation, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, in light of China's growing assertiveness.

The conclave provides a significant platform for India to address ongoing tensions with Canada over the Nijjar case and the alleged assassination plot against Sikh separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in the US. As intelligence chiefs from various countries gather, their deliberations could have far-reaching implications for global security and diplomatic relations.

## Delhi Police Bust Fake Call Center Scam Targeting Job Seekers



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi Police recently exposed a fraudulent call centre operation that preyed on job-seekers, arresting 18 individuals involved in the scam. The accused posed as HR representatives from well-known banks and companies, deceiving victims by offering fake job opportunities in exchange for registration fees and course charges.

According to officials, the criminals operated by impersonating HR managers or recruiters from reputable online job portals. They promised employment to victims, asking them to pay a fee upfront for registration and additional costs related to job training or courses. However, once the money was collected, the job opportunities never materialized, leaving victims empty-handed.

Deputy Commissioner of Police for Outer District, Sachin Sharma, con-

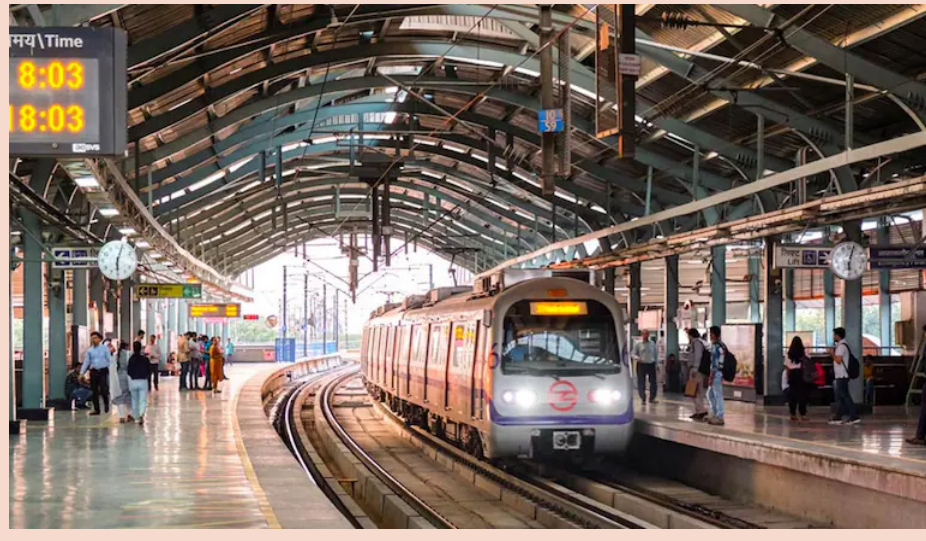
firmed the details of the operation and assured that the arrested individuals would face legal action. The scam targeted job-seekers looking for legitimate employment opportunities, exploiting their hopes and vulnerabilities in a difficult job market.

The fake call centres were well-organized, with perpetrators working across multiple locations and using advanced tactics to deceive their victims. They operated primarily online, using fake email IDs and phone numbers to give the appearance of legitimacy.

The police have been investigating the case, and efforts are underway to identify and apprehend others involved in the scam. Authorities have urged the public to be cautious when dealing with online job offers and to verify the legitimacy of companies before making any payments.

This scam highlights the increasing trend of cyber fraud targeting vulnerable individuals. It serves as a reminder of the need for greater awareness and vigilance when navigating the job market, particularly in the age of digital recruitment platforms.

## Delhi Metro Announces Revised Schedule for Holi 2025



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has announced changes to its metro services for Holi 2025. On Friday, March 14, metro trains will start operating at 2:30 PM instead of the usual early morning hours. This revised schedule applies to all Delhi Metro lines, including the Airport Express Line. DMRC clarified on social media that there will be no

metro services available until 2:30 PM on the day of the festival.

In a statement shared via X (formerly Twitter), DMRC informed commuters that metro services will begin from terminal stations on all lines at 2:30 PM and continue as usual thereafter. The typical schedule, which sees metro services starting around 5:00 AM and running until 11:00 PM, will not be in

effect on Holi.

Holi 2025 is set to be celebrated on Friday, March 14, with the prelude of Holika Dahan, or Choti Holi, taking place on the evening of March 13. Holi is a vibrant festival that brings people together through music, dance, and the throwing of colored powders. It marks the arrival of spring and symbolizes the victory of good over evil.

Holi is a two-day celebration. The first day, Holika Dahan, involves the lighting of bonfires, where devotees pray for peace and happiness. On the second day, known as Dhuleti, the colorful festivities take place as people engage in playful water and powder fights to spread love and joy.

Commuters in Delhi planning to travel on Holi should take note of the altered metro timings and plan their journeys accordingly. The DMRC's decision ensures the safety and well-being of passengers while allowing people to enjoy the festivities.

## Winter Humidity in Delhi May Lead to Significant Underestimation of PM1 Pollution



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A recent study published in npj Clean Air has revealed that the fine particulate matter (PM1) in Delhi's air could be underestimated by up to 20% due to the hygroscopic growth, a process where these particles absorb moisture from the humid air during winter months. This underestimation is especially significant in winter, when the city experiences high humidity levels. The findings are particularly relevant for New Delhi, which has consistently been ranked as the world's most polluted capital city, according to the 2024 World Air Quality report by IQAir.

Researchers, including those from the University of Birmingham, UK, explained that fine particles, particularly those under one micron in diameter, swell as they absorb moisture. This increase in size reduces the efficiency of air sampling devices, leading to a potential underreporting of PM1 pollution levels. The study emphasizes the importance of accounting for this hygroscopic growth when assessing air quality, particularly in regions like Delhi, where pollution levels are extreme and humidity can skew measurement accuracy.

PM1 particles are dangerous because they are small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, posing severe health risks. The study author, Ying Chen from the University of Birmingham, highlighted that it is crucial to consider this phenomenon of hygroscopic growth when evaluating air quality, as it can significantly distort the pollution data.

The research also pointed out that the greatest underestimates occur during the winter months, particularly during the rush hours of December and January. During this time, both pollution levels and humidity are at their highest, resulting in underreported concentrations of PM1. The study suggests that the actual PM1 concentrations during these periods could be higher by as much as 50 micrograms per cubic meter, representing an underestimation of up to 20%.

This new understanding of air quality in Delhi underscores the need for more accurate pollution measurement techniques, especially during the winter months when both air quality and humidity are at their worst.

## New Delhi station stampede: Govt says ₹2.01 crore paid to 33 affected families

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The government has announced that a total of ₹2.01 crore has been distributed to 33 families affected by the stampede at New Delhi Railway Station on February 15. In a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw confirmed the disbursement of compensation to the victims.

The ex gratia payments included ₹10 lakh each to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the tragic incident. Additionally, ₹2.50 lakh was given to each of the grievously injured individuals, while those with minor injuries received ₹1 lakh each.

The stampede occurred in the evening of February 15, during a rush of devotees heading to the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. Though Vaishnaw did not specify the exact number of fatalities or injuries in his response, earlier reports indicated that the incident re-

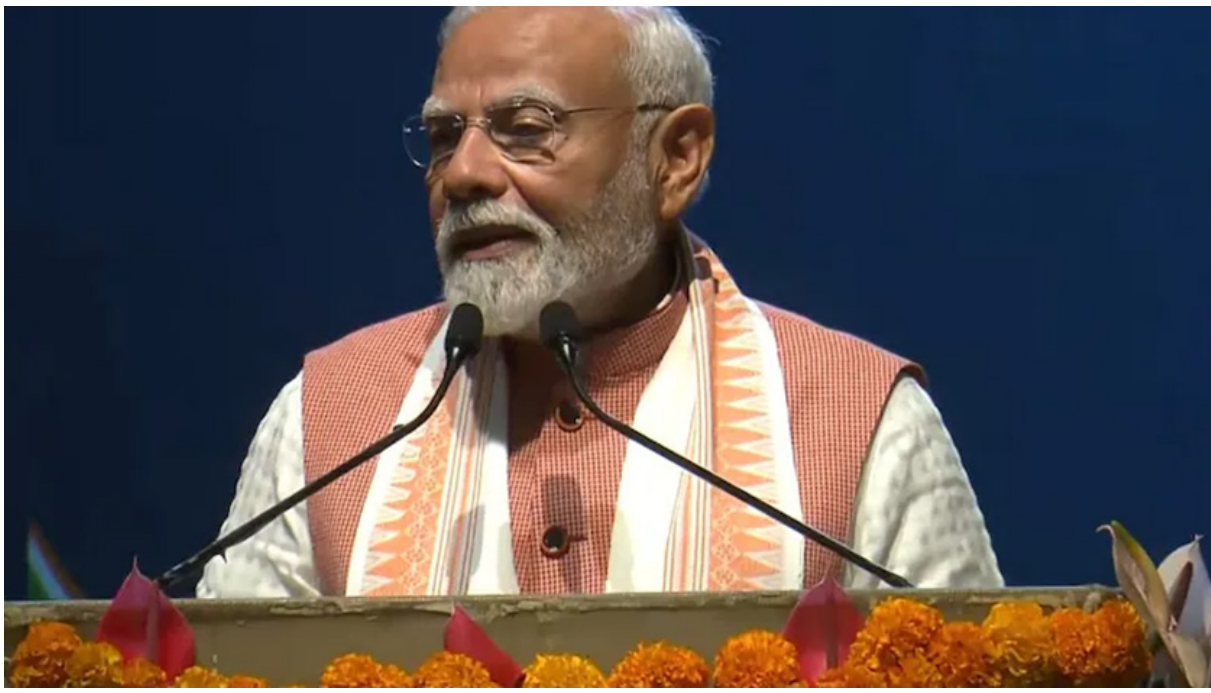
sulted in 18 deaths and 15 injuries.

In response to the incident, the government has ordered a high-level inquiry to investigate the cause of the stampede. Vaishnaw also provided further details regarding the infrastructure improvements made for the Maha Kumbh Mela. Over ₹5,000 crore was invested in the Prayagraj region to improve rail capacity, including the construction of road underpasses, overpasses, and the doubling of railway lines.

During the period of the Maha Kumbh, from January 13 to February 28, more than 17,300 trains were operated, carrying over 4.24 crore passengers. This included over 3,000 special trains, a significant increase compared to the 694 trains that operated during the 2019 Kumbh. For the first time, Ring Rail services connecting key religious sites such as Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Chitrakoot were operated daily during the event.



## "Defining Chapter In India's Freedom": PM Modi On Dandi March Anniversary



- PM Modi Pays Tribute to Dandi March Participants on Its Anniversary
- Calls it a pivotal moment in India's independence struggle
- Gandhi's march protested British salt tax, promoting self-reliance
- Modi praises marchers' courage, truth, and non-violence

TPN Correspondent  
| New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid tribute to the participants of the historic Dandi March, led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930, calling it a pivotal moment in India's struggle for independence.

The Dandi March, which began on this day from Sabarmati Ashram, was a direct protest against the British-imposed salt tax. Gandhi's decision to march with his followers to Dandi marked a turning point in India's freedom movement, rallying citizens across the nation in support of self-reliance and resistance against British rule.

Modi, sharing his tribute on social media platform X, said, "Today, we pay homage to all those who participated in the historic Dandi March, a defining chapter in India's freedom struggle. Led by Mahatma Gandhi, this March ignited a nationwide movement for self-reliance and independence."

The Prime Minister emphasized the significant values upheld during the march, noting, "The courage, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to truth and non-violence of all those who took part in the Dandi March continue to inspire generations."

The Dandi March mobilized a massive wave of public sup-

port and is seen as one of the key moments in the Indian independence movement. It brought attention to the oppressive nature of British colonial policies and played a crucial role in uniting the masses for the cause of freedom. Through this act of non-violent protest, Gandhi galvanized the nation, promoting the ideals of self-sufficiency and swaraj (self-rule).

The march marked a seminal moment in the Indian struggle, showcasing the strength of peaceful resistance. Its impact continues to resonate today, inspiring movements for justice, equality, and freedom across the world.

## 549 Indians rescued from cyber scam centres in Myanmar

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India has successfully repatriated 549 of its citizens who were freed from cybercrime centres along the Myanmar-Thailand border, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Wednesday. The return was facilitated through two flights operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF), which brought the citizens back from Thailand.



The individuals, hailing from various Indian states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh, had been lured to Thailand or Myanmar with false job promises in the IT sector. Once in these countries, they were trafficked to cybercrime centres primarily run by Chinese criminal gangs. These centres were located in lawless border regions of Myanmar, areas that are not controlled by the military junta.

The repatriation came after a significant crackdown on the

cybercrime operations along the Myanmar-Thailand border. The Indian nationals, along with citizens from other South and Southeast Asian nations, were rescued from Myanmar's Myawaddy region and brought to Mae Sot in Thailand. They were housed temporarily in detention centres in Thailand before being repatriated to India.

On Monday and Tuesday, 283 and 266 Indian nationals, respectively, were flown back to India aboard IAF's C-17 heavy lift aircraft. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Rand-

hir Jaiswal confirmed the repatriation and expressed gratitude to the Thai authorities for their support in facilitating the safe return of the citizens.

This effort is part of the Indian government's ongoing commitment to protecting its citizens from human trafficking and cybercrime operations. The successful repatriation of these 549 individuals highlights the coordinated efforts between India, Thailand, and Myanmar in combatting cross-border crime and ensuring the safe return of the victims.

## Himachal Pradesh Education Department Issues Dress Code Guidelines for Teachers

TPN Correspondent | Shimla

The Himachal Pradesh Education Department has introduced a new circular recommending a dress code for teachers, aimed at promoting dignity and decorum in schools. State Education Minister Rohit Thakur elaborated on the rationale behind the decision, emphasizing that teachers, who hold a special place in society, should present themselves in a dignified and respectable manner. "This has a positive impact on society, particularly on students," Thakur explained in an interview with ANI.

However, the minister clarified that the dress code would not be strictly enforced across the state. He pointed out that a school in Hamirpur had independently implemented such a dress code, highlighting that it was a voluntary initiative

rather than a mandate. "Any good initiative should be appreciated. While it may not be imposed throughout the state, the key point is that teachers should wear attire that upholds the decorum and dignity of their profession," Thakur added.

The decision is seen as a step toward ensuring that the teaching community maintains its revered position in society. While not mandatory, the guidelines are expected to encourage a positive and professional atmosphere in schools.

In a separate issue, another



development within the education sector sparked controversy when a letter from the Deputy Director of Elementary Education directed schools to organize magic shows and deposit the funds raised into the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Minister Thakur clarified that this letter was not an official directive but a communication from the deputy director, and swiftly ordered its withdrawal. "It was not a notification; it was merely a letter, and I have instructed for its immediate retraction," Thakur stated. He also assured that strict action would be taken against the official responsible for issuing the letter.

This incident has raised questions about the administrative oversight within the department, though Thakur's prompt action to withdraw the letter has been seen as an appropriate corrective measure.

## Adani Realty Places Highest Bid for Redevelopment of Motilal Nagar in Mumbai



TPN Correspondent  
| Mumbai

Adani Realty Group, which is already involved in the ambitious Dharavi slum redevelopment project, has now placed the highest bid for the redevelopment of Motilal Nagar, a large residential and commercial area in Mumbai. The group has bid Rs 36,000 crore for the redevelopment of Motilal Nagar, which spans across 143 acres in Goregaon (West).

Motilal Nagar is made up of three significant settlements—Motilal Nagar 1, 2, and 3—comprising a mix of residential and commercial

properties. These areas are among the largest in the city and have long been in need of redevelopment due to their outdated infrastructure and overcrowded conditions.

Sources reveal that Adani Realty's bid is the highest among those submitted for the project, marking a significant step forward for the company's expanding real estate interests in Mumbai. The redevelopment of Motilal Nagar is expected to transform the area, providing modern infrastructure, better housing, and commercial spaces that could drive growth in the region.

This project comes on the heels of Adani Realty's involvement in the high-profile Dharavi redevelopment project, another major urban renewal effort in Mumbai. The company's success in securing such large-scale redevelopment projects is seen as a testament to its growing presence in Mumbai's real estate market.

The Motilal Nagar redevelopment is expected to offer state-of-the-art residential complexes, improved amenities, and commercial spaces that will attract both investors and residents. The project aligns with Mumbai's ongoing efforts to address its housing shortage and revitalize older urban areas.

With the approval of the bid, Adani Realty's plans to redevelop Motilal Nagar could significantly reshape the area, providing a new standard of living and contributing to the city's economic growth.

## Ranya Rao's Bail Plea: Actor Alleges Verbal Torture and Denial of Sleep in Custody



TPN Correspondent | Bangalore

Kannada actor Ranya Rao, arrested last week at Bengaluru airport for smuggling over 14 kilograms of gold into India, has made serious claims about her treatment in custody. Speaking in a special court handling economic offences, Rao alleged that she was "denied her right to sleep" during the period between her arrest on March 3 and 7 a.m. on March 4, when she was questioned three times.

Rao's lawyer, Kiran Javali, argued that despite being a woman, she was not allowed

to rest, which violated her rights. This claim follows her previous allegations that she was "verbally tortured and threatened" while in custody. Photographs shared online showed Rao with bruised eyes and a swollen face, prompting her to express being "emotionally broken" in court. However, the arrest memo mentioned that the injuries were pre-existing.

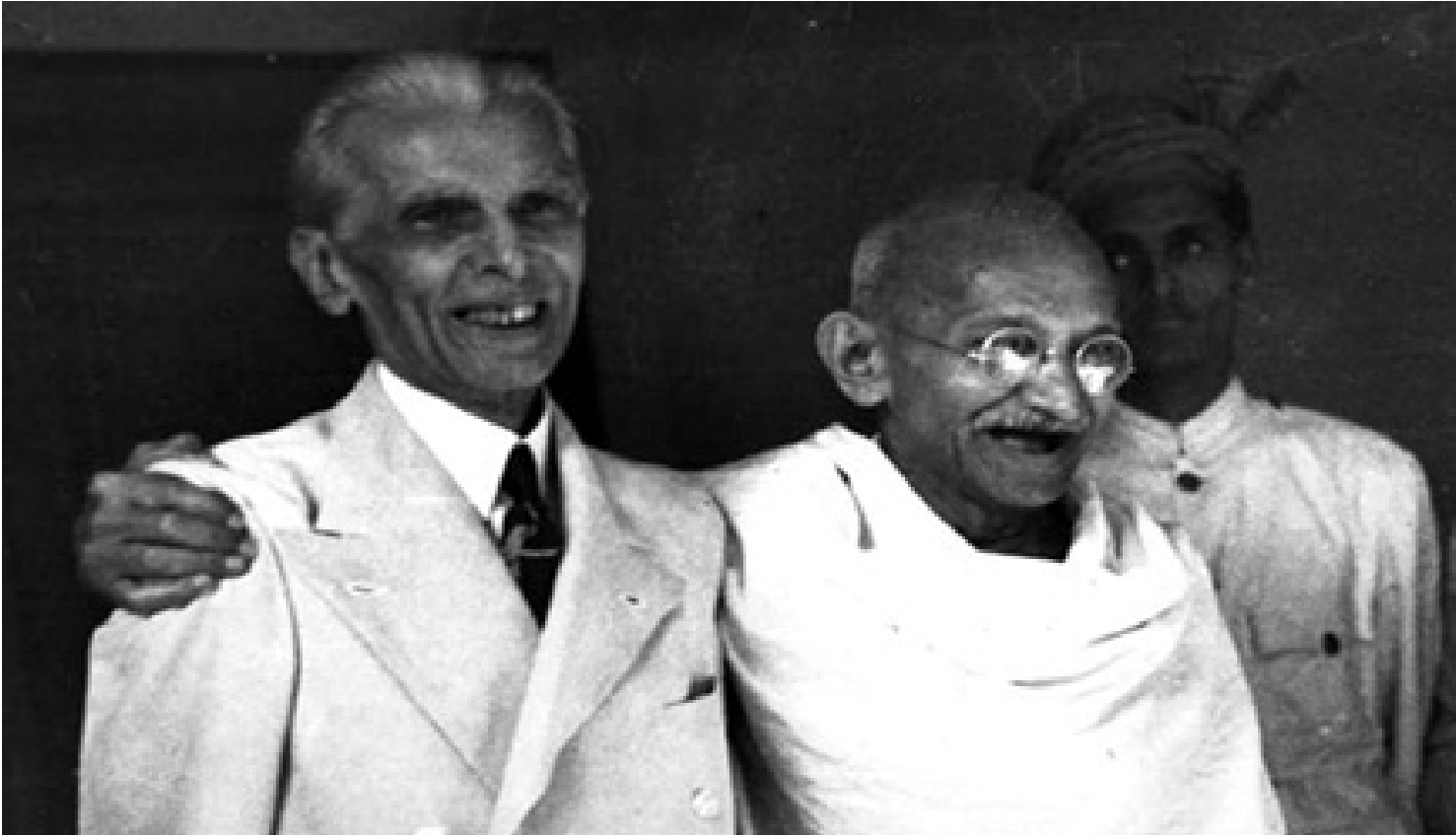
Rao's legal team also highlighted multiple protocol violations during her arrest, including the failure to inform her of her rights. The lawyer contended that her statement to authorities was "not voluntary" and should be considered inadmissible. Furthermore, they pointed out that the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) did not adhere to the required procedure under Section 102 of the Customs Act, which mandates the immediate production of an arrested individual before a

magistrate upon request.

Rao's lawyer compared her case to others, arguing that courts grant bail to women even in serious crimes like murder, and urged the court to grant her bail given the lesser punishment involved in her case.

Ranya Rao, the stepdaughter of senior police officer Ramachandra Rao, was arrested after returning from Dubai with gold bars worth Rs 14.56 crore. Authorities believe she was part of a gold smuggling network, taking large commissions for her role in the operation. Investigations also uncovered gold and cash worth several crore from her residence. Rao's stepfather has denied any involvement in the crime, stating he was unaware of her actions. The Karnataka government has ordered a separate inquiry into him.

# Why Pakistan Rejected Gandhi's Non-Violence?



The narrative surrounding India's struggle for independence often highlights Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, or ahimsa, as the decisive force that compelled the British to relinquish their hold on India. The Congress party has played a significant role in promoting this view, suggesting that Gandhi's teachings were the cornerstone of the freedom movement. However, this perspective can obscure the complex realities of the time, particularly the violent upheaval that accompanied the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. Partition led to one of the largest mass migrations in history, resulting in the deaths of millions and the displacement of countless others—primarily Hindus and Sikhs fleeing

to India and Muslims moving to Pakistan. This tragic chapter underscores the limitations of non-violence in the face of deep-seated communal tensions and animosities. While Gandhi's teachings profoundly influenced India, they did not resonate in the same way across the border in Pakistan. Why did the people of Pakistan not embrace the principles of ahimsa and non-violence that Gandhi championed? While many Indians found solace and strength in Gandhi's message, the response from Pakistanis was markedly different. Attempts by Indian leaders to engage with Pakistan on the basis of peace and reconciliation often fell flat, as they failed to address the underlying hostilities



**Dr. Buragadda Srinadh**

and grievances exacerbated by partition. The historical context of Pa-

- The division of the country also divided Gandhiji's philosophy of Non-Violence, with Pakistan embracing violence while India upheld Non-Violence.
- Pakistan resorted to violence to instigate unrest in Kashmir and Punjab by supporting separatist movements, and now it is grappling with the consequences of its actions.
- The very survival of Pakistan is in jeopardy. It is crucial for Pakistan to relinquish its claim over occupied Kashmir and seek assistance from India to address its internal challenges.
- India, under the inspiring leadership of Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi, stands as a global advocate for peace, desires people from both sides to coexist harmoniously and thrive together with peace and prosperity

kistan's creation—rooted in a desire for a separate identity and autonomy—contributed to a mindset resistant to Gandhian ideals. Had the people of Pakistan genuinely adopted the principles of non-violence, the bloodshed of partition might have been prevented, saving countless lives. The stark reality is that the legacy of partition continues to shape India-Pakistan relations, with lingering animosities and conflicts persisting for decades. As we reflect on over seventy years of independence, it is increasingly important for the current generation to understand the complexities of the Pakistani mindset and the historical factors that have influenced it. The failure of Gandhi to instill the

concept of non-violence in Pakistan raises critical questions about the willingness of its people to embrace such ideals. It invites a deeper examination of the cultural, political, and social dynamics that have shaped Pakistan since its inception. Understanding these realities is essential for fostering meaningful dialogue and reconciliation between the two nations. As we move forward, achieving lasting peace will require more than just the promotion of non-violence—it will demand a genuine willingness among people of all faiths to accept it as a fundamental truth and way of life. In an increasingly fragile world, peaceful coexistence is not just desirable but essential for the welfare of all humanity.

## Does Congress Stand a Chance for Revival in Gujarat?

THE POINT DESK

Rahul Gandhi has set his sights on reviving Congress in Gujarat, boldly asserting that the party will defeat the BJP in the 2027 assembly elections. However, history and electoral trends suggest that reclaiming Gujarat after three decades out of power is an uphill task. While Gandhi acknowledges internal sabotage as a significant hurdle, his ambitious 'Mission Gujarat' will require more than just replacing a handful of leaders. Congress must undergo a deep structural transformation if it hopes to challenge the BJP's dominance in the state.

### The 2022 Setback

Gujarat has been BJP's stronghold for decades, and the 2022 assembly election only reinforced this. Congress suffered a massive blow, securing just 17 seats—a steep fall from its 2017 tally of 77. Its vote share plummeted to 27%, a drastic decline from 42% in 2017. Meanwhile, the BJP secured a record 156 seats with a 53% vote share, while AAP, despite being a newcomer, managed to bag 13% votes, largely at the expense of Congress. This downward trajectory is particularly concerning as Congress had, for years, maintained a steady vote share between 38% and 42%. However, internal defections, weak leadership, and failure to connect with Gujarat's evolving electorate have steadily eroded its support. The party now finds itself struggling not just against BJP's electoral machinery but also against an increasingly competitive opposition space.

### Fixing the Leadership Crisis

Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks about certain Congress leaders being in "collusion" with the BJP are not entirely unfounded. Over the years, many Congress MLAs have defected to the BJP, weakening the party from within. Even in the current assembly, Congress has already lost four MLAs to the BJP, reducing its tally to just 13. However, placing the blame solely on individual defectors is not enough. The Congress high command itself has repeatedly failed to retain key leaders. After the 2017 elections, young faces like Hardik Patel and Alpesh Thakor, who had once energized the party, left for the BJP due to dissatisfaction with Congress's senior leadership. Patel accused the party of lacking seriousness, while Thakor cited the absence of strong leadership and representation for OBCs. To regain lost ground, Congress must rebuild from within, promoting leaders who are genuinely committed to the party's ideology and grassroots work. Leadership in Gujarat cannot be dictated solely from Delhi—it requires strong state-level figures who can connect with local voters and challenge the BJP's dominance effectively.

### Winning Over Urban Voters



One of Congress's biggest weaknesses in Gujarat is its inability to make inroads into urban constituencies. While the party has traditionally held a decent presence in rural areas, BJP's grip on urban Gujarat has remained unshaken. In the 2017 elections, Congress led BJP 62-43 in rural seats but was heavily outnumbered in urban areas, trailing 15-57. Major cities like Ahmedabad, Vadodara, and Gandhinagar remain BJP bastions, where Congress has struggled to appeal to the dominant middle class.

To change this, Congress must rebrand itself as a party that speaks to urban aspirations. BJP's narrative of being a pro-business, development-driven party has resonated strongly with Gujarat's middle class, while Congress is often perceived as leaning too much towards populism. A targeted approach addressing urban infrastructure, employment, and economic opportunities could help shift this perception.

### AAP's Decline—An Opportunity?

The emergence of AAP in Gujarat further complicated Congress's position in 2022, as a significant chunk of Congress's traditional vote base drifted towards the new entrant. However, AAP's recent setbacks, particularly in Delhi, and the tarnishing of Arvind Kejriwal's 'clean' image, could create an opening for Congress to reclaim lost ground. But this will only be possible if Congress presents itself as a viable alternative, rather than being a party that merely benefits from BJP-AAP conflicts. Reviving Congress in Gujarat is not a short-term project—it requires consistent effort, organizational restructuring, and a shift in strategy. Removing inactive or compromised leaders is just the first step. The party must build a strong leadership team at the state level, re-engage with its lost voter base, and craft a compelling narrative that resonates with Gujarat's electorate. Without a strategic, long-term vision, Congress risks remaining a distant challenger in a state where BJP's dominance seems unshakable.

## Could Canada Ever Join the European Union?

### A Bold Idea with Many Hurdles

The idea of Canada joining the European Union (EU) has recently gained traction, with a notable 44% of Canadians supporting such a move, according to a recent Abacus Data survey. This speculation has been fueled by strained US-Canada relations, particularly under President Donald Trump, and the EU's refusal to outright dismiss the possibility of Canadian membership. However, while the idea is intriguing, several significant obstacles stand in the way, ranging from geography to historical precedent and EU membership criteria.

### The Appeal of EU Membership for Canada

Canada and the EU already share strong economic and cultural ties. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) has solidified Canada's position as a key trading partner of the EU, making it the second-largest destination for Canadian exports after the United States. Additionally, Canada shares linguistic ties with Europe, with both English and French being official languages of the EU. Beyond economics, shared democratic values and a commitment to human rights make Canada a natural ideological ally to the EU. European Commission spokeswoman Paula Pinho acknowledged this alignment, noting that Canada and the EU are "like-minded partners which share many, many, many values and also strong historical connections." Given these factors, some Canadians may see EU membership as an opportunity to further align with a stable and influential economic bloc, especially as tensions with the US create uncertainty about the future of North American trade relations.

### Criteria and Geographic Challenges

Despite the benefits of closer ties, the fundamental challenge remains: Canada is not in Europe. Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union states that any "European state" that respects democratic values can apply for membership. However, the treaty does not define what constitutes a "European state," leaving room for interpretation. Historical precedents suggest that geography matters. In 1987, Morocco's application to join the EU was rejected explicitly on the grounds that it was not a European country. In contrast, countries such as Ukraine, Moldova,



and Georgia—though outside the EU's current borders—have had their applications accepted for consideration due to their geographic and cultural proximity to Europe. Canada's closest territorial connection to Europe is Greenland, an autonomous Danish territory. While this link is notable, it is unlikely to be enough to override the EU's general preference for maintaining a geographically coherent membership.

### Economic and Strategic Considerations

Given Canada's existing free trade agreement with the EU, formal membership may not be necessary to deepen economic ties. The CETA agreement already allows Canada to enjoy significant trade benefits without assuming the responsibilities and constraints of EU membership. Furthermore, EU membership would require Canada to adopt EU regulations, policies, and potentially even the euro. These changes could be politically unpalatable and economically disruptive, especially given Canada's strong financial system and independent trade policies.

### The Geopolitical Context

Speculation about Canada's potential EU membership is also driven by broader geopolitical shifts. Trump's remarks about Canada potentially becoming the "51st state" highlight the pressures Canada faces in maintaining its sovereignty and economic independence. At the same time, the EU's willingness to discuss membership criteria with non-traditional candidates like Canada reflects a changing global landscape where alliances are increasingly fluid. However, interest in discussions does not equate to a realistic path toward membership.



## Jio Signs Deal With Elon Musk's SpaceX To Offer Starlink Services In India

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Reliance Group's digital services arm, Jio Platforms Limited, has entered into an agreement with SpaceX to offer Starlink's broadband internet services to customers in India, the company announced on Wednesday. However, the agreement is contingent upon SpaceX receiving authorization from the Indian government to sell Starlink in the country.

This development comes just a day after Jio's competitor, Bharti Airtel, signed a similar deal with SpaceX to bring Starlink services to India.

Mathew Oommen, Group CEO of Reliance Jio, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, calling it a transformative step toward enhancing broadband connectivity in India. He stated, "By integrating Starlink into Jio's broadband ecosystem, we are expanding our reach and improving the reliability and accessibility of high-speed broadband, empowering communities and businesses across the country."

The agreement will allow Jio and SpaceX to explore ways to extend Jio's offerings and enhance Starlink's services to consumers and businesses. Jio will distribute Starlink's solutions through its retail outlets and online platforms, further expanding the reach of high-speed internet across the nation.

By leveraging Jio's position as the world's largest mobile operator in terms of data traffic and SpaceX's leadership in low Earth orbit satellite constellations, the partnership aims to provide reliable broadband services, particularly in India's most remote and rural regions. Jio will also offer Starlink equipment at its retail stores and will set up a system to assist with customer service, installation, and activation. The collaboration aims to ensure reliable internet access for enterprises, small businesses, and communities across India.

Additionally, the partnership between Jio and SpaceX is expected to complement Jio's existing internet services, such as JioAirFiber and JioFiber, by providing high-speed internet in areas that are difficult to reach.

SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell praised Jio's commitment to improving India's connectivity, expressing eagerness to work together once the necessary government authorization is obtained.

# PM Modi, Mauritius PM Inaugurate Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute

- Institute to foster leadership, research, public service
- Modi receives Mauritius' Highest National Award
- He honors India-Mauritius cultural ties
- Pledges stronger strategic partnership

TPN Correspondent | Port Louis

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alongside Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam, inaugurated the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation on Wednesday. The institute aims to become a hub for learning, research, and innovation, fostering new leadership and ideas for the future.

In a post on X, PM Modi expressed that the institute would focus on advancing public service, research, and innovation, and help in nurturing leadership for the coming generations. He added, "It will serve as a hub for learning, research, and public service, foster-



ing new ideas and leadership for the future. It also strengthens our shared commitment to progress and development."

Earlier in the day, PM Modi was conferred the Highest National Award of Mauritius during a ceremony held on the National Day. Despite heavy rainfall, thousands of people gathered to witness the event. Modi expressed his heartfelt gratitude for receiving the prestigious honor, calling it not only a personal recognition but also an acknowledgment of the 1.4 billion Indians he represents. "This is not just my honor, it is the honor of 1.4 billion Indians. It is a tribute to the centuries-old cultural and historical bonds of kinship between India and Mauritius," said PM Modi.

He emphasized the strong ties between India and Mauritius, stating that the award symbolized the shared commitment to regional peace, progress, security, and sustainable development. He dedicated the award to the Indian ancestors who migrated to Mauritius and contributed to the nation's rich diversity. "Through their hard work, they wrote a golden chapter in the development of Mauritius and contributed to its vibrant diversity," he remarked.

PM Modi also reiterated his commitment to strengthening the India-Mauritius Strategic Partnership, aiming to elevate bilateral relations to new heights in the future.

## Tamil actor-politician Vijay slams Nirmala Sitharaman over Periyar remarks

TPN Correspondent | NEW DELHI

Tamil actor-politician Vijay has come to the defense of social reformer Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, criticizing the BJP for using the Dravidian leader's legacy to deflect criticism of the Union government. Vijay highlighted Periyar's contributions to social reform, emphasizing his opposition to child marriage, support for widow remarriage, and fight against caste-based discrimination.

He also underscored Periyar's early advocacy for reservation, saying, "People still praise him today because he spoke about reservation for social justice a hundred years ago," pointing out the relevance of his ideas in modern India. Vijay questioned whether the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, was truly upset about Periyar's controversial remarks on Tamil, asking, "Should the Union Finance Minister stop imposing the trilingual policy



views?"

Vijay's remarks come in response to Sitharaman's speech in the Lok Sabha, where she criticized the DMK for idolizing Periyar, despite his alleged disparaging remarks about the Tamil language. Sitharaman did not mention Peri-

yar by name but referred to him as someone who called Tamil a "barbaric" language. She accused the DMK of hypocrisy for venerating a person who allegedly spoke ill of Tamil while claiming to defend the language.

The controversy has also reignited the debate over the National Education Policy (NEP). Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan accused the DMK of misleading students in Tamil Nadu regarding the NEP, particularly its three-language formula. The DMK responded by reiterating its opposition to the formula and asserting that it would not accept the NEP in full. The party also stated that the Centre could not withhold education funds over Tamil Nadu's refusal to implement the policy. Vijay's defense of Periyar and his criticism of the BJP and the Centre highlight the ongoing tension between Tamil Nadu's political leadership and the Union government over cultural and educational policies.



## India's Economic Growth To Exceed 6.5% In FY26

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Moody's Ratings has forecasted India's economic growth to exceed 6.5% in the next fiscal year, up from 6.3% projected for the current year. This growth is attributed to higher government capital expenditure (capex), tax cuts, and interest rate reductions, which are expected to boost consumption.

The global credit rating agency has projected a stable outlook for India's banking sector, citing a favorable operating environment for banks in the coming fiscal year. However, it anticipates a moderate deterioration in asset quality following significant improvements in recent years. Moody's specifically highlighted stress in unsecured retail loans, microfinance loans, and small business loans as key areas of concern. Despite this, the profitability of banks is expected to remain adequate, with declines in net interest margins (NIMs) likely to be marginal due to modest rate cuts.

India's economic growth is expected to rebound after a temporary slowdown in mid-2024, with projections

for one of the fastest growth rates among large economies globally. The finance ministry's Economic Survey has projected GDP growth for the next fiscal year in the range of 6.3% to 6.8%. Official estimates suggest that GDP growth for the current fiscal year will be around 6.5%.

Moody's anticipates India's inflation rate to decline to 4.5% in fiscal 2025-26, down from 4.8% in the previous year. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised interest rates by 250 basis points between May 2022 and February 2023 to control inflation. However, it lowered the policy rate by 25 basis points to 6.25% in February 2025. Moody's expects any future rate cuts to be modest, as the RBI maintains a cautious stance amid global uncertainties, including US trade policies and exchange rate volatility.

The ratings agency also forecasts that system-wide loan growth will slow to 11-13% in fiscal 2025-26, compared to an average of 17% for the period from March 2022 to March 2024, as banks align loan growth with deposit expansion.

## "Prioritize childbirth": Udhayanidhi Stalin's Advice To Newlyweds

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Amid growing concerns over the potential loss of parliamentary seats due to delimitation, Tamil Nadu's political leaders have appealed to the public to have more children. Chief Minister MK Stalin's recent call for population growth was followed by his son, Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, who made a similar request at a mass wedding event in Chennai.

During the ceremony, Udhayanidhi Stalin urged the newlyweds to focus on having children immediately, though he humorously added, "but not too many." He linked the issue to Tamil Nadu's implementation of early birth control measures, which he argued may now result in the state losing up to eight seats in the upcoming delimitation process. In contrast, northern states, which failed to manage their population growth, would see an increase of around 100 seats.

The Deputy CM emphasized the need to preserve Tamil culture and identity, encouraging parents to give their children Tamil names. He further mentioned that Tamil Nadu's success in implementing family planning has contributed to the current dilemma of potentially losing representation in Parliament.

This issue has become particularly sensitive as the delimitation exercise looms ahead of the 2029 general elections. Con-



cerns about losing seats and political influence in comparison to northern states have sparked similar reactions across South India. In Andhra Pradesh, for instance, Kalisetti Appala Naidu, an MP from the Telugu Desam Party, announced a cash reward of Rs 50,000 for women giving birth to a third child, with additional incentives for those delivering boys.

Union Minister Amit Shah recently addressed the issue, assuring southern states that their seat share would remain unaffected. He assured the public that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had ensured no reduction in southern states' representation. Shah accused MK Stalin and Udhayanidhi Stalin of trying to distract the public with such concerns, emphasizing that the government had already clarified its stance on the matter.

# Ukraine Agrees To Ceasefire Proposal, US Says "Ball Now In Russia's Court"

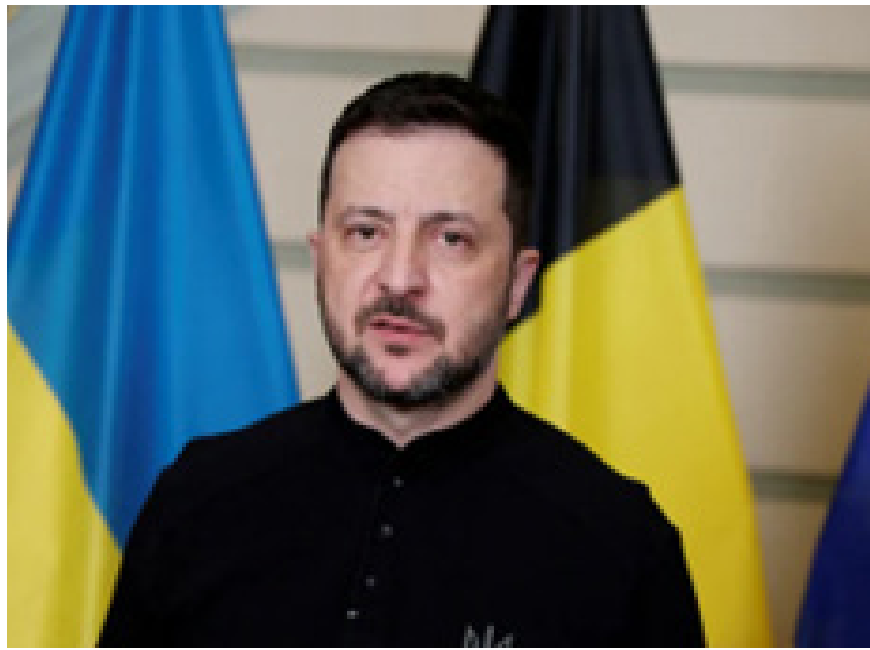
- Accepts 30-day ceasefire proposal, agrees to talks with Russia
- U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirms Ukraine's commitment
- Trump resumes military aid, expresses optimism for swift resolution
- Ukraine urges Russia to clarify its stance on peace negotiations

TPN Correspondent | Ukraine

In a significant shift in the ongoing war, Ukraine has endorsed an American proposal for a 30-day ceasefire and agreed to immediate negotiations with Russia, following intensive talks in Jeddah on Tuesday. This breakthrough comes after three years of conflict, with tens of thousands of lives lost and extensive devastation in Ukraine.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirmed that Ukraine had agreed to enter into the ceasefire and begin direct negotiations with Russia. "Today we made an offer that the Ukrainians have accepted, which is to enter into a ceasefire and into immediate negotiations," Rubio stated after nearly nine hours of discussions. The United States now hopes Russia will reciprocate the peace offer, but if they refuse, the blame for the continued conflict will be squarely placed on Moscow.

In a shift of U.S. policy, President Donald Trump's administration,



which had previously cut military aid to Ukraine following a contentious meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on February 28, announced it would resume providing military assistance and intelligence sharing. Trump also expressed optimism about the ceasefire, stating, "I hope it will be over the next few days." Zelenskyy, in response, thanked Presi-

dent Trump for his "constructive" approach and noted that the U.S. had recognized Ukraine's proposals. He also emphasized that the key to peace now lies in Russia's response.

However, the path to lasting peace remains fraught with challenges. Despite the U.S. urging Moscow to agree to the ceasefire, Russia's

actions on the ground—such as increased attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure—suggest they may not yet be ready to end the war. Ukrainian officials are pressing Russia to make a clear commitment to peace, with top advisor Andriy Yermak stating, "Russia needs to say, very clearly, they want peace or not."

Trump's diplomatic overture has raised concerns among European allies, particularly France and Germany, who are wary of his departure from traditional NATO positions, including his rejection of Ukraine's NATO membership. In Poland, a strong supporter of Ukraine, Prime Minister Donald Tusk welcomed the U.S.-Ukraine ceasefire agreement but stressed that any deal must ensure Ukraine's long-term security.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding Russia's response, the Jeddah talks signal a significant shift in global diplomacy, with the focus now moving from "if" the war will end to "how" it will conclude.



## Greenland's Nationalist Party Gains Ground in Surprise Election Amid Trump's Interest

TPN Correspondent | Denmark

In a surprising turn of events, the centre-right opposition in Greenland has secured a significant victory in the territory's legislative elections, marking a surge in support for the nationalist Naleraq party, which advocates for rapid independence.

While the vote count was still ongoing, the Democratic Party, which is social-liberal and supports independence in the long term, led with a commanding share of the vote, according to Greenland's public broadcaster KNR. However, the nationalist Naleraq party, the most vocal pro-independence group, was set to achieve a "stunning" result.

The election attracted unprecedented international attention, primarily due to US President Donald Trump's previous interest in acquiring Greenland. Trump has long expressed his desire to control the vast Arctic island, citing its strategic significance.

Outgoing Prime Minister Mute Egede of the Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA) party respected the election outcome, while the leader of the Siumut party, IA's coalition partner, conceded defeat. With no party securing a majority in Greenland's 31-seat parliament, coalition negotiations are expected in the coming days. The newly formed government will likely focus on drafting a timeline for independence, a goal that enjoys widespread support among Greenland's 57,000 residents.

Jens-Frederik Nielsen, the 33-year-old leader of the Democratic Party, expressed surprise at the election results and emphasized his party's commitment to unity and dialogue with all factions. "We didn't expect the election to have this outcome, we're very happy," he said.

Amid these discussions, Greenlanders' frustrations with Denmark's colonial legacy and the financial dependence on Danish subsidies have further fueled calls for independence. While the Naleraq party seeks a quick exit from Denmark, citing the mineral wealth that could fuel Greenland's economy, other parties prefer a more gradual approach, citing the island's dependence on fisheries and Danish financial support.

Trump's recent comments urging Greenlanders to join the US were met with resistance from the majority, further complicating the independence debate. Some fear that independence could lead to increased pressure from the US, making ties with Denmark appear more appealing.

# Pakistan Launches "Full Scale" Ops Against Train Hijackers, 155 Hostages Rescued

TPN Correspondent | Pakistan

Pakistan has initiated a large-scale military operation to rescue hostages from the Jaffar Express, which was hijacked by armed rebels in the volatile Balochistan region. So far, security forces have successfully rescued 155 passengers, including women and children, after engaging in a fierce gunfight with the rebels. The rescued passengers were taken to Mach, a nearby town, where a makeshift hospital has been set up to provide medical care.

The situation escalated overnight as the gunfight between Pakistani

forces and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) continued. While over 150 hostages have been freed, it remains unclear how many passengers are still held by the attackers. The BLA, a prominent separatist group, claimed to have killed 30 soldiers, though this has not been confirmed by official sources. The rebels split into smaller groups and attempted to escape, but the military has surrounded them in the area.

The hijacking occurred when the attackers intercepted the Jaffar



Express, which was traveling from Quetta to Peshawar. The rebels blew up the tracks, halting the train in a remote tunnel, and killed the locomotive driver. The BLA, which has long been seeking independence for Balochistan,

demanding the release of Baloch political prisoners and missing persons by the military within 48 hours. They threatened to destroy the train and execute hostages if their demands were not met.

One passenger, who managed to escape by walking for hours through the mountains, described how the rebels separated people from Pakistan's Punjab region and took them away. The attackers also reportedly killed two soldiers in front of the hostages.

# After DeepSeek, China Launches 'Manus', New AI Assistan

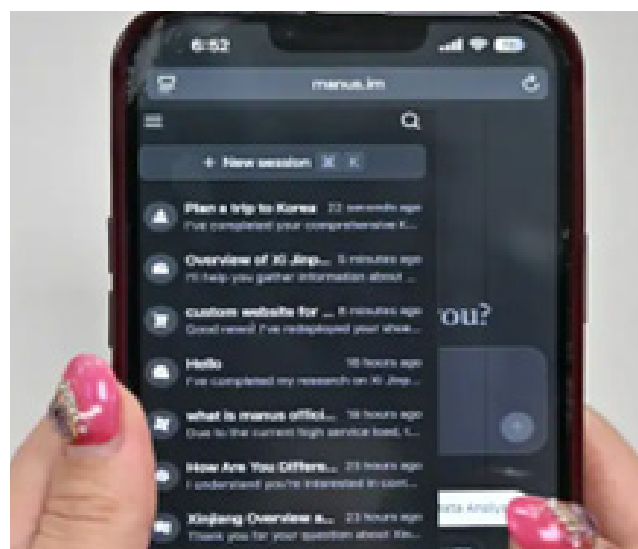
TPN Correspondent | Beijing

A new AI tool, Manus, is quickly gaining attention in China, sparking speculation that it could follow in the footsteps of DeepSeek, a chatbot that made waves globally earlier this year. Manus, an AI agent considered more advanced than a typical chatbot, can perform a wide range of tasks, including analyzing the stock market and creating personalized travel guides, according to its website.

Manus was launched last week by Chinese startup Butterfly Effect. In a viral introductory video, co-founder Yichao "Peak" Ji referred to Manus as "the next paradigm of human-machine collaboration," possibly even offering a glimpse of artificial general intelligence (AGI), which aims to mimic human-like thinking. Manus has generated significant interest despite being accessible by invitation only, with its official Discord server amassing over 170,000 members.

The tool's name, derived from the Latin phrase "Mens et Manus" meaning "mind and hand," reflects its combination of knowledge and practical application. Unlike chatbots like DeepSeek or ChatGPT, which respond to user prompts, Manus can autonomously execute tasks, such as booking tickets or sorting resumes.

Manus's exclusive beta access and focus on enterprise clients set it apart from other AI applications. However, some analysts warn that this closed ecosystem could hinder its widespread adoption. Despite this, Manus's ability to complete more complex tasks—such as creating custom websites—distinguishes it from competitors, although



it has faced challenges with response times.

One notable feature of Manus is its uncensored responses to sensitive political topics. Unlike DeepSeek, which follows government-approved narratives, Manus provides detailed, objective information on topics like the Tiananmen Square crackdown and human rights issues in Xinjiang. This openness may be attributed to Manus's design, which prioritizes task execution over content control.

Whether Manus can become a mainstream success like DeepSeek remains uncertain. Analysts suggest that Manus's potential depends on its ability to scale, handle technical challenges, and navigate ethical and regulatory concerns. Its future success in the enterprise automation space remains to be seen.

# "Entirely Unjustified": Australia's Anthony Criticizes US Tariffs on Steel and Aluminium

TPN Correspondent | Australia

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has condemned the United States' decision to impose 25 percent tariffs on steel and aluminium, calling the move "entirely unjustified" after the White House rejected Australia's request for an exemption.

"This is not a friendly act," Albanese told reporters on Wednesday, expressing his disappointment at the US decision. The Australian Prime Minister stated that the imposition of tariffs goes against the long-standing friendship between the two nations. "Quite clearly, it is not a positive step in our relationship," Albanese added.

The tariffs, which are part of US President Donald Trump's broader trade measures, will affect various countries, including close allies like Australia. Albanese expressed his frustration over the decision, highlighting that it is contrary to the spirit of the alliance. "Friends need to act in a way that reinforces, to our respective populations, the fact that we are friends," he said.

Despite the setback, Albanese made it clear that Australia would not retaliate. He stressed that tariffs and escalating trade tensions are ultimately detrimental to both economies, leading to slower growth and higher inflation. "Tariffs are a form of economic self-harm," he remarked.

Earlier this year, Albanese had hinted that Australia might secure an exemption fol-



lowing a phone call with President Trump in February, where the US leader agreed that an exemption was under consideration. However, White House officials confirmed overnight that this exemption was no longer on the table. "He considered it, and considered against it," said White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt.

While Australia is not a major global player in steel exports, it is a dominant supplier of iron ore, which is a critical component in steel production. Australian steel producer BlueScope, which employs around 4,000 people in the US, could also be impacted by the tariffs. Despite the tension, Albanese reiterated that Australia would not engage in retaliatory measures.



# Markets End Flat as Nifty Holds 22,300; IT Drags, Banks Support



**Voltas Ltd (VOLTAS)**  
Voltas saw a strong rise, gaining 2.77% to close at ₹1,445.05. The stock benefited from positive sentiment in the consumer durables sector, with expectations of rising demand for cooling products ahead of the summer season. The company's strong brand positioning and expansion plans further boosted investor confidence.



strengthened investor sentiment.

**Bharat Forge Ltd (BHARATFORG)**  
Bharat Forge advanced 2.43% to ₹1,090.20, driven by optimism in the auto and engineering segments. The company's global expansion strategy, strong order book, and improving defense sector contributions have supported its stock price. Increased exports and higher demand in domestic infrastructure projects have also contributed to its recent gains.

**KPR Mill Ltd (KPRMILL)**



KPR Mill inched up by 0.85% to ₹894.00, supported by steady demand in the textile sector. The company's focus on value-added products, sustainable textile production, and strong export orders have helped maintain investor interest. Recent capacity expansions and cost-effective operations have also been key drivers for its stock performance.



**Emami Ltd (EMAMILTD)**  
Emami Ltd surged 3.12% to ₹567.00, supported by strong investor interest in FMCG stocks amid expectations of improved earnings growth. The company's focus on premiumization, rural demand recovery, and new prod-



uct launches contributed to the positive momentum. Analysts believe that its cost-control measures and strategic acquisitions will drive future growth.

**Aditya Birla Capital Ltd (ABCAPITAL)**  
Aditya Birla Capital gained 3.17% to close at ₹162.90, reflecting increased buying interest in the financial services sector. The company's diversified presence in lending, insurance, and asset management segments has made it a key player in the market. Positive earnings expectations and steady business growth have

Domestic stock markets ended flat on Wednesday, with benchmark indices fluctuating throughout the session. The indices, which opened with gains, gradually declined due to mixed signals from global markets. Despite IT stocks



**NURTHY NAIDU PADAM**  
Stock Market Analyst  
+91 988 555 9709

facing heavy selling pressure, the Nifty managed to recover from intraday losses, holding strong at 22,300 with support from banking and financial shares. Oil and auto stocks also contributed to market stability. Notably, indices are showing signs of consolidation. By the end of the session, the Nifty lost 27 points, while the Sensex declined by 72 points.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 74,102 in the previous session, opened at 74,270 on Wednesday. It hit an intraday low of 73,598 and a high of 74,392 before closing at 74,029, down 72 points. The NSE Nifty opened at 22,536, touched a low of 22,329 and a high of 22,577, losing 27 points to settle at 22,470. Meanwhile, the Nifty Bank gained 202 points, closing at 48,056.

Among the Nifty50 stocks, 19 gained while 31 declined. Private banking, healthcare, finance, auto, pharma, bank, oil, and energy stocks performed well, while IT, realty, media, PSU bank, consumption, and metal stocks faced selling pressure. Top gainers included IndusInd Bank, Tata Mo-

tors, Kotak Bank, Bajaj Finance, and ITC, while Infosys, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Nestle, and TCS were the biggest losers.

Market breadth on the NSE remained negative, with 993 stocks advancing while 1,830 declined out of the 2,962 traded stocks. Additionally, 20 stocks hit 52-week highs, while 234 stocks touched 52-week lows. A total of 69 stocks hit the upper circuit, whereas 160 stocks hit the lower circuit.

On the macroeconomic front, industrial production surged to an eight-month high of 5% in January. The rupee remained stable, settling at 87.32 against the US dollar. RailTel Corporation announced its second interim dividend of ₹1 per share for FY25. TCS extended its partnership with Coop Denmark. Meanwhile, Morgan Stanley assigned an underweight rating to Bank of Baroda with a target price of ₹215. InterGlobe Aviation's board approved an investment in InterGlobe Aviation Financial Services. Reliance, Airtel, and Hindustan Unilever were selected as top picks by Motilal Oswal. Fitch assigned a BBB-rating to Adani Ports. Infosys saw 16 lakh shares change hands, and Power Finance Corporation's board approved raising ₹1,40,000 crore in FY26.

# Retail inflation at 7-month low of 3.6%, thanks to slowing food prices

India's retail inflation has dropped to a seven-month low of 3.6% in February 2025, driven by easing food prices, including vegetables, pulses, and eggs. This marks a significant decline from the 4.26% inflation recorded in January 2025.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which tracks retail prices, has slowed for the fourth consecutive month, dipping by 65 basis points from January to February. This brings inflation within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) target range of 4%, increasing expectations that the central bank may implement a 0.25% rate cut at its upcoming monetary policy meeting.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) highlighted that the February CPI reading is the lowest year-on-year inflation since July 2024, reflecting a slowdown in price increases. The Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI), which tracks food inflation, saw a significant slowdown, rising by only 3.75% in February, the slowest in nearly two years. This was a sharp contrast to the 5.9% increase in January 2025.

The easing of food inflation was largely driven by a decline in vegetable prices, which deflated by 1%, compared to double-digit in-



flation earlier in the fiscal year. Notably, tomato prices dropped, while the rate of inflation for potatoes slowed, although onion prices rose at a faster pace. Pulses, which had seen consistent price increases, saw a 1.35% deflation, marking the first negative growth in pulses inflation this fiscal year.

The easing food prices, coupled with a high base effect, contribut-

ed to the dip in overall inflation. Rural consumers saw inflation decrease to 3.8%, down from 4.6% in the previous month, while urban inflation slowed to 3.3% from 3.9%.

Inflation varied across states, with Kerala seeing the highest inflation at 7.3%, while Telangana had the lowest at just 1.3%. This regional difference was largely

attributed to varying food price trends across the country.

Economists now anticipate that the lower inflation could prompt the RBI to cut its repo rate by 25 basis points in its April meeting, with a possibility of further cuts in June, as the inflation outlook remains more benign than initially expected.

## India's Sugar Exports Slow as Domestic Prices Rise



Indian sugar mills have contracted to export 600,000 metric tons of sugar in the 2024/25 marketing year, which ends in September. However, industry officials say they are hesitant to sign new deals as local sugar prices rise. This slowdown in shipments from India, the world's second-largest sugar producer, is expected to support global sugar prices, which are currently at their lowest levels in three years.

After halting exports in 2023 to stabilize domestic prices, India allowed sugar exports of 1 million tons in January 2025 to clear surplus stocks. However, with domestic sugar prices on the rise, and expectations of further increases due to lower production and higher demand in the summer months, export activity has slowed in recent weeks.

According to a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm, exports picked up in January but have since decelerated as local prices have strengthened. Industry sources mentioned that the increasing domestic prices are making it less appealing for mills to engage in further exports, as the cost of selling abroad becomes less favorable. These sources, however, requested anonymity due to their inability to speak publicly.

India's sugar production for the 2024/25 marketing year is expected to fall to 25.8 million tons, compared to an annual consumption of 29 million tons. The summer season, which typically boosts demand for sugar due to increased consumption of cold drinks and ice creams, is expected to further elevate domestic demand.

Mills have already shipped around 250,000 tons of the 600,000 tons contracted for export since January. Despite the slowdown, industry experts believe that India will meet its target of 1 million tons in exports by September. Prakash Naiknavare, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories, confirmed that mills have ample time to complete exports, and they are likely to do so when they find better prices.

India remains a key player in the global sugar market, exporting to countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and the UAE. However, the current price dynamics could affect the competitiveness of Indian sugar in the global market.

## India's Industrial Output Grows by 5% in January 2025

India's industrial output, measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), saw a growth of 5.0% in January 2025, up from 3.5% in December 2024, according to the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Wednesday.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) data highlighted that the manufacturing sector led the growth, expanding by 5.5% in January 2025 compared to 3.6% in the same month of the previous year. This performance reflects a strong recovery in the manufacturing industry, contributing significantly to the overall industrial growth.

On the other hand, mining production showed slower growth, increasing by just 4.4% in January 2025, compared to a 6% growth in January 2024. Power output also saw a modest increase of 2.4% in January, indicating slower expansion in energy production compared to previous years.

For the period from April to January, industrial output increased by 4.2%, which was lower compared to the 6% growth recorded during the same period the previous year. Despite the overall slowdown in some sectors, the performance in the manufacturing sector helped buoy the overall industrial output.

One of the bright spots in the data was the capital goods segment, which grew by 7.8% in January 2025, a substantial improvement compared to the 3.2% growth in January 2024. This surge in capital goods suggests increased investment in infrastructure and industrial capacity, which could bode well for future growth.

Overall, while the industrial output showed positive growth in January, certain sectors like mining and power production exhibited slower expansions. The data indicates a mixed but overall favorable industrial performance as India moves forward into 2025.

## iPad Air (2025) and 11th Gen iPad Go on Sale in India



Apple has officially launched the iPad Air (2025) and the 11th Generation iPad (2025) in India, with sales beginning today across Apple's website, Apple Stores, and various online and offline retailers. The latest iPads feature significant upgrades in performance, display, and storage. The iPad Air (2025) comes in 11-inch and 13-inch

variants, powered by the M3 chip with support for Apple Intelligence. The 11-inch Wi-Fi model starts at ₹59,900, while the Wi-Fi + Cellular variant costs ₹74,900. The 13-inch version is priced at ₹79,900 for the Wi-Fi model and ₹94,900 for the Wi-Fi + Cellular variant. It is available in Blue, Purple, Space Grey, and Starlight color options. Meanwhile, the 11th Generation iPad (2025) is powered by the A16 Bionic chip and now starts with 128GB of storage. The Wi-Fi model is priced at ₹34,900, while the Wi-Fi + Cellular variant costs ₹49,900. It is available in Blue, Pink, Silver, and Yellow. Both iPads come with Liquid Retina displays, advanced camera systems, and support for Wi-Fi 6E and Bluetooth 5.3. The iPad Air supports Apple Intelligence features and offers improved battery life, while the new iPad (2025) delivers a 30% performance boost over its predecessor. With these upgrades, Apple aims to enhance user experience across work, creativity, and entertainment.

## Basil Water: A Powerful Morning Detox for Better Health

- Basil water aids digestion and reduces bloating.
- It detoxifies the body and boosts kidney health.
- Rich in antioxidants, it strengthens immunity and heart health.



### THE POINT DESK

Basil water, a natural detox drink made by infusing basil leaves in water, has been recognized for its remarkable health benefits. Often referred to as Tulsi in India, basil is rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and essential minerals that contribute to overall well-being. Consuming basil water on an empty stomach each morning can provide multiple health advantages.

One of the key benefits of basil water is its positive impact on digestion. It stimulates the production of digestive enzymes, easing bloating and indigestion. The anti-inflammatory properties of basil also help in soothing the gastrointestinal tract, making it a natural remedy for acid reflux and gut-related issues.

Basil is known for its detoxifying effects, promoting kidney health by flushing out toxins and excess salts. Its diuretic properties aid in preventing kidney stones and urinary tract infections, ensuring a cleaner and more hydrated urinary system. Additionally, its immunity-boosting properties, rich in vitamin C and antioxidants, strengthen the body's defenses against infections by neutralizing free radicals and reducing inflammation. Mental well-being also benefits from basil water, as it contains adaptogenic properties that help regulate cortisol levels, reducing stress and anxiety. Drinking it regularly promotes relaxation, improves focus, and combats daily fatigue, making it an ideal natural remedy for managing mental stress.

For those managing blood sugar levels, basil helps regulate glucose by improving insulin sensitivity,

making it beneficial for heart health and energy balance. Additionally, its ability to reduce cholesterol levels, improve circulation, and prevent plaque buildup in arteries supports cardiovascular well-being, reducing the risk of heart disease. Basil's antibacterial properties contribute to clearer skin by flushing out toxins and reducing acne and blemishes. It also promotes respiratory health by clearing mucus from the lungs and easing breathing difficulties, especially for those with allergies or respiratory infections. Additionally, basil water is a great metabolism booster, aiding in weight management by reducing water retention and flushing out excess waste. Its detoxifying effects support fat metabolism, making it an effective addition to a healthy lifestyle.

Incorporating basil water into a daily morning routine can bring significant health benefits, enhancing digestion, immunity, metabolism, and overall wellness.

## Mahindra XUV700 Ebony Edition Teased Ahead of Launch



Mahindra has teased the upcoming XUV700 Ebony Edition, an all-black variant of its popular SUV, ahead of its official launch. This follows the recent debut of the Scorpio N Carbon Edition and will be launched alongside the black edition of the Thar Roxx. The XUV700 Ebony Edition will feature a completely blacked-out appearance with black paint, a black grille re-

placing the chrome version, and new 18-inch black alloy wheels. Similar to the exterior, the interior will also receive an all-black theme, replacing the existing ivory upholstery with black elements on the dashboard and AC vents.

Mechanically, the Ebony Edition will retain the same specifications as the top-spec variants of the XUV700. It will be offered with a 2.0-litre tur-

bo petrol engine producing 197 hp and 380 Nm torque, as well as a 2.2-litre diesel engine available in two states of tune—182 hp with 420 Nm torque and 152 hp with 370 Nm torque.

Mahindra is expected to announce the official launch date and pricing details soon, with anticipation building among SUV enthusiasts for the latest addition to the XUV700 lineup.

## Rottweiler Rips Cobra Apart in Viral Video, Sparks Heated Debate

A chilling video of a Rottweiler attacking and killing a cobra has gone viral on social media, igniting a heated debate among viewers. Shared on Instagram by user lone\_wolf\_warrior27, the clip captures a tense confrontation between the pet dog and the venomous snake in a garden. The video shows the Rottweiler growling and barking at the cobra while its owner records the incident. Moments later, the powerful dog lunges at the snake, tearing it apart. Even after the cobra is lifeless, the dog continues to growl, bark, and rip at the reptile. Captioned "Rottweiler vs Cobra," the post has amassed over 63 million views and 2.1 million likes. However, it has also sparked controversy. While some praised the dog's bravery, others criticized the



owner for not intervening. One user wrote, "Train your dog, he doesn't even follow your command." Another pointed out, "Cobras rarely attack unless provoked. This could have been prevented." Others expressed concern for the dog's safety, with one commenter stating, "This could have been fatal. The owner

should have acted sooner." Many users also condemned the decision to film the encounter instead of calling a rescue team to handle the snake. The video continues to stir strong reactions, with debates over responsible pet ownership and the ethics of allowing such encounters to unfold.

## These 5 countries have the lowest gold prices, UAE not on list

Dubai is often regarded as a prime destination for buying gold, but it surprisingly ranks sixth on the list of countries with the lowest gold prices. The recent arrest of Kannada actor Ranya Rao at Bengaluru airport for attempting to smuggle 14.2 kg of gold from Dubai has brought attention to global gold price differences.

As of February 2025, the top five countries with the lowest gold prices are:

- **United States:** 24K gold at ₹8,586 per gram, 22K gold at ₹7,874 per gram.
- **Australia:** 24K gold at ₹8,602 per gram, 22K gold at ₹7,889 per gram.
- **Singapore:** 24K gold at ₹8,667 per gram, 22K gold at ₹7,949 per gram.
- **Switzerland:** 24K gold at ₹8,682 per gram, 22K gold at ₹7,963 per gram.
- **Indonesia:** 24K gold at ₹8,704 per gram, 22K gold at ₹7,983 per gram.

Dubai follows at sixth place, with 24K gold priced at ₹8,718 per gram and 22K gold at ₹7,996 per gram. Prices fluctuate based on market trends.

Gold Import Regulations in India

Despite lower prices abroad, importing gold is subject to customs duty. In the Union Budget 2024-25, the import duty was reduced from 15% to 6%. The tariff value of gold, set by the CBIC, currently stands at \$927 per 10 grams, down from \$938.

Duty-Free Allowance Indian citizens returning from abroad can carry:

- Male passengers: Up to ₹50,000 worth of gold jewellery.
  - Female passengers: Up to ₹1 lakh worth of gold jewellery.
- Gold bars, coins, and other forms beyond jewellery are subject to customs duty. The maximum importable quantity per person is 1 kg, with mandatory declaration for amounts exceeding the duty-free limit.



## Gill Retains No. 1 Spot in ODI Rankings, Rohit Moves to Third

India's Shubman Gill has retained his No. 1 ranking among ODI batters following his performance in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. Skipper Rohit Sharma moved up two places to third after his match-winning 76 in the final against New Zealand, while Virat Kohli remains in the top five at fifth after amassing 218 runs in the tournament. New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell climbed to sixth, while Rachin Ravindra and Glenn Phillips also made notable gains. Among bowlers, New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner surged six spots to second after taking nine wickets in the tournament, trailing only Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana. India's Kuldeep Yadav jumped to third, and Ravindra Jadeja moved into the top 10. Afghanistan's Azmatullah Omarzai retained the top spot in the all-rounder rankings, but New Zealand's Santner, Michael Bracewell, and Ravindra made significant gains, with Ravindra finishing as the 'Player of the Tournament' after scoring two centuries and taking three wickets.



## Gambhir Set to Travel with India 'A' for England Tour First India Head Coach to Take Up This Role



In a break from tradition, Gautam Gambhir is set to become the first head coach of Team India to travel with the India 'A' squad for an overseas tour. The move comes ahead of India's senior team's tour of England in June, with Gambhir reportedly keen on analyzing the red-ball talent pool firsthand. Historically, India 'A' and U19 teams have been guided by National Cricket Academy (NCA) coaches, with former India head coach Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman previously overseeing such assignments. However, Gambhir, who recently led India to a Champions Trophy victory, has informed the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) about his desire

to accompany the 'A' team. A BCCI source confirmed that Gambhir sees this move as a crucial step in strengthening India's bench strength, especially in red-ball cricket. "Since returning from Australia, Gambhir has been in discussions with the board. He believes analyzing the reserve players closely is essential for future team-building," the source said. Gambhir is also pushing for more India 'A' tours, pointing out that recent 'A' series have been limited to shadow tours for marquee events. His proactive approach could lead to structural changes in India's domestic and developmental cricket programs.

## Harry Kane Leads Bayern Munich Into Champions League Quarterfinals

Bayern Munich marched into the UEFA Champions League quarterfinals after a 2-0 victory over Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday, sealing a dominant 5-0 aggregate win. Star striker Harry Kane played a pivotal role, scoring one goal and assisting another as Bayern comfortably dispatched last season's unbeaten German champions. Having already taken control of the tie with a 3-0 home win in the first leg, Bayern entered the second leg in a commanding position. Despite Leverkusen's efforts to mount a comeback, Bayern remained composed and struck early in

the second half. Kane found himself at the right place to tap in a Joshua Kimmich cross, breaking the deadlock and effectively ending Leverkusen's hopes of a turnaround. With Leverkusen pushing forward in desperation, Bayern capitalized again in the 71st minute. Kane turned provider with a clever chip, setting up Alphonso Davies, who smashed home Bayern's second goal to put the game beyond reach. The England captain, often scrutinized for his performances in crucial matches, delivered a commanding display, just as he had in the first leg when he scored

twice. With Bayern eyeing a dream final at their home ground in Munich, Kane remains instrumental in their pursuit of European glory.



## Every Time We Played Against CSK, I Wanted To...

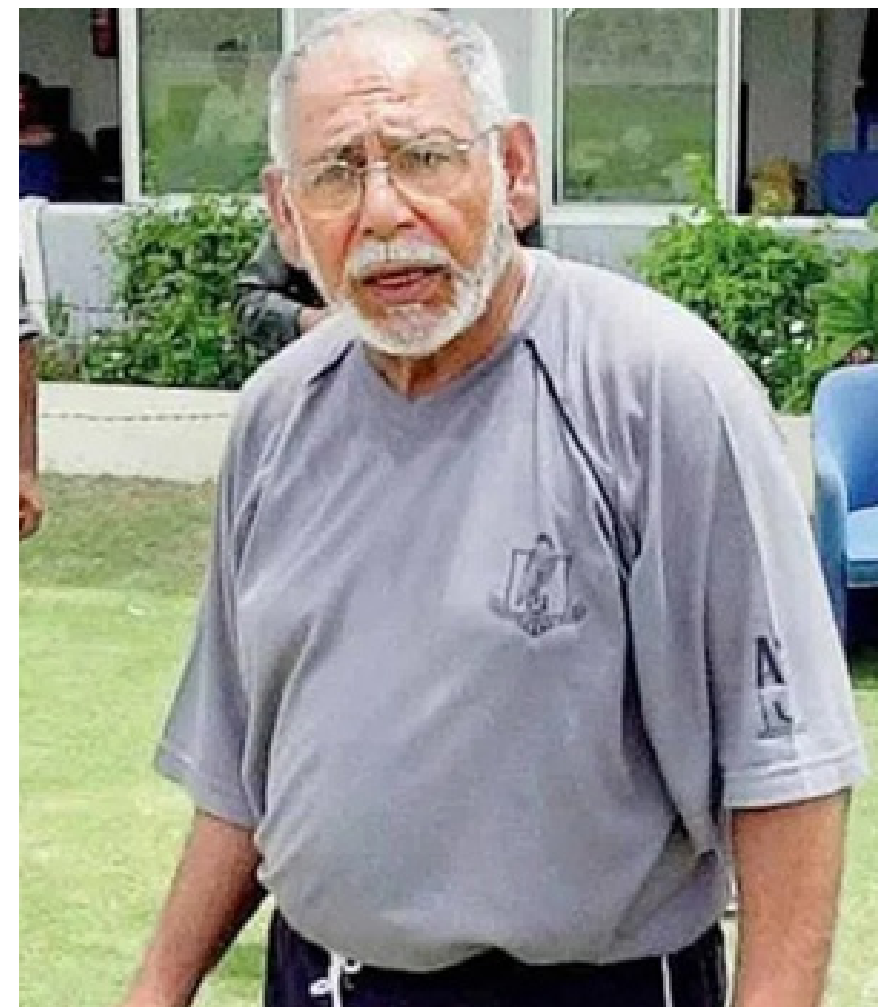


Ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025, Rajasthan Royals (RR) captain Sanju Samson has shared his ad-

miration for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) legend MS Dhoni. Samson revealed that every time he played against CSK, he eagerly sought opportunities to interact with Dhoni and learn from him. "Like every young Indian cricketer, I always wanted to be around MS Dhoni. Every time we played against CSK, I wanted to sit and talk to him, ask him how he does things. It was a dream for me," Samson said while speaking on JioHotstar's 'SuperStar' programme. Samson recalled a memorable game against CSK in Sharjah, where he scored 70-80 runs and won the Man of the Match award. After that match, he had a conversation with Dhoni, which marked the beginning of their strong bond. "Even now, I meet him often. Just yesterday, I

met him again. It's truly a blessed feeling—to go from idolizing him to now sitting with him for shoots and events," he added. Dhoni, who will play in IPL 2025, was retained by CSK as an uncapped player for ₹4 crore under a special retention rule. Since retiring from international cricket in 2020, he has continued to feature only in the IPL. In the 2024 season, he scored 161 runs at an astonishing strike rate of 220, often playing the role of a finisher. The 42-year-old remains one of IPL's most iconic players, ranking sixth on the all-time run-scorers list with 5,243 runs in 264 matches. As CSK gears up for the 2025 season under the leadership of Rururaj Gaikwad, fans eagerly await another chapter in Dhoni's legendary career.

## Legendary all-rounder Syed Abid Ali passes away at 83



Hyderabad's cricketing stalwart Syed Abid Ali, a former India all-rounder, passed away in the US on Wednesday at the age of 83. A key figure in India's historic Test victory at The Oval in 1971, Abid Ali had the rare honor of scoring the winning runs in that iconic match. A determined medium-pacer and an aggressive lower-order batsman, Abid Ali claimed 47 wickets across 29 Tests. His Test career began with a dream spell of six for 55 against Australia in Brisbane (1967-68), earning praise from the legendary Frank Tyson. He followed it up with impressive knocks of 78 and 81 in the Sydney Test during the same series. Apart from his on-field exploits, Abid Ali was renowned for his ex-

ceptional fielding and sharp running between the wickets. However, he once faced an unusual situation in the early 90s when a mistaken report falsely declared him dead, an incident he took with humor. After retiring, Abid Ali took up coaching assignments with Maldives, UAE, and the Andhra Ranji teams. His son Faqeer Ali is married to former India wicketkeeper Syed Kirmani's daughter. Despite his contributions, Abid Ali often found himself overlooked by the Hyderabad Cricket Association for reasons unknown. Abid Ali credited his cricketing success to the late M L Jaisimha, whom he considered his mentor. His passing marks the end of an era for Hyderabad cricket.

## East Bengal Crash Out of AFC Challenge League After Loss to FK Arkadag



East Bengal's AFC Challenge League campaign came to an end after a 1-2 defeat against FK Arkadag in the second leg of the quarterfinals. The Indian side, reduced to 10 men in the first half, lost 1-3 on aggregate, failing to advance to the semifinals. The match started on a promising note for East Bengal as Messi Bouli put them ahead within the first

minute, leveling the aggregate score. However, their momentum suffered a blow in the 33rd minute when Lalchungnunga received his second yellow card, leaving them a man down for the remainder of the game. FK Arkadag took advantage of their numerical superiority, with Altmymrat Annadurdyev scoring twice in the dying moments of the game—

first in the 89th minute and then in the eighth minute of stoppage time (90+8'). This sealed a 3-1 aggregate victory for the Turkmenistan side, who had already won the first leg 1-0 in Kolkata on March 5. With this loss, East Bengal's run in the AFC Challenge League comes to an end, while FK Arkadag advances to the semifinals.



## Naga Chaitanya's Thandel Dominates Netflix Charts



Naga Chaitanya's latest blockbuster *Thandel* continues its remarkable run, now dominating the Netflix streaming charts. The film, which marked Chaitanya's first ₹100 crore grosser worldwide, has been a commercial success despite facing multiple challenges. After making waves at the box office, *Thandel* premiered on Netflix last Friday and quickly became a trending title. Audiences across different regions have resonated with its universal themes of love, courage, and resilience, pushing it to the top of the platform's

charts. Chaitanya's dedication to his role was evident, with meticulous attention to his looks, body language, and slang, earning him widespread praise. Sai Pallavi also delivered a stellar performance, and their on-screen chemistry has been a major highlight. Director Chandoo Mondeti struck the perfect balance between love, action, and drama, keeping viewers engaged throughout. Adding to the film's appeal, Devi Sri Prasad's soundtrack has gained renewed popularity on digital platforms, further amplifying its success.

## Pranitha Stuns at Paris Fashion Week in Bold Look



Actress Pranitha Subhash made a striking statement at Paris Fashion Week, turning heads with her bold and stylish appearance. The actress, who has been in the industry for over 15 years and is now a mother of two, exuded confidence as she walked the ramp. Dressed in a chic brown checked pow-

er suit paired with a black bralette, Pranitha elevated her look with vibrant orange lipstick and bold eyeliner. Her effortless charm and poised presence captivated fashion enthusiasts. Despite setbacks in Malayalam and Kannada cinema last year, fans believe 2024 will be her resurgence, with her latest appearance reinforcing her en-

## Dhanush vs Nayanthara Copyright Row Actor's Company Seeks Rs 1 Crore Compensation



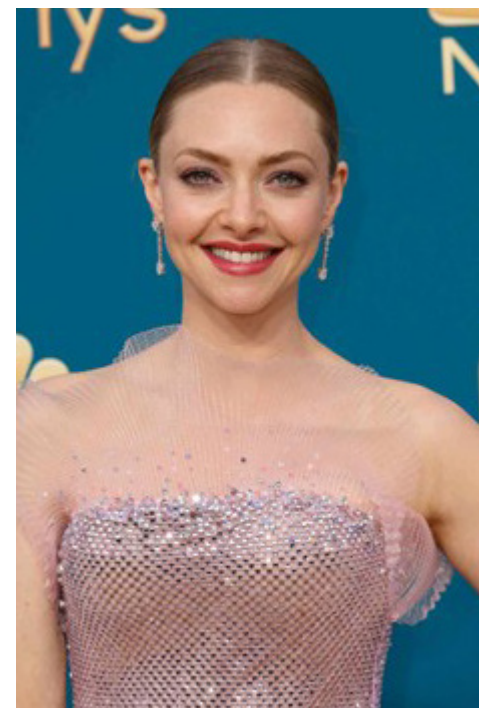
Dhanush's production house, Wunderbar Films Private Limited, has decided to proceed with its civil suit seeking ₹1 crore in damages and a permanent injunction against the use of behind-the-scenes (BTS) visuals from the Tamil film *Naanum Rowdy Dhaan* in Netflix's docu-drama *Nayanthara: Beyond the Fairytale* without his consent. The actor-producer accused Nayanthara's husband, filmmaker Vignesh Shivan, of "unprofessional behavior" during the shoot of the film, as stated in the affida-

vit submitted to the court. Wunderbar Films has named Nayanthara and the documentary's creators in its compensation claim. "The fourth respondent (Vignesh Shivan) unnecessarily began focusing his attention only on the third respondent (Nayanthara), ignoring the other cast and crew by taking multiple re-takes of scenes involving her to ensure she delivered her best performance, without prioritizing other actors," the affidavit read. The conflict between Dhanush and Nayanthara became public on November 16, 2024, when the *Jawan* actress posted an open letter on X, accusing Dhanush of "touching an all-time low" after he denied permission to use a three-second clip shot on personal devices, despite two years of repeated requests. Dhanush has refrained from making any public statements and has instead taken legal action. In November 2024, he filed a civil suit in the Madras High Court against Nayanthara, Vignesh Shivan, and their production house, Rowdy Pictures Private Limited. On January 28, the court ruled in favor of Dhanush by dismissing a petition from Netflix India that sought to reject his lawsuit. The main suit will be taken up for hearing on April 9.

## Amanda Seyfried confirms Mamma Mia 3

Hollywood actress Amanda Seyfried has confirmed that a third installment of the beloved *Mamma Mia!* franchise is in the works. While an official production timeline remains unannounced, Seyfried hinted that filming could take place in Greece as early as 2026. The first film, *Mamma Mia!* (2008), and its sequel, *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* (2018), received immense love from audiences, making a third installment highly anticipated. In a recent chat with Entertainment Tonight, Seyfried confirmed that *Mamma Mia 3* is happening but jokingly remarked, "It's going to happen in Greece, hopefully before 2038." While she did not specify a release date or confirm whether production had begun, she assured fans that the project is moving forward.

Seyfried also hinted at a possible filming schedule, stating, "Summer of 2026, that's just my schedule." Speaking about the challenges of coordinating the cast's schedules, she recalled a past experience, saying, "Everybody has to put their lives on hold. I remember I was feeding my six-day-old baby, and they were like, 'Mamma Mia, it's happening! August. Gotta be in the UK!' And I was like (faux crying), 'I just had a baby, I can't do this!' But it's going to be like that again. It will take a lot of people's schedules aligning and the story being right." While further details are awaited, fans can revisit the first two *Mamma Mia!* films, which are currently available for streaming on various OTT platforms.



## Kiara And Sidharth's First Interaction Has A Lust Stories Connection?

Bollywood couple Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani, who recently announced their first pregnancy, initially met on the sets of Kiara's anthology film *Lust Stories*, not *Shershaah*, as widely believed. In an interview with Lilly Singh, Sidharth revealed that he first met Kiara while visiting the *Lust Stories* set to

meet filmmaker Karan Johar. "That's the film (*Lust Stories*), the reason I met her. I'm very grateful for that short film to be made because I met her... I was on set," he said. Sidharth further shared that he was already aware of Kiara's role in *Lust Stories* as Karan Johar had narrated the story to him beforehand. Praising Kiara's film choices, he highlighted her performances in *Lust Stories* and *Guilty*, commending her for taking on bold and socially relevant roles. He also spoke about Kiara's influence on his personal life, emphasizing her strong family values and work ethics. "She's very family-oriented, and her ethics and morals are in the right place, and that's something I respect and admire," he stated. On February 28, 2025, the couple announced their first pregnancy through a joint Instagram post, sharing a heartwarming picture of them holding a pair of baby socks, delighting their fans.



## 'Court: State Vs Nobody' Holds Celebrity Premiere Tonight

Nani's latest production, *Court: State Vs Nobody*, starring Priyadarshi and directed by Ram Jagadeesh, is set to have its celebrity and special press premiere tonight. Several distinguished guests, along with the film's entire team, will be attending the exclusive screening. In addition to the private premiere, the makers have also announced paid premiere screenings in Hyderabad and other cities across the Telugu states. The advance bookings for these early shows have been remarkable, indicating strong

audience interest. While holding premiere screenings before the official release is a calculated risk, positive word-of-mouth from these early shows could significantly boost the film's prospects. Given its sensitive subject matter—centered around the POCSO Act and the story of a teenager—the film blends courtroom drama with an emotional love story and other compelling elements. With strong pre-release buzz and an intriguing narrative, *Court: State Vs Nobody* is poised to make a strong impact ahead of its theatrical debut.

