

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

t°

H

33°

C

L

25°

C

VIJAYAWADA

t°

H

35°

C

L

26°

C

TIRUPATHI

t°

H

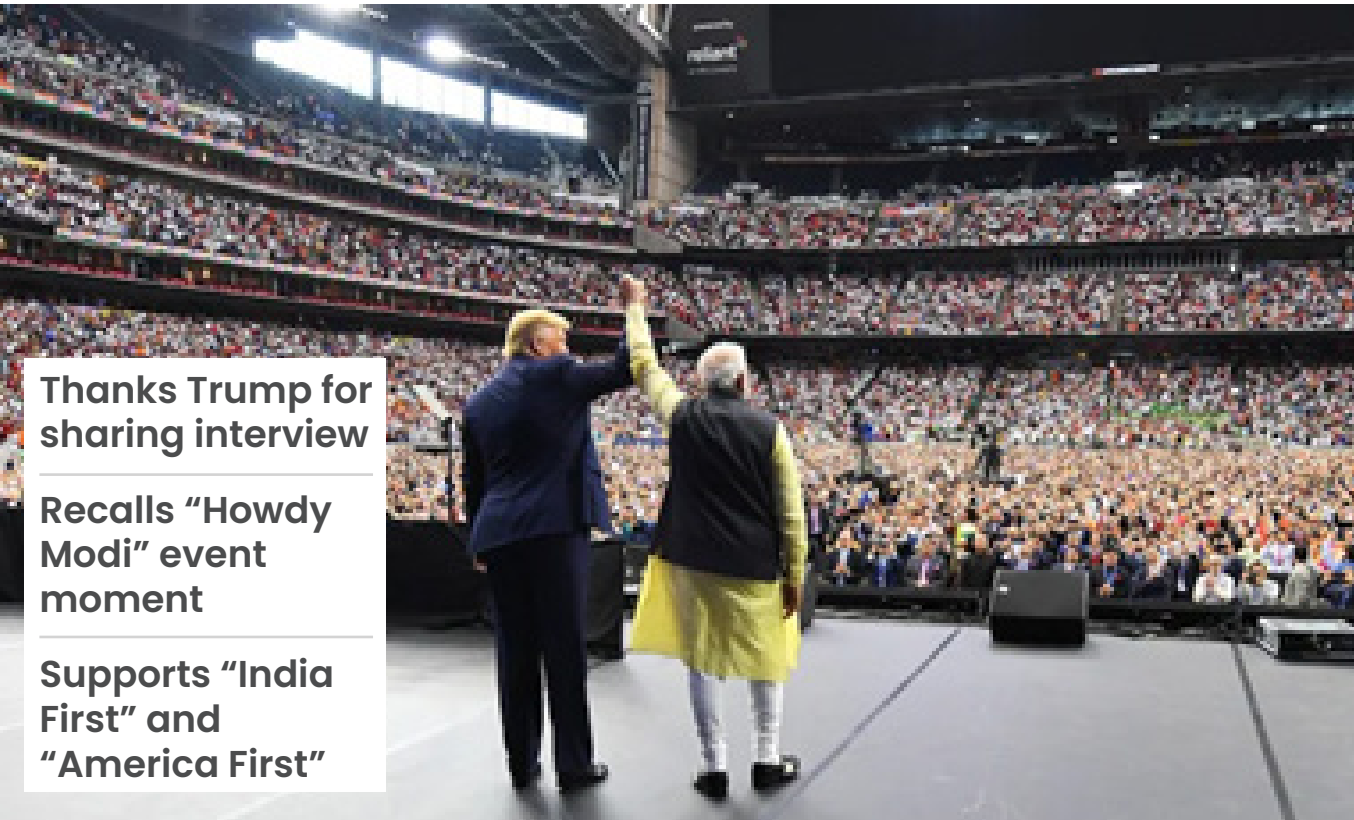
36°

C

L

26°

C



Thanks Trump for sharing interview

Recalls “Howdy Modi” event moment

Supports “India First” and “America First”

PM Modi Joins Truth Social, Engages with Trump on Global Affairs

Shares first post, discusses mutual trust with Trump, and highlights India’s vision

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his debut on Truth Social, a social media platform founded by former US President Donald Trump. In his first post, PM Modi expressed excitement about joining the platform and engaging in meaningful conversations with its users. “Delighted to be on Truth Social! Looking forward to interacting with all the passionate voices here and engaging in meaningful conversations in the times to come,” Modi wrote.

Earlier that day, Trump shared a video link of Modi’s recent conversation with Lex Fridman, a US-based podcaster and computer scientist, which aired on Sunday.

Thanking Trump for sharing the video, Modi expressed his appreciation: “Thank you my friend, President Trump. I’ve covered a wide range of topics, including my life journey, India’s civilisational outlook, global issues, and more.”

During the three-hour interaction, Modi spoke about his rapport with Trump, noting that both leaders share a deep commitment to prioritizing their respective countries. He emphasized that their mutual trust has remained strong, even during Trump’s time out of office under President Joe Biden’s administration. Modi highlighted a moment during his first term as Prime Minister when Trump broke security protocol at the “Howdy Modi” event in Houston, allowing Modi to

take a lap around the stadium. “I was touched by his courage and his trust in me,” Modi remarked.

Modi also shared his admiration for Trump’s “America First” philosophy, drawing a parallel to his own guiding principle of “India First.” He emphasized that this shared mindset helps foster a strong connection between the two leaders.

Truth Social, launched by Trump in 2022 after he was banned from major social media platforms like Facebook and X following the Capitol attack in 2021, aims to provide an alternative platform for free expression. Modi’s entry onto Truth Social marks a new chapter in his digital engagement with global audiences.

Violence Erupts In Nagpur Over Quran Burning Rumours

4 Injured, CM Fadnavis Urges People To Maintain Peace



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Tension erupted in central Nagpur on Monday following rumors that the Quran had been burned during a protest by a right-wing organization demanding the removal of Aurangzeb’s tomb. The unrest led to clashes between the police and a mob, with stones being hurled at law enforcement officers. The violence left four individuals injured, prompting the police to deploy tear gas shells and resort to a cane charge to disperse the crowd in the Chitnis Park and Mahal areas.

The disturbances quickly spread to the Kotwali and Ganeshpeth areas by the late afternoon, with the Chitnis Park to Shukrawari Talao road being the most severely affected. Reports indicated that rioters set fire to several four-wheelers and threw stones at residents’ homes. Thousands of people were reportedly involved in the violent protests, escalating the situation and increasing fears of further unrest.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who also holds the Home portfolio, appealed for peace and urged citizens to refrain from believing in rumors. In a statement, Fadnavis reminded the public that Nagpur had long been known as a peaceful city, where people of different communities lived in harmony. “Nagpur has always been a peaceful city where people share each other’s joys and sorrows. Do not fall for misinformation,” Fadnavis said. He assured the public that he was in constant contact with the police and had instructed them to maintain law and order while cooperating with citizens.

The violent incident has left the city on edge, with authorities working to contain the situation and restore calm. Security forces are closely monitoring the affected areas as tensions remain high following the unrest. The police are investigating the origin of the rumors that sparked the violence and have urged residents to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity.

82% of Bodo Accord Implemented, Full Execution Expected in Two Years: Amit Shah

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Sunday that 82% of the Bodo Peace Accord, signed in January 2020, has been successfully implemented, with the remaining provisions set to be fulfilled within the next two years. Shah made the statement at the 57th annual conference of the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) in Kokrajhar, Assam.

The Bodo Peace Accord, aimed at bringing lasting peace and development to the Bodoland region, had initially faced skepticism, particularly from the Congress. Shah recalled how Congress leaders had mocked the agreement at its inception, suggesting that peace in Bodoland was an impossible goal. However, with 82% of the accord’s clauses already fulfilled, the Home Minister emphasized the progress made under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Shah assured that the remaining provisions of the accord would be fully executed within the next two years, ensuring lasting peace and stability in the region. He noted that the successful implementation of the accord has already resulted in significant improvements in the Bodoland region, including the reduction of insurgency and an increase



in development activities.

Additionally, Shah directed all north-eastern states to ensure that there would be no political interference in cases related to terrorism, mob lynching, or organized crime. During a review meeting in Guwahati on the implementation of new criminal laws, he stressed the importance of training police personnel to protect citizens’ rights and strengthen justice delivery.

With insurgency in the region nearly eradicated, Shah urged the police to shift focus to safeguarding lives, property, and dignity. He also advocated for strengthening the Director of Prosecution to ensure more efficient justice delivery across the region.

Shah’s remarks marked a significant milestone in the implementation of the Bodo Peace Accord, highlighting the government’s commitment to bringing peace and development to the Bodoland region.

Chaos Erupts in Delhi MCD House as AAP and BJP Councillors Clash



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A dramatic disruption unfolded in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) House on Monday as councillors from both the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) engaged in a heated clash, leading to the adjournment of the General House meeting.

The session, which began later than scheduled, saw BJP councillors immediately rising to demand a vote, arguing that AAP no longer held a majority in the House. In response, AAP members vehemently countered the claim, accusing the BJP of undermining democratic principles and “murdering” the Constitution.

As tensions escalated, the House descended into chaos. BJP councillors began chanting slogans and tearing up agenda papers, while others climbed onto tables to voice their protest. The AAP members, equally vocal, waved the torn documents and shouted counter-slogans, intensifying the disruption.

Mamata conveys message of peace from Furfura Sharif

Slams oppn for questioning visit to shrine



TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited Furfura Sharif in Hooghly district on Monday, conveying a message of “harmony, peace, and unity.” She addressed opposition criticism regarding her visit, emphasizing that her intention was purely to foster unity among communities.

Banerjee, who was visiting Furfura Sharif after nearly a decade, met with local religious leaders and participated in the community’s Iftar. The shrine, which is dedicated to Mohammad Abu Bakr Siddique, a revered religious leader for a section of Bengali Muslims, holds significant influence within the community. Over the years, political leaders have often sought the support of the ‘pirs’ (religious leaders) of Furfura Sharif, seen as a key constituency in state elections.

The Chief Minister expressed disappointment over reports in the media questioning her visit’s motives. She pointed out that this was not her first

Union Minister Anupriya Patel Inaugurates Quad Workshop On Pandemic Preparedness for the Indo-Pacific Region

- Event focuses on strengthening global health security
- digital health solutions, and regional resilience

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India is hosting the Quad Workshop on Pandemic Preparedness for the Indo-Pacific Region from March 17-19, 2025. The workshop, inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Anupriya Singh Patel, aims to strengthen global health emergency frameworks and improve pandemic preparedness across the Indo-Pacific region.



Patel, in her inaugural address, highlighted India's role as a leader in digital health technologies. She emphasized that the workshop is a direct outcome of the 6th Quad Leaders' Summit held in September 2024, where the Quad leaders committed to enhancing collaboration on health security and pandemic preparedness. The workshop seeks to improve preparedness, resilience, and coordination in the face of evolving pandemics, focusing on a One Health approach, which integrates human, animal, and environmental health through a multisectoral lens.

Patel stated, "The rise of emerging and re-emerging health threats underscores the need for strengthened preparedness, enhanced surveillance, and coordinated international responses to safeguard global health security." She also highlighted India's significant financial contribution, announcing that India had pledged USD 10 million towards the Pandemic Fund, with an additional USD 12 million to support its ongoing efforts.

The Union Minister also stressed India's leadership in digital health initiatives, which aim to improve healthcare access and outcomes. These initiatives include the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), CoWIN platform, eSanjeevani, National Telemedicine Service, and the Ni-Kshay portal, which helps track and manage tuberculosis patients. Patel added that India's digital disease surveillance system could serve as a valuable model for other countries looking to strengthen their public health infrastructure.

Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Union government, discussed India's efforts to integrate health services and stressed the importance of regional health networks, especially for countries with significant livestock sectors, to prepare for zoonotic diseases. Punya Salila Srivastava, Union Health Secretary, also highlighted the Quad's collaborative role in health security, leveraging the expertise and resources of its member countries, including India's vaccine production capacity and the technological expertise of the US, Japan, and Australia.

Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhu Presents ₹58,514 Crore Tax-Free Budget Focused on Rural Development

TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu presented a tax-free budget with an outlay of ₹58,514 crore for the fiscal year 2025-26. The budget is designed to foster the development of the rural economy by engaging farmers, rural youth, and women in the growth process. Sukhu, who also holds the Finance portfolio, emphasized that the budget's core objective is to accelerate the state's journey toward self-reliance. It focuses on transforming the rural economy while ensuring the conservation of the environment and natural resources throughout the development process. Key sectors highlighted in the budget include agriculture, animal husbandry, and social security, with a clear focus on long-term sustainability.



For the fiscal year 2025-26, the state's revenue receipts are estimated at ₹42,343 crore, while the total revenue expenditure is projected at ₹48,733 crore, leading to a revenue deficit of ₹6,390 crore. The fiscal deficit is estimated at ₹10,338 crore, which constitutes 4.04% of the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In his address, the Chief Minister criticized the previous BJP government, citing challenges such as a fragile fiscal position, rampant mining mafia activities, and reckless expenditures that had worsened the state's

financial health. Sukhu also pointed out that the Congress government had inherited economic difficulties following their assumption of power on December 11, 2022.

Addressing the state's financial hurdles, Sukhu highlighted the lack of funds due from the Centre, including approximately ₹9,000 crore owed to the state government and its employees under the National Pension Scheme (NPS). Additionally, the state has incurred a total revenue loss of ₹9,478 crore since the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The reduction in the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG) and the end of GST compensation have further strained the state's financial situation.

Sukhu also criticized the Centre for its neglect of the state's economic needs, referencing the abolition of the Planning Commission and continuous imposition of conditions on schemes and financial assistance, leaving Himachal Pradesh consistently marginalized.

1st Page Cont..

Mamata conveys message of peace from Furfura Sharif

visit to Furfura Sharif, having come 15-16 times before. She questioned why no such scrutiny arises when she attends Hindu religious events like Durga Puja, Kali Puja, or wishes people during Holi and Christmas. "The soil of Bengal is the soil of harmony, and our message from this platform is one of harmony, peace, and unity among all communities of the state," Banerjee asserted.

During her visit, Banerjee also promised to address local infrastructure needs, announcing the establishment of a polytechnic college in the area.

However, her visit was met with criticism from opposition leaders. Some, including senior Congress leader Adhir Chowdhury, claimed her visit was politically motivated, aiming to garner support from the Muslim community ahead of the state assembly elections next year. "Mamata Banerjee had taken assistance from Furfura leaders in the past to cement her position in power," Chowdhury said, accusing the Chief Minister of not fulfilling promises, such as improving railway connectivity in the region.

Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari labeled the visit a "pre-election ritual," while CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty claimed Banerjee was testing waters within the Muslim community ahead of the polls.

Despite the political criticism, Pirzada Twaha Siddique, a key cleric of Furfura Sharif, defended the Chief Minister, calling the opposition's criticism hypocritical. Notably, Pirzada Abbas Siddique, a critic of Banerjee, was absent from the event.

Chaos Erupts in Delhi MCD House as AAP and BJP Councillors Clash

The clash between the two parties reached such a peak that the House could no longer function, and the proceedings were adjourned amid the turmoil.

The uproar comes amidst ongoing political tensions between the two parties, with AAP maintaining its stance that it retains a majority in the MCD House, while the BJP insists otherwise. The dramatic scenes inside the House underscore the growing animosity and the deep political divide, with both sides accusing

each other of unconstitutional actions.

The adjournment of the meeting leaves the MCD's functioning temporarily suspended and raises concerns about the stability and smooth operation of the city's local governance. It remains to be seen how this latest clash will affect the political dynamics within the MCD and whether a resolution can be reached to ensure the House operates effectively in the future.

Manipur violence: Cases to be tried in Guwahati itself, says Supreme Court

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Supreme Court of India, on March 17, 2025, confirmed that the trial of the Manipur ethnic violence cases, being investigated by the CBI, will be conducted in Guwahati, Assam. This follows the transfer of the cases to Guwahati in August 2023 for pre-trial proceedings. The three-judge bench, led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, also extended the tenure of the relief and rehabilitation committee until July 31, 2025. The committee, chaired by former Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal, was set up in August 2023 to oversee the welfare of the victims of the violence in Manipur.

The ethnic violence in Manipur, which accounted for 77% of the violent incidents in the northeastern region in 2023, has resulted in a significant loss of life and displacement of thousands. As of now, 27 cases, including serious charges such as sexual assault, molestation, and murder, have



been transferred to Assam for trial. These include the high-profile case of two women being paraded naked in a viral video, which brought national attention to the violence.

The top court had previously moved the trials out of Manipur to ensure a fair and unbiased legal process, citing concerns over the "overall environment" in the state. On Monday, the court reiterated that the trial of these transferred cases will be conducted in Guwahati and directed the Gauhati High Court Chief Justice to appoint judicial officers to handle them.

The court has also been monitoring the efforts of the Manipur government in addressing the grievances of the displaced persons and restoring properties damaged during the violence. In December 2023, the court directed the government to submit a detailed report on the damage to properties, including those looted or encroached upon, and to take necessary legal action against trespassers.

The next hearing is scheduled for the week of July 21, 2025, as the investigation and the relief process continue.

Justice Bagchi sworn in as SC judge, in line to be CJI in 2031

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Justice Joymalya Bagchi was sworn in as a Supreme Court judge by Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna. This appointment brings the judicial strength of the Supreme Court to 33, leaving only one vacancy remaining on the bench.

Before his elevation to the apex court, Justice Bagchi served as a judge at the Calcutta High Court, where he gained extensive experience. His appointment is notable as it brings regional representation from the Calcutta High Court to the Supreme Court, filling a long-standing gap since the retirement of Justice Altamas Kabir in July 2013. The Supreme Court Collegium had recommended Justice Bagchi's name for the position on March 6, 2025, and the government notified the



assent of the President to the appointment on March 10.

Justice Bagchi is poised to take on significant leadership roles in the judiciary. Based on the current seniority structure, he is in line to become the Chief Justice of India (CJI) in May 2031, a position he will hold until his retirement on October 2, 2031. His tenure as a Supreme Court judge will span over six years, further solidifying his legal

career.

The Collegium's recommendation, which also took into account the need for regional representation, highlighted that at present, only one judge from the Calcutta High Court, Justice Dipankar Datta, served on the Supreme Court bench. Justice Bagchi's appointment brings balance and diversity to the composition of the court.

Justice Bagchi's judicial career began when he was appointed to the Calcutta High Court on June 27, 2011. His experience includes a transfer to the Andhra Pradesh High Court in January 2021, before being repatriated to Calcutta in November 2021. With over 13 years of service as a high court judge, Justice Bagchi brings a wealth of experience to his new role on the Supreme Court.

'Muslims Will Never Forgive You': Owaisi Warns Naidu, Nitish Over Waqf Bill

JPC Chief Calls Protest A 'Conspiracy'

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

Opposition parties led by Congress joined forces with the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) to protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024. The protest aimed to draw attention to what the board called an "intimidation" of Muslims and an attempt to undermine their constitutional rights, specifically those enshrined in Articles 12 to 35 of the Indian Constitution.

The protest saw participation from several key opposition parties, including Congress, Trinamool Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, CPI (Marxist), Nationalist Congress Party, and the Indian Union Muslim League. Notably, the Biju Janata Dal also aligned itself with the opposition, while BJP allies like the Telugu Desam Party, Janata Dal (United), and Lok Janshakti Party abstained from the protest.

AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi led the charge against BJP allies who supported the government on the Waqf issue. Owaisi criticized Chandrababu Naidu, Chirag Paswan, and Nitish Kumar for backing the bill, warning them that Muslims would not forgive their support for what he called an



- AIMPLB calls it unconstitutional
- BJP allies abstain from protest

unconstitutional law. He also highlighted the bill's potential to allow non-Muslims to dominate Waqf boards, questioning why non-Muslims should have a role in Muslim religious affairs when non-Sikhs and non-Hindus are not allowed in Gurdwaras and temple trusts.

Congress MP Mohammed Jawaid expressed his support for the protest, asserting that the bill was unconstitutional and posed a threat to Muslim properties. Other leaders like Salman Khurshid, Muhibullah Nadvi, and Dharmendra Yadav echoed concerns about the bill's interference in Muslim affairs and its potential to weaken Waqf boards, endan-

gering Muslim properties in the future.

Leading Muslim organizations such as Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind also lent their support, with their leaders emphasizing that the rights given to Muslims through the Waqf Act were similar to those enjoyed by other communities. They warned that the bill was an attack on the Constitution itself.

The protest marked the beginning of a nationwide movement against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, with AIMPLB president Khalid Saifullah Rehmani vowing to continue the fight.

Mayawati: Relatives are Part of Bahujan Samaj, Nothing More

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati addressed the media on Monday, emphasizing that her siblings and other relatives are merely part of the 'Bahujan Samaj' and nothing beyond that. She clarified that personal relations will not interfere with the party's interests and growth.

Mayawati assured that anyone from the Bahujan Samaj who works sincerely for the party's cause will be given opportunities to progress, irrespective of family ties. "I will never let my interests, or those of my siblings and relatives, weaken the party as long as I am alive. My relatives are just a part of the Bahujan Samaj, and nothing more," she stated.

These remarks come after Mayawati removed her nephew, Akash Anand, from all party posts on March 2, and announced that there will be no successor to her in the party as long as she remains alive. She also appointed her brother Anand Kumar and Ramji Gautam as national coordinators to manage BSP's affairs na-



tionwide.

Mayawati highlighted the enthusiasm surrounding the 91st birth anniversary celebrations of BSP founder Kanshi Ram on March 15, noting that the event was held with great zeal, despite coinciding with several festivals like Holi. "The resolution taken by Kanshi Ram's followers to strengthen the party at all levels has given me new energy," she added.

On the topic of social change, Mayawati spoke about the importance of moving away from caste-based mentality. She criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi's repeated references to his poverty, stating

that he has never faced caste discrimination like Dalits or other marginalized communities. Mayawati urged party members to educate the younger generation about the struggles faced by these communities.

Reflecting on the BSP's impact, she praised the social changes brought about during her leadership, particularly the empowerment of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. She claimed that before the BSP's majority government in 2007, Dalits could not sit with upper-class people, but this changed under her leadership, marking a significant victory for social justice.

'One district, one mafia' era in UP replaced with One District, One Product : CM Adityanath



TPN Correspondent | UP

Saharanpur (UP): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday criticized the previous Samajwadi Party government for fostering a culture of lawlessness, alleging that its "one district, one maa" policy had led to widespread corruption and misgovernance. Adityanath claimed that this policy has now been replaced by his government's "One District, One Product" (ODOP) initiative, which he said promotes local artisans and products to create jobs and boost global recognition.

Addressing an event as part of the 'CM Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan,' where loans were distributed to 365 entrepreneurs, Adityanath remarked,

"Every district had a 'maa' under the previous government. We replaced that with 'One District, One Product' so that artisans and local products get global recognition and create jobs."

While not naming former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav directly, Adityanath took a dig at his predecessor, saying, "If the leader of a state wakes up at noon, gets ready by 2 pm, and then goes on picnics with his friends, when will he work? The public suffered while his associates looted the state."

The Chief Minister also highlighted his government's focus on improving connectivity, specifically mentioning efforts to reduce the travel time be-

tween Saharanpur and Delhi to just 1 hour and 45 minutes. He further emphasized the success of the ODOP scheme, pointing to Saharanpur's flourishing wood carving industry, which now exports goods worth Rs 1,000 crore globally.

Criticizing previous governments for neglecting artisans, Adityanath said, "Earlier, these craftsmen existed but the old governments were too busy turning them into vote banks. They never cared about providing them with better designs, technology, packaging, or export facilities."

In his speech, the Chief Minister also highlighted employment generation efforts, noting that 60,244 new police jobs had been announced during Holi, including many for youth in Saharanpur. He pointed out that over 12,000 women had secured positions in the police force, which had previously seen only 10,000 women officers since 1947.

Adityanath concluded by reaffirming his commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and providing opportunities for all, stressing that his government is focused on hard work, not dynastic politics.

Parliamentary Panel Proposes India Explore "Grand Strategy" for Long-Term Foreign Policy

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

A parliamentary panel has recommended the formulation of a comprehensive foreign policy strategy tailored specifically to India's unique geopolitical context, growing economic influence, and evolving global relationships. The recommendation, made by the Committee on External Affairs, was presented in the 'Fifth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (2024-25) on Demands for Grants (2025-26)' in Parliament on March 17, 2025.

The committee, chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, expressed interest in understanding whether the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has considered developing a "grand strategy" to clearly define India's long-term foreign policy objectives and approach. The panel highlighted that India's burgeoning geopolitical influence necessitates a roadmap for a future-oriented foreign policy that aligns with the country's growing global

stature.

The report underscores the importance of having a formal and comprehensive foreign policy document specifically suited to India's current geopolitical situation and evolving international ties. It calls for the MEA to initiate consultations with experts, diplomats, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders to explore the feasibility of such a strategy. The committee emphasized the need for the MEA to expedite this process.



While acknowledging India's longstanding diplomatic principles, which have contributed to its global success, the committee also noted that several countries like the UK, US, Ger-

many, Japan, and others have formalized national foreign policy strategies that have proved beneficial in guiding their international engagements. The committee urges the MEA to consider similar steps.

In its response, the MEA stated that while there is no formal, overarching document outlining India's foreign policy, the principles of the country's diplomatic strategy are well-established. These principles include safeguarding national sovereignty, promoting economic transformation, ensuring global security, and enhancing India's influence in global forums.

The panel reiterated that India's foreign policy, grounded in these enduring principles, has helped strengthen ties with traditional allies, forge new partnerships, and adapt to global challenges, providing a solid foundation for India's future diplomatic endeavors.

Haryana Presents Rs 2.05 Lakh Crore Budget, Aim To Make State "Future Capable"

TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini presented the state's budget for the financial year 2025-26 on Monday, outlining a total outlay of Rs 2.05 lakh crore. The budget aims to enhance the state's future capabilities, focusing on technological advancements and economic growth.

In his speech at the Haryana Assembly, CM Saini shared that the state government had received around 11,000 suggestions from various sectors to shape the budget. To make Haryana "future capable," he pro-

posed the creation of a new government department called the "Department of Future," which would drive forward-looking policies and projects.

The budget outlay for 2025-26 is Rs 2,05,017.29 crore, marking a 13.7% increase from the revised estimates of 2024-25. CM Saini emphasized the government's focus on e-governance over the past decade, highlighting that 19 out of the 217 promises made in the election manifesto had already been fulfilled.

Among the key proposals, CM Saini announced the establishment of the

Haryana AI (Artificial Intelligence) Mission, with assistance from the



World Bank amounting to Rs 474 crore. The mission will establish hubs in Gurugram and Panchkula to promote AI innovation.

To foster entrepreneurship, the Haryana government will create a 'fund of funds' worth Rs 2,000 crore to attract private investors and support startups. In addition, a Rs 10 crore allocation has been proposed for the creation of the Substance Abuse and Narcotics Knowledge Awareness and Liberation Programme Authority, aimed at tackling drug abuse in the state.

The budget also includes Rs 5,000 crore for the Lado Lakshmi Yojana, which will provide Rs 2,100 per month to women in Haryana. To boost agricultural development, CM Saini proposed the establishment of a Horticulture Research Centre in Palwal and a flower market in Gurugram.

With these initiatives, the Haryana government aims to position the state for sustained growth, technological advancement, and social welfare in the coming years.

Ajit Doval Meets Tulsi Gabbard In Delhi, Chairs High-Level Security Meet



- Discussions focus on counterterrorism, intelligence-sharing
- Indo-Pacific security amid growing India-US partnership

TPN Correspondent| New Delhi

National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval met with US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard on Sunday in New Delhi, marking the beginning of a two-and-a-half-day visit by Gabbard to India. The meeting focused on enhancing intelligence-sharing and collaboration between India and the US, particularly in the context of the growing India-US global strategic partnership. Doval and Gabbard discussed a range of security issues, including tackling terrorism and addressing the challenges posed by emerging technologies.

This visit is the first high-level trip to India by a senior official from the Donald Trump administration. Gabbard's visit comes after she met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his trip to Washington,

DC. Sources reported that the one-on-one discussions between Doval and Gabbard were productive and focused on strengthening security ties between the two nations.

In addition to the bilateral talks, Doval chaired a closed-door conclave of top global intelligence officials. The conclave, hosted by India, saw participation from intelligence chiefs from several countries, including Canadian spy chief Daniel Rogers, UK National Security Adviser Jonathan Powell, and the intelligence heads of Australia, Germany, New Zealand, and other allied nations. The discussions revolved around intelligence sharing, counterterrorism efforts, and addressing threats from emerging technologies. Security in the Indo-Pacific region, cooperation on counterterrorism financing, and issues related to extradition and immigration

were also key topics of deliberation.

The Indian side raised concerns about anti-India elements operating abroad, including pro-Khalistan groups, during the conclave. Additionally, the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war and conflicts in the Middle East were discussed in the context of global security challenges.

Gabbard's visit follows recent tensions between India and Canada, stemming from allegations surrounding the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The ongoing diplomatic strains between the two countries are expected to be addressed in discussions between Doval and Rogers.

Gabbard is scheduled to speak at the Raisina Dialogue on Tuesday as part of her official visit.

Delhi Airport Sues Centre For Allowing Flights From Defence Airbase



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The operator of Delhi's international airport, predominantly owned by GMR Airports, has filed a lawsuit against the Indian government over the approval of commercial flights from a nearby military airbase, according to legal documents set to be heard on Monday. The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), which operates the airport, claims that allowing commercial operations from the Ghaziabad airbase will make the airport economically unfeasible.

The airport in question, one of the busiest in India, served approximately 73.6 million passengers last year. However, it faced a loss of \$21 million due to high government fees. In stark contrast, the airbase in Ghaziabad, which is about 30 kilometers (19 miles) away, saw only around 1,400 users by Sunday.

DIAL argues that the government's decision to permit commercial flights from Hindon Airforce Station threatens to undermine the financial viability of the Delhi airport. In its lawsuit filed on March 10, DIAL asserts that the government's actions violate aviation regulations, which prevent the establishment of a new commercial airport within 150 kilometers (90 miles) of an existing one unless there is clear passenger demand. The suit is being heard by the Delhi High Court.

The Airports Authority of India, a state-run entity, also holds a stake in DIAL. However, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has yet to respond to requests for comment on the matter. The lawsuit further claims that media reports have indicated Air India Express began operating flights from Hindon in March, which prompted DIAL to take legal action.

DIAL seeks to reverse the government's decision, citing concerns about the potential impact on the Delhi airport's economic stability and operational capacity. The case is now set for a hearing, with DIAL represented by the law firm Trilegal.

Delhi's I&FC and MCD Collaborate for De-silting Sunehri Pul and Kushak Drains

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

The Delhi Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that it will undertake de-silting work on the open portions of the Sunehri Pul and Kushak drains in South Delhi. Meanwhile, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will be responsible for de-silting the covered portions of these drains.



The I&FC's submission, dated March 11, outlined the plans for the Sunehri Pul and Kushak drains. For the Sunehri Pul drain, the MCD has committed to cleaning the covered portion by cutting through the section near the bus depot by Dayal Singh College. For the Kushak drain, which is partially covered, the MCD will issue an Expression of Interest (EOI) within seven days to identify effective methods for de-silting the box portion. Additionally, the MCD will take steps to prevent waterlogging in these stretches, ensuring proper drainage and the continued flow of water.

All 24 major drains in Delhi that flow into the Yamuna River come under the jurisdiction of the I&FC department. However, in this particular case, the I&FC has stated that it will make an exception and collaborate with the MCD. This decision follows a joint meeting held on March 5, 2025, under the chairmanship of the Delhi Chief Secretary, after I&FC clarified that it lacks the necessary expertise to clean covered drains.

Delhi Police Detain Seven Illegal Bangladeshi Immigrants, Deportation Process Begins

TPN Correspondent| New Delhi

The Delhi Police have detained seven illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, including a minor, and have initiated their deportation process, an official confirmed on Monday. This is part of the ongoing crackdown on illegal immigration that the Delhi Police launched last December.

The detained individuals—Dilawar Khan (48), Beauty Begum (39), Rafikul (43), Tauhid (20), Md Azhar (28), Zakir Malik (40), and a 15-year-old minor girl—are accused of entering India illegally via river routes. They were found residing in various locations across Delhi and Ghaziabad. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (East), Abhishek Dhania, the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) is assisting with the deportation process.

The detention occurred on March 16 after the police received a tip-off about the presence of illegal immigrants in the Krishna Nagar area. The police detained Dilawar Khan, who initially claimed to be from West Bengal. However, after further questioning and verification, it was



revealed that he was a Bangladeshi national from Khulna district.

Following this revelation, the police identified six other illegal Bangladeshi nationals residing in different areas of Delhi-NCR. Raids were conducted in Laxmi Nagar, Lajpat Nagar, Seemapuri, and Shalimar Garden in Ghaziabad, leading to their detention. The investigation is still ongoing, and authorities are working to uncover additional details.

This operation is part of the larg-

er drive against illegal immigrants, which gained momentum after a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other political leaders in February. The police are continuing their efforts to identify and detain individuals who have entered the country unlawfully.

The Delhi Police's intensified actions reflect the government's commitment to addressing illegal immigration and ensuring security in the region. Further updates on the case are expected as investigations progress.

Delhi Metro to launch urban freight services, joins hands with Blue Dart

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has teamed up with logistics provider Blue Dart to introduce an urban freight (cargo) service on its metro network, marking a pioneering step in the South Asia Pacific region. This innovative initiative is designed to revolutionize last-mile delivery solutions by utilizing Metro connectivity to transport goods efficiently.

Under this partnership, Blue Dart will operate its cargo services on DMRC's metro network during non-peak hours, reducing the need for road transport. This collaboration aims to ease traffic congestion in the city, decrease vehicular emissions, and improve overall urban mobility.

A senior DMRC official explained, "By integrating cargo movement with Metro services, we are optimising our infrastructure for sustainable logistics solutions." The initiative is

in line with DMRC's broader goal of promoting environmentally friendly urban transport and tackling the growing challenge of urban congestion.

This move follows similar efforts by other cities around the world. For instance, Madrid has already launched pilot projects to transport parcels via metro systems, successfully reducing road traffic and pollution. DMRC is actively engaging with Madrid Metro to exchange best practices and gain insights into urban freight transportation. The collaboration with Madrid will



help DMRC fine-tune its approach to ensure the efficient and seamless movement of cargo on the metro network.

The project also aims to improve first-mile and last-mile connectivity by establishing micro parcel hubs at Metro stations. These hubs will serve as crucial points in the supply chain, ensuring smoother logistics and contributing to a more sustainable urban transport ecosystem across Delhi-NCR.

"This project is about more than just logistics," the DMRC official emphasized. "It's about shaping the future of urban mobility in a sustainable manner. By reducing dependence on road-based freight transport, we are taking a significant step toward lowering carbon emissions in the city." The new urban freight service is expected to play a crucial role in reducing congestion and promoting

Assam Rifles Chief, Mizoram Official On "Historic Moment" In Aizawl



- Move fulfills long-standing demand, enhancing urban development
- Improving AR infrastructure in Mizoram

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The recent relocation of the Assam Rifles (AR) establishment from Aizawl, Mizoram's capital, has been well-received by the local population, according to Lieutenant General Vikas Lakhera, the Director General of Assam Rifles. In an interview with NDTV, Lakhera explained that the decision to shift the AR from the capital was met with a positive response, particularly due to the green belt and open space of the new location in Zokhawsang, 15 km away from Aizawl.

The Assam Rifles has been stationed in Mizoram since the 1890s. The Union government made the decision to transfer the land in Aizawl to the state government, as part of a broader effort to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Mizoram.

"The mood was very positive during the formal ceremony marking the vacating of the land," Lakhera said, adding that Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who oversees the Ministry of Home Affairs, emphasized that the newly vacated space could be used for better urban development in the growing hill city.

The move was part of a long-standing demand from the Mizoram government to relocate the Assam Rifles. The initial request was made in 1988 by the Mizo National Front (MNF) government after a controversial incident in which 11 civilians were killed in a clash with the paramilitary force. After years of negotiations, in February 2019, the Union Home Ministry directed the Assam Rifles to relocate its establishment to Zokhawsang.

Lakhera highlighted that while the new location is close to Aizawl, it offers better infrastructure for the AR, with the sector headquarters remaining in the Khatla neighborhood. "It's a wonderful location and provides better facilities for the Assam Rifles while staying close to Aizawl," he said.

Jonathan Lalremruata, Officer on Special Duty to the Mizoram Chief Minister, called the relocation a historic moment and praised the leadership of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Chief Minister, and the Director General of Assam Rifles for making the shift a reality. "We are fortunate that this process has moved forward quickly and effectively," he added.

Vadodara Crash Accused Sent For Further Remand, Cops Transferred



TPN Correspondent | Vadodara

Chaurasia in reaching the media.

In a hit-and-run case that rocked Vadodara on the night of Holika Dahan, Rakshit Chaurasia is accused of ramming his car into three two-wheelers near Amrapali Complex in the Karelbaug area, leaving several people injured. The incident occurred on the night of March 14, during the Holika Dahan celebrations, when Chaurasia allegedly lost control of his car while overspeeding and crashed into the vehicles. After the incident, he fled the scene, but police later tracked him down and arrested him.

The police initially obtained a one-day remand from the court to question Chaurasia. However, new evidence emerged during the investigation, prompting the court to extend his remand by an additional two days on March 13. While in police custody, Chaurasia managed to give a statement to the media, which violated police protocol as an accused person is not allowed to speak publicly while under detention. It was later discovered that three Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs) from the Traffic department had assisted

In response to this breach of protocol, the Vadodara Police Commissioner took swift action, transferring the three ASIs to different departments as punishment. The incident has raised concerns over police accountability and the handling of suspects in custody.

During his arrest, Chaurasia was overheard shouting cryptic phrases like "Another Round" and "Nikita," which have since raised suspicions. Authorities are now investigating whether these words are related to the motive behind the crime or potential accomplices. More than seven key aspects of the case, including Chaurasia's connections and the possibility of premeditation, are under investigation.

The families of the victims and local residents have demanded strict action against Chaurasia and thorough accountability for the police officers involved. The investigation continues, as the police work to determine whether the incident was a tragic accident or a deliberate act.

Bombay high court discharges Gautam Adani in market violation case

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

Gautam Adani, founder and chairman of the Adani Group, and his brother Rajesh Adani, managing director and executive director at Adani Enterprises Ltd., have been cleared of all charges in a market regulation violations case by the Bombay High Court.

The case, which dates back to 2012, involved allegations of violations related to market regulations and financial transactions worth nearly ₹388 crore. The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) had initiated legal proceedings against Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) and its promoters, Gautam and Rajesh Adani, accusing them of criminal conspiracy and cheating.

In 2019, the Adanis filed a petition with the Bombay High Court to quash the sessions court's decision, which had denied their discharge from the case. On Monday, Justice RN Laddha of the single bench of the Bom-



bay High Court quashed the sessions court's order and cleared the Adanis of all charges in the matter.

This ruling marks a significant victory for the Adani brothers, as they have now been absolved of any wrongdoing in connection with the market regulation violations case.

Encounter Breaks Out Between Security Forces, Terrorists In J&K's Kupwara



TPN Correspondent | Srinagar

An encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces in the Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, according to officials. The confrontation occurred after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the Krumhoora village of Zachaldara, based on intelli-

gence reports about the presence of terrorists in the area.

The operation, which began as a search to locate the militants, quickly escalated when the terrorists opened fire at the security forces. In response, the forces retaliated, leading to an ongoing firefight between the two sides.

As the operation continues, further details on the outcome of the encounter remain unavailable. The situation in the region is still developing, with additional forces deployed to assist in the operation and ensure the safety of nearby areas.

Authorities have yet to confirm any casualties or injuries as a result of the clash. The security forces remain on high alert as they work to neutralize the militants and secure the area.

This encounter is part of a broader, ongoing effort by Indian security forces to eliminate terrorist activity in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in areas such as Kupwara, which has been a hotspot for militant activities. Further updates are expected as the situation unfolds.

Kolkata Police STF Arrests Man with Firearms at Sealdah Railway Station

TPN Correspondent |Kolkata

On Monday morning, the Special Task Force (STF) of Kolkata Police arrested a man at Sealdah railway station after seizing firearms from his possession, a police officer reported. The arrest was made following a tip-off regarding potential arms trafficking through the station.

The arrested individual, a resident of Kaliachak in Malda district, was detained under the Arms Act. The man had traveled to Kolkata aboard the Hate Bazare Express and arrived at the station earlier that morning.

Authorities recovered at least six improvised firearms from

his possession, including two single-shot firearms and four 7mm semi-automatic pistols, each fitted with dual magazines. In addition to the weapons, the STF also seized eight live cartridges.

The officer revealed that the STF had received information regarding potential arms trafficking via the Sealdah route. Acting on this intelligence, the personnel remained vigilant and conducted a thorough

search, leading to the man's arrest and the seizure of the firearms. A case has been registered at Entally police station in connection with the incident.

Preliminary interrogation of the suspect has revealed that he had procured the improvised firearms and live ammunition from Kagharia, Bihar. Authorities are continuing to question the accused to gather further information on the source of the weapons and any potential network involved in trafficking.

The successful operation highlights the STF's ongoing efforts to crack down on illegal arms smuggling and ensure the safety of the public.





Election Commission Needs Urgent Course Correction on Voter Rolls

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is facing growing criticism from Opposition parties over discrepancies in electoral rolls and issues of duplicate Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers. As the country approaches a significant milestone of 100 crore eligible voters, these concerns have raised alarm over the integrity of the electoral process. If not addressed swiftly, these issues could undermine the credibility of India's democratic framework. The ECI has acknowledged that while some EPIC numbers may appear identical, other voter details such as demographic information, assembly constituency, and polling booth are different. However, this assurance has done little to quell concerns, and many believe it is insufficient. The need for a comprehensive national exercise to

ensure each voter has a unique EPIC number has become critical. In addition, there must be stronger coordination between the ECI and state electoral officers to ensure accurate and updated voter databases. Lapses by these officers, particularly in managing voter records independently, seem to have contributed to these discrepancies. A key point of contention is the ECI's move to link voter IDs with Aadhaar. Although current law allows for voluntary linking of Aadhaar details to electoral rolls, the government has assured that those who do not comply will not be removed from the voter list. This approach aims to prevent coercive actions and ensure inclusivity. Aadhaar, being a unique identifier, plays a pivotal role in eliminating duplicate voters, ensuring transparency, and improving

service delivery to citizens. However, the government must focus on resolving the current issues with voter rolls before undertaking major reforms like 'One Nation, One Election.' The concerns raised by Opposition parties are valid, as voter roll integrity is the cornerstone of any fair election. For a democracy as vast as India's, it is crucial to ensure that the voter list is accurate and free from duplication. The ECI's upcoming high-level meeting on March 18 to discuss the Aadhaar linkage issue must result in a clear, time-bound plan to address these concerns. Failure to act swiftly and decisively could lead to widespread disenchantment with the electoral process, damaging the trust that citizens place in their democratic institutions.



Ukraine Faces Potential "Frozen" Conflict Amid Ceasefire Talks

Ukraine may be on the verge of a "frozen" conflict, as international pressure mounts for a ceasefire, yet both sides remain far from agreeing on a lasting peace. The recent proposal for a 30-day ceasefire, brokered by the U.S., has brought global attention to Moscow's stance. While Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed conditional support for a ceasefire, emphasizing that it should address the root causes of the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has warned that Putin's intentions are manipulative and aimed at gaining further territorial concessions. Putin's response is strategic; he recognizes that the conflict is not just a military struggle but a geopolitical one, and he aims to prolong negotiations to maximize his gains. With Russia regaining control of significant areas in Ukraine, including the Kursk region, Putin is pushing for a halt to Western military support to Ukraine during the ceasefire period, further complicating negotiations. The situation mirrors the Korean War's armistice, where an official peace agreement was never signed, only a temporary halt to hostilities. Just as the Korean conflict remained unresolved for years, Ukraine could face a similar fate, with no peace deal in sight. Putin's demands to keep Crimea and parts of Donbas under Russian control are unacceptable to Ukraine, which remains determined to reclaim its territory. Zelenskyy, meanwhile, is in a weaker position, as the Trump administration has hinted that Kyiv may have to accept significant territorial losses, including not joining NATO. The ill-fated Ukrainian offensive in Kursk last year only compounded the country's strategic challenges, with Russia regaining lost ground. While the U.S. puts pressure on Moscow to accept the ceasefire and toughens sanctions on Russian energy and banking sectors, Zelenskyy is calling for guarantees to ensure Russia adheres to the ceasefire. The Kremlin, however, opposes the idea of European peacekeepers in Ukraine, with Putin preferring a role for countries like India and other BRICS nations, who have maintained neutral relations with Russia. As talks progress, the conflict risks becoming a prolonged "frozen" war, where violence stops but a lasting peace remains elusive. For Ukraine, the challenge is to ensure its sovereignty while navigating complex international pressures.

India Must Deftly Walk the Tariff Tightrope

India faces a significant challenge in negotiating trade tariffs with the United States under President Donald Trump. The tariffs being used as leverage for non-trade objectives, such as reducing illegal immigration and bolstering the dollar, have caused global trade turmoil. While Trump's trade war strategy appears erratic, India must navigate these tumultuous waters carefully to avoid serious economic setbacks. India's trade surplus with the U.S. has become a point of contention for the Trump administration, particularly as India runs a large overall trade deficit with the world. India's high tariffs on agricultural products, automobiles, and alcohol—ranging from 100% to 165%—have particularly drawn criticism. In response, India offered to reduce tariffs on items of American interest, like bourbon whiskey, but this gesture has not mollified Trump. The situation has become a complex balancing act. On the one hand, India is protective of its domestic industries, such as agriculture and automobiles, where high tariffs shield local businesses and farmers from foreign competition. On the other hand, India has significant vulnerabilities. For instance, if India agrees to reduce tariffs for the U.S., it risks setting a precedent for other countries, such as the European Union and the U.K., who have long sought similar concessions. Moreover, the United States is unlikely to significantly increase its exports even if India cuts tariffs, making this trade dispute more emotional than practical. India's economic situation is far stronger today compared to 1991, when it faced an economic crisis. The 1991 economic reforms opened up India's economy, making it the world's fifth-largest economy today. However, India's agricultural and automobile sectors remain overprotected, reminiscent of the country's pre-reform era. With growing global competition and changing economic dynamics, India must reconsider its high tariff policies. Eliminating tariffs on agriculture and manufactured goods would help India integrate more deeply into the global economy, boosting its manufacturing sector and attracting foreign investments. This shift would also create jobs in new industries,



while freeing up resources to address pressing domestic issues such as the over-reliance on agriculture. India should not only focus on tariff reductions but also harness its labor force's potential in emerging sectors like sports, entertainment, and personal services. By retraining workers and investing in global opportunities, India can ensure long-term prosperity without compromising its economic independence. In conclusion, India must tread carefully with the U.S. on tariffs, aiming to strike a deal that protects its interests while positioning itself as an open and competitive player in the global economy.



Pakistan Faces Growing Internal Crisis Amid Baloch Separatism and TTP Resurgence

Pakistan is grappling with a significant internal crisis, driven by escalating separatist insurgencies and a surge in terrorist attacks. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has intensified its activities, conducting at least 14 attacks between 2020 and 2025 against Chinese nationals, killing 20 people and injuring 34. In addition, over 400 Pakistani security personnel have died in similar attacks. While the BLA's militancy continues, the Baloch independence movement is also supported by non-violent activists, such as Mahrang Baloch, advocating for provincial autonomy and social justice. The BLA's March 13 hijacking of the Jaffar Express, a high-profile operation, has propelled the movement into the international spotlight. This event parallels other global incidents, such as the October 2023 Hamas attack, highlighting the BLA's strategy to rejuvenate the Baloch cause. However, this bold action risks triggering a harsh response from Pakistan's military establishment, which traditionally leans towards military solutions rather than diplomatic engagement. Pakistan's counterinsurgency history reveals the limits of force in resolving separatist

movements. In 1971, the state's heavy-handed tactics led to the separation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Similarly, while Operation Zarb-e-Azb against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) brought temporary peace, it failed to address the underlying issues, with the TTP quickly resurfacing when the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan. The Baloch insurgency shares key similarities with past conflicts, where the state's reliance on military might has proven ineffective. Pakistan's failure to address the grievances of ethnic minorities like the Baloch, Sindhis, and Kashmiris has prolonged regional instability. As the TTP resurges and Baloch separatism gains momentum, Pakistan faces a perilous situation where military responses alone could lead to a prolonged, unwinnable conflict. Pakistan's military engagement across its borders, including operations along the Durand Line, and its ongoing internal conflicts threaten to undermine recent economic stabilization. With tensions rising and the situation spiraling out of control, Pakistan must reconsider its approach, shifting from forceful suppression to genuine political dialogue to prevent further destabilization.

PM Modi-Christopher Luxon meeting: India, New Zealand ink defence pact

- Focus on maritime security and cooperation
- Roadmap planned for future defence ties
- Joint training and exercises to increase
- Supports Indo-Pacific peace and stability



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India and New Zealand have signed a defence cooperation agreement aimed at boosting their partnership in maritime safety and security. This pact follows a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon on Monday, marking a significant step in strengthening the two nations' ties.

Following the talks, Modi emphasized the decision to strengthen and institutionalize the defence and security relationship between the two countries. He also revealed that a roadmap would be developed to guide future cooperation in the defence industry sector, ensuring more strategic collaboration.

As a member of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance, New Zealand plays a vital role in global security, and this agreement is seen as a move to

enhance both countries' strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. The focus on maritime safety and security is particularly significant given the increasing geopolitical challenges in the region, which call for stronger partnerships between like-minded nations.

The new agreement is expected to deepen defence engagements and facilitate greater collaboration on training, joint exercises, and the sharing of best practices in the defence sector. Both leaders acknowledged the importance of maintaining a rules-based international order in the maritime domain, and this agreement serves as a step towards enhancing peace and stability in the region.

This development also reflects India's growing global influence and its efforts to strengthen ties with key partners like New Zealand, in line with its broader foreign policy strategy to bolster defence cooperation across the Indo-Pacific.



India and Sweden Aim to Strengthen Trade and Investment Ties

Discussions focus on green technologies, smart infrastructure, and economic cooperation

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India and Sweden are actively exploring ways to enhance their bilateral trade and investment relations, with a focus on fostering economic cooperation in key sectors. During a recent meeting in New Delhi, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, and Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Maria M. Stenergard, discussed opportunities for collaboration in areas such as green technologies, renewable energy, smart infrastructure, and healthcare.

Sweden is currently the 21st largest investor in India, with a cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) of USD 2.51 billion from April 2000 to March 2024. Key sectors attracting Swedish investments include automobiles, industrial machinery, engineering, electrical equipment, and metallurgy. The two countries aim to further strengthen their trade and investment ties through increased cooperation, opening up new avenues for business in both nations.

Minister Goyal emphasized the importance of these discussions, saying, "We discussed ways to further strengthen the India-Sweden bilateral trade and investment partnership, fostering economic cooperation and

opening up new business opportunities in both nations." The Joint Economic Commission (JEC) continues to serve as the primary platform for government-to-government dialogue between India and Sweden.

In recent trade statistics, India's exports to Sweden reached USD 104 million in June 2024, while imports totaled USD 171 million, resulting in a trade deficit of USD 66.6 million. However, compared to June 2023, India's exports to Sweden saw significant growth of 45.2%, while imports increased by 21.6%. Key exports from India to Sweden include ready-made cotton garments, electric machinery, automobile spare parts, and iron and steel products. Imports from Sweden include iron and steel, pulp and waste paper, paper products, auto components, and industrial machinery for various sectors.

This growing engagement between the two countries comes as Sweden strengthens its global partnerships, responding to shifts in international dynamics, including the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its evolving stance toward China. Both nations continue to deepen their ties, focusing on shared goals of economic growth and mutual prosperity.



RG Kar Rape-Murder Case: SC disposes of parents' plea for fresh CBI probe – 'free to approach Calcutta HC'

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court of India on Monday, March 17, dismissed a petition filed by the parents of a victim in the RG Kar rape-murder case, seeking a fresh investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). However, the court granted them the option to pursue their case in the Calcutta High Court.

Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, stated, "Without making comments, we dispose of the application observing that the applicant is at liberty to pursue the proceedings before the HC," according to legal news agency LiveLaw.

The case relates to the horrific rape and murder of a 31-year-old post-graduate trainee doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. Her body was discovered on August 9, 2024, within the hospital premises. Investigations revealed that the woman had been raped and murdered, sparking widespread protests across the country.

During a prior hearing, the CJI-led Bench directed hospitals and medical colleges nationwide not to penalize doctors and medical professionals who had participated in protests over the case but had returned to their duties after the Supreme Court's appeal. Senior Advocate Karuna Nundi represented the victim's parents, while Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta appeared on behalf of the CBI.

In February 2025, a special court in Kolkata ordered the CBI to submit a progress report on the case by February 24. The CBI had taken over the investigation following a directive from the Calcutta High Court.



Centre has accorded approval for Chandrayaan-5 Mission: ISRO chief

ISRO to Launch 250 kg Rover to Study the Moon

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Centre has granted approval for the ambitious Chandrayaan-5 mission, aimed at studying the lunar surface, ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan announced on Sunday. Speaking at an event to felicitate his appointment as the new head of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Narayanan highlighted the significance of the mission, which will carry a 250 kg rover, a substantial upgrade from the 25-kg rover 'Prayagyaan' aboard Chandrayaan-3.

The Chandrayaan-5 mission, a key part of ISRO's lunar exploration program, will focus on detailed surface studies of the moon. Narayanan noted that this mission would be a step forward in ISRO's lunar exploration capabilities, following the success of the previous Chandrayaan missions. Chandrayaan-1, launched in 2008, provided crucial data on the moon's chemical, mineralogical, and photo-geological characteristics. Despite a partial setback during the Chandrayaan-2 mission in 2019, which was 98% successful, the high-resolution camera on the spacecraft continues to send valuable images from the lunar surface.

Narayanan also spoke about the recent success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission, which achieved a significant milestone with the Vikram lander performing a soft landing on the moon's South Pole on August 23, 2023.



India, New Zealand resume FTA talks, bilateral meet held

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India and New Zealand have officially resumed negotiations for a proposed free trade agreement (FTA), marking a significant step towards strengthening economic ties after a nearly decade-long pause. The two countries began discussions on the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in April 2010, aimed at boosting trade in goods, services, and investment. However, after nine rounds of talks, negotiations stalled in 2015.

The announcement of the resumption of talks came after Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met with New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment, Todd McClay, during a high-level visit by New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon to India. The two leaders agreed to pursue a comprehensive and mutually beneficial FTA that seeks to enhance supply chain integration, improve market access, and unlock new business opportunities for both countries.

Bilateral trade between India and New Zealand has been steadily growing, surpassing \$1 billion during April-January 2025. However, a report by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) suggests that the proposed FTA may offer limited benefits to Indian companies, as many already enjoy duty-free access to a significant portion of goods in the New Zealand market. The report notes that New Zealand's average import tariff is just 2.3%, compared to India's 17.8%. Despite this, the FTA negotiations aim to further enhance trade relations and unlock new opportunities for businesses and consumers. India's exports to New Zealand include clothing, textiles, refined petroleum, agricultural machinery, and basmati rice.



Trump Attempts to Void Biden's Pardons, Raising Legal and Political Controversies

TPN Correspondent | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump has moved to annul several of his predecessor Joe Biden's pardons, marking the latest in a series of actions to challenge political opponents. Among the pardons Trump declared void were those granted to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives investigating the January 6, 2020, Capitol attack, as well as prominent figures such as Dr. Anthony Fauci, who headed the Biden Administration's COVID-19 response, and former Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley.

Trump's statement on his 'Truth Social' media platform claimed that these pardons, signed by Biden just before he left office on January 20, were invalid because they were allegedly signed using an autopen. "The 'Pardons' that Sleepy Joe Biden gave to the Unselect Committee of Political Thugs... are hereby declared VOID, VACANT, AND OF NO FURTHER FORCE OR EFFECT," Trump wrote early Monday morning.

The January 6 Select Committee, which Trump criticized, included several high-profile figures, such as Republicans Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, and Democrat Adam Schiff, all vocal critics of Trump. On his first day in office, Trump had pardoned over 1,500 individuals involved in the Capitol attack, further emphasizing his controversial use of pardons.

Trump also claimed—without evidence—that Biden might not have been aware of the pardons and suggested that members of the Select Committee might have signed them on his behalf. He asserted that these individuals, who he accused of destroying evidence during their investigation, should be prepared for high-level scrutiny.

While Trump's attempt to nullify these pardons raises significant questions about executive power, he acknowledged that it would ultimately be up to the courts to decide if the rescinding of presidential pardons is legally valid. Presidential pardoning power, granted by Article II Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution, is broad but has historically been used to protect allies and family members. Despite these powers, the courts have largely refrained from limiting presidential pardons, leaving their scope open to interpretation.



Ukraine Appoints Major General Andrii Hnatov as New Chief of General Staff

TPN Correspondent | Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has appointed Major General Andrii Hnatov as the new Chief of the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, replacing Lieutenant General Anatolii Barhylevych. The decision, announced through decrees published on the presidential website, did not specify the reasons behind the leadership change.

Defense Minister Rustem Umerov confirmed the reshuffle, emphasizing that the move was aimed at improving the combat effectiveness of the armed forces. Umerov noted that the promotion of Hnatov, which he recommended, is part of Ukraine's broader efforts to transform its military. Hnatov brings over 27 years of military experience to the position, having previously commanded various units, including a marine brigade, Operational Command East, and the Joint Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

As part of the restructuring, Barhylevych has been appointed chief inspector of the Ministry of Defence. His new role will focus on ensuring compliance with military standards and reinforcing discipline within the Ukrainian military. Barhylevych had served as Chief of the General Staff since February 2024.

Competition is fine, not conflict: PM Modi on China

- PM Modi Emphasizes India-China Cooperation
- Criticizes Pakistan's Role in Global Terrorism

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated on Sunday that cooperation between India and China benefits not only the two nations but also the global community. Speaking to Lex Fridman in a podcast, he highlighted the progress made in normalizing the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and noted that both countries are working toward restoring the pre-2020 status along the border, although the process might take time.

Modi emphasized that India-China cooperation is crucial for global stability and prosperity, stating, "The 21st century is the Asian century. Competition is natural, but there should not be conflict." Reflecting on the historical ties between India and China, Modi pointed out that the two countries, both ancient civilizations, have learned from each other throughout history. He noted that they once contributed to half of the world's GDP and had little history of conflict.

Looking ahead, Modi expressed India's desire to maintain strong ties with China. "Differences between neighbors are natural, and occasional disagreements are also natural. Our aim is to ensure that these differences



do not escalate into disputes. We prioritize dialogue over discord," he said. Modi acknowledged that the 2020 border standoff had strained relations, but emphasized that efforts are underway to rebuild trust.

On relations with Pakistan, Modi reflected on his previous attempts to foster peace, including his invitation to Pakistan at his 2014 swearing-in ceremony. He said, "The biggest breakthrough was inviting Pakistan, but the results were disappointing." Modi criticized Pakistan for continuing to pursue conflict

instead of peace and harmony, despite the heavy emotional toll of the Partition on India. He pointed to Pakistan's role in global terrorism, particularly its involvement in the 9/11 attacks, as a source of global instability.

Modi urged Pakistan to abandon its policy of state-sponsored terrorism, stating that such actions were harming both India and the world. He expressed hope that Pakistan would eventually choose peace and that its people, too, were frustrated with the ongoing cycle of violence.

NASA announces Sunita Williams, Butch Wilmore's return date to earth



TPN Correspondent | Cape Canaveral

NASA has confirmed the return date for astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore, who have spent an extended mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS). The pair, along with fellow astronauts Nick Hague and Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov, will return to Earth in mid-March aboard a SpaceX capsule.

Williams and Wilmore were originally scheduled for a brief mission lasting about a week when they launched in June 2024 aboard Boeing's first astronaut flight. However, due to several issues with the Boeing Starliner capsule, which delayed their scheduled return, they ended up spending nearly nine months in space. The capsule had encountered multiple technical problems, forcing NASA to leave

their mission crew behind until a SpaceX capsule could transport their replacements.

On Sunday, a new SpaceX crew capsule arrived at the ISS, delivering replacements for Williams and Wilmore. The four astronauts, hailing from the US, Japan, and Russia, will spend a few days aboard the station, learning about its operations from the experienced crew members before the pair return to Earth. This marks the end of their unexpected extended stay.

In a lighthearted moment, one of the Russian astronauts, Ivan Vagner, wore an alien mask as the new crew arrived. Wilmore greeted them with enthusiasm, ringing the space station's bell as the new crew members entered. Williams shared her excitement with Mission Control, saying, "It was a wonderful day. Great to see our friends arrive."

The planned return is set for mid-March. After some additional delays, including extensive repairs to their replacement capsule's batteries, Williams, Wilmore, and their fellow astronauts will undock from the ISS on Tuesday morning and splash down off Florida's coast later that evening. Weather permitting, their return will conclude an extended and challenging mission aboard the space station, with 11 astronauts currently aboard the orbiting laboratory.

"Lack Of Trust": Israel's Netanyahu Seeks To Fire Internal Security Agency Chief

TPN Correspondent | Jerusalem

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Sunday, March 17, 2025, that he intends to seek the dismissal of Ronen Bar, the head of Israel's internal security agency, Shin Bet. Netanyahu's decision follows weeks of public disputes between the two, especially after the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, which triggered the ongoing war in Gaza. Netanyahu criticized Bar's leadership and accused him of failing to prevent the attack, which resulted in over 1,200 Israeli deaths.

In a video statement, Netanyahu explained that the lack of trust between him and Bar had led to the decision, stating that the Shin Bet's leadership needed to be restored in order to meet Israel's war objectives and prevent further disaster. He claimed that Bar's actions, including alleged media leaks, had obstructed necessary reforms within the agency.

However, Bar has rejected the notion that his dismissal is tied to the failures surrounding the October attack. He argued that Netanya-



hu's motive is political, suggesting the prime minister expects "personal loyalty" that contradicts Shin Bet's ethical standards. Bar emphasized that an in-depth investigation into the broader causes of the attack, including government policies, is crucial.

The proposed dismissal has sparked controversy. Israel's attorney general, Gali Baharav

Miara, called Netanyahu's move "unprecedented" and questioned its legality, stating that the decision should be fully reviewed before any action is taken. The political opposition, led by former Prime Minister Yair Lapid, has vowed to challenge the decision in the Supreme Court, claiming it is an attempt to derail a criminal investigation into Netanyahu's office.



Stock Markets Start the Week on a Strong Note



Domestic stock markets surged on Monday, closing at their highest levels amid positive cues from Asian and international markets. Investor sentiment was lifted as all major Asian indices opened with gains, and quality stocks were available at attractive prices. The BSE Sensex gained 341 points, closing at 74,169, after touching an intraday high of 74,376. The NSE Nifty rose 111 points to settle at 22,508, with the Nifty Bank advancing 293 points to 48,354.

Among Nifty50 stocks, Dr. Reddy's, Bajaj Finserv, SBI Life, Trent, and Axis Bank led the gainers, while Wipro, Britannia, BPCL, Hero Moto, and ITC were the biggest losers. Pharma, healthcare, finance, and auto stocks saw strong demand, while FMCG, PSU banks, and oil & gas stocks faced selling pressure. Market breadth favored sellers, with 1,134 stocks gaining and 1,781 losing on the NSE. A total of 29 shares hit 52-week highs, while 433 shares reached 52-week lows.

In corporate updates, NMDC declared a ₹2.50 per share dividend for FY25, while Tata Motors and Maruti Suzuki announced price hikes of 2% and up to 4%, respectively. Airtel received a buy rating from Macquarie at a ₹1,800 target price, and HSBC upgraded Tata Motors to a buy. Hudco shares surged after sanctioning a ₹10,000 crore loan for Amara-vati construction.



Voltas Ltd

Voltas saw strong demand in the air conditioning and cooling segment due to rising temperatures and increased sales of commercial refrigeration products. The company has a ₹500 crore expansion plan to boost its production capacity for cooling appliances. Jefferies has retained a 'Buy' rating with a target price of ₹1,620, citing growth potential in the consumer durables sector.

Coromandel International Ltd

Coromandel is expanding its specialty fertilizer business to cater to increasing demand in the agri-tech sector. The company reported a 12% YoY growth in revenue, supported



MURTHY NAIDU PAADAM
Stock Market Analyst
+91 988 555 9709

by stable raw material costs and rising domestic demand. HSBC has maintained a 'Buy' rating with a target price of ₹2,250, emphasizing growth in agri-inputs.



Bharat Forge Ltd

Bharat Forge has secured a ₹900 crore defense order for artillery components and armored vehicle parts. The company is expanding its EV components business to capitalize on growing demand in the electric mobility sector. Analysts remain bullish, with Motilal Oswal giving a 'Buy' rating and a target price of ₹1,350.



HUDCO

HUDCO (Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd) announced fresh loan approvals worth ₹3,000 crore for affordable housing projects. The government's focus on infrastructure and urban development is expected to boost HUDCO's loan disbursement pipeline. ICICI Securities upgraded the stock to 'Buy' with a target price of ₹260.



Coal India Ltd

Coal India's production increased by 8% YoY, driven by higher demand from the power and industrial sectors. The company declared a third interim dividend of ₹5 per share, benefiting long-term investors. strong fundamentals and steady production growth.



India's Wholesale Inflation Rises to 2.38% in February, Food Prices Ease



India's wholesale inflation, based on the wholesale price index (WPI), rose to 2.38% in February, slightly up from 2.31% in January, according to provisional data released by the Union Ministry of Commerce on Monday. The increase in inflation was driven by a slower pace of decline in fuel and power prices and a rise in the prices of manufactured products.

The WPI inflation in February was marginally higher than the 2.36% predicted by economists in a Reuters poll.

Food Prices Show Moderate Increase Food prices, a major contributor to the overall inflation, increased by 5.94% annually in February, although this was a decrease compared to December's 8.85% and January's 7.47% rise. Within the food category,

cereal prices rose by 6.77% in February, a slight decline from January's 7.33%. Meanwhile, vegetable prices fell by 5.80%, following an 8.35% surge in January. However, the prices of onions and fruits continued to rise.

Despite the softer rise in food prices, they have remained elevated for over a year, largely due to uneven monsoon rains between November 2023 and June 2024.

Sonal Badhan, economist at the Bank of Baroda, noted that food inflation softened, helped by a broad-based slowdown. "The vegetable inflation index eased the most, followed by food grain inflation and inflation for protein-based items like milk, eggs, meat, and fish," she explained.

Manufactured Products and

Fuel Prices Manufactured product prices, which account for about 64% of the WPI, rose by 2.86% year-on-year in February, up from 2.51% in January. The prices of fuel and power fell by 0.71%, a smaller decline compared to January's 2.57% drop.

Rahul Agrawal, senior economist at ICRA Ltd., said that the overall uptick in wholesale inflation was primarily driven by non-food items. He added that the cooling in food inflation was offset by the narrowing deflation in fuel and power and an increase in core WPI inflation, which reached a 24-month high of 1.3%.

Looking ahead, experts predict volatility in commodity prices due to factors like the trade war and uncertainty surrounding US Federal Reserve rate cuts.

Swiggy Shares Rise 2% as Instamart Expands to 100 Cities in India



Swiggy's shares gained nearly 2% in intraday trade on Monday, March 17, reaching ₹359.30 apiece, following the announcement of a significant milestone for its Quick Commerce platform, Instamart. The platform, which was launched in August 2020, has now expanded to 100 cities across India, responding to the growing demand for fast 10-minute deliveries, especially in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

In its filing to the exchanges, Swiggy revealed that it had introduced Instamart to 32 new cities this month alone, includ-

ing Raipur, Siliguri, Jodhpur, and Thanjavur. This expansion brings the convenience of rapid deliveries to millions of customers, who now have access to over 30,000 products, ranging from groceries and daily essentials to electronics, fashion, makeup, and toys, all delivered within 10 minutes.

Amitesh Jha, CEO of Swiggy Instamart, spoke about the milestone, noting that the platform has gained significant traction not only in metro cities but also in smaller towns. He emphasized that the demand for quick

commerce has grown substantially beyond Indian metros, highlighting the importance of their expansion to underserved areas.

In 2025, Swiggy reported that one in four new users came from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, demonstrating the increasing demand for quick commerce in these regions. The company remains committed to offering convenience, variety, and value to a broader customer base while empowering local ecosystems by supporting dark store staff and delivery partners.

Despite a 43% drop in Swiggy's share price from its peak, analysts remain optimistic about the long-term potential of the quick commerce space. They view the recent correction as an opportunity, with some brokerages offering positive outlooks. JM Financial has set a "buy" rating with a target price of ₹500, suggesting a 34.6% upside. ICICI Securities also maintains a "buy" call with a target price of ₹740 per share.

Tata Motors to Hike Prices of Commercial Vehicles by Up to 2% from April

Tata Motors announced on Monday, March 17, 2025, that it will increase the prices of its commercial vehicle range by up to 2% starting April 1, 2025. The price hike is aimed at partially offsetting the rising input costs the company has been facing.

In a regulatory filing, Tata Motors stated that the price increase will vary depending on the individual model and variant. The company noted that the move was necessary to address

the rising costs of materials and other inputs that are impacting the commercial vehicle segment.

Tata Motors, a part of the \$165 billion Tata Group, is a major player in the automobile industry, manufacturing cars, utility vehicles, trucks, and buses. With a market capitalization of \$44 billion, it has a significant footprint in both the passenger and commercial vehicle markets.

This price increase is expected to affect the company's range of commercial vehicles, which includes trucks and buses that are used for various industrial and transportation purposes. The decision comes in the wake of increasing raw material costs, including steel and other components, which have impacted the cost structure for automobile manufacturers worldwide.

Despite the price hike, shares of Tata

Motors closed 0.84% higher on Monday, trading at ₹660.90 per share on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The rise in stock prices indicates investor confidence, despite the increase in operational costs.

Tata Motors' decision is in line with broader industry trends, where automakers are passing on a portion of the rising costs to customers through price adjustments. As input costs continue to rise globally, especially for



critical materials used in vehicle production, companies like Tata Motors are increasingly under pressure to balance profitability with consumer affordability.

As the industry adapts to these market conditions, the price increase is expected to impact both businesses and consumers, particularly in the commercial vehicle segment.

iPhone 17 Air Was Supposed to Be Port-Free, But Apple Scrapped the Idea: Mark Gurman



The iPhone 17 series has been a topic of extensive speculation, with rumors suggesting the lineup will include the iPhone 17, iPhone 17 Air (or iPhone 17 Slim), iPhone 17 Pro, and iPhone 17 Pro Max, with an expected launch in the second quarter of this year. Among these, the iPhone 17 Air was slated to be Apple's thinnest iPhone yet, potentially replacing the Plus variant in the lineup. Bloomberg's Mark Gurman has revealed new details about the iPhone 17 Air, including an ambitious plan that Apple initially considered. According to Gurman's weekly Power On newsletter, Apple originally planned to make the iPhone 17 Air "Apple's first completely port-free iPhone." The device would have relied on wireless charging and cloud-based data syncing, eliminating the traditional charging ports altogether. This move was intended to pave the way for even slimmer models in the future, with a sleek, minimalist design that further pushed the limits of device thinness. However, Apple reportedly scrapped this plan to avoid po-

tential regulatory issues, particularly from the European Union (EU), which has recently mandated that tech companies like Apple adopt the USB Type-C charging standard. Apple's decision was likely influenced by the need to comply with the EU's regulations and maintain its broad consumer appeal. The iPhone 17 Air's thin design would have required a thinner battery, which could have compromised battery life. To avoid this, Apple instructed engineers to redesign key components, including the display and silicon, to optimize efficiency while maintaining performance. Expected Specifications: The iPhone 17 Air is expected to feature a 9.5mm thick profile, including the 4mm camera bump. It may offer a 6.6-inch OLED display with a 120Hz ProMotion refresh rate and Dynamic Island. The device could house a 24MP front camera, a 48MP rear camera, and be made with a titanium frame. It may also include Apple's first 5G modem and Wi-Fi chip. Rumored pricing is between \$1,299 and \$1,500.

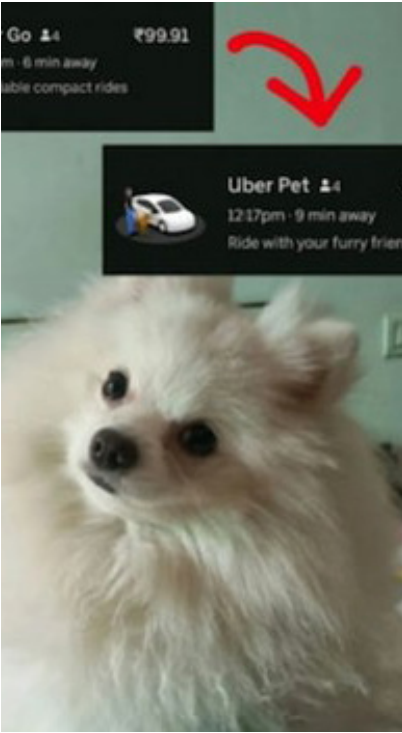
Amazon Echo Users Will No Longer Have Option to Process Alexa Voice Recordings On-Device



Amazon has announced that starting March 28, Echo users will no longer have the option to process their voice commands and recordings locally on their devices. Instead, all Alexa voice recordings will be sent to Amazon's cloud for processing, as the company expands Alexa's capabilities with generative AI features. This change affects all Echo devices such as smart speakers and displays. In an email to users who had previously enabled the 'Do Not Send Voice Recordings' option, Amazon explained that on-device processing is being discontinued to enable the new AI-driven features that require the processing power of Amazon's secure cloud. The company emphasized that Alexa voice requests will remain encrypted during transmission to the cloud, where they are processed under security protections. Although voice recordings will still be deleted automatically after processing, the new policy raises privacy concerns. Many users may be uncomfortable with Amazon having access to their voice data, especially in the context of

in-home devices that can listen continuously. Amazon assures users that privacy controls will still be available through the Alexa Privacy dashboard, where they can manage how their data is handled, including the option to prevent their voice recordings from being stored at all. Amazon also announced the upcoming launch of Alexa+, a subscription-based, generative AI version of Alexa, which will include advanced features like Alexa Voice ID. This feature will allow Alexa to recognize individual users based on their voice, and share personalized content like calendar events and music. However, Amazon clarified that Voice ID may not function if users choose not to save voice recordings. This shift in policy is part of Amazon's ongoing push to enhance Alexa's AI capabilities but raises concerns about privacy, particularly in light of past controversies surrounding the handling of user data. Notably, Amazon has faced scrutiny over allowing employees to listen to Alexa voice recordings for training purposes and other privacy violations related to its Ring doorbell cameras.

Gurugram Woman Calls Out Uber Pets For Overpricing



A Gurugram woman has raised concerns over the steep pricing of Uber's new service, Uber Pets, which allows passengers to travel with their pets. In a LinkedIn post, she highlighted the significant price difference between regular Uber rides and Uber Pets. For a short 2 km ride, the regular Uber fare was ₹100, while Uber Pets cost a staggering ₹530, over five times the price of a regular ride. The woman questioned whether the price hike was justified, speculating that it could account for cleaning fees, premium drivers, or simply be an added charge for pet owners. She pointed out that her local auto-rickshaw charges just ₹60 for a similar ride and even

offers belly rubs for her dog, making the Uber Pets pricing seem excessive. In her post, she expressed her surprise at the service's pricing, asking, "If the goal was accessibility, why is this service a luxury?" She further criticized the fact that many pet owners might struggle with these higher costs, especially when pets are considered family members. While some commenters suggested booking a regular Uber and informing the driver about the pet, others speculated that Uber might be capitalizing on the growing trend of pet ownership in India. One user pointed out that Uber may be trying to monetize this shift in consumer preferences.



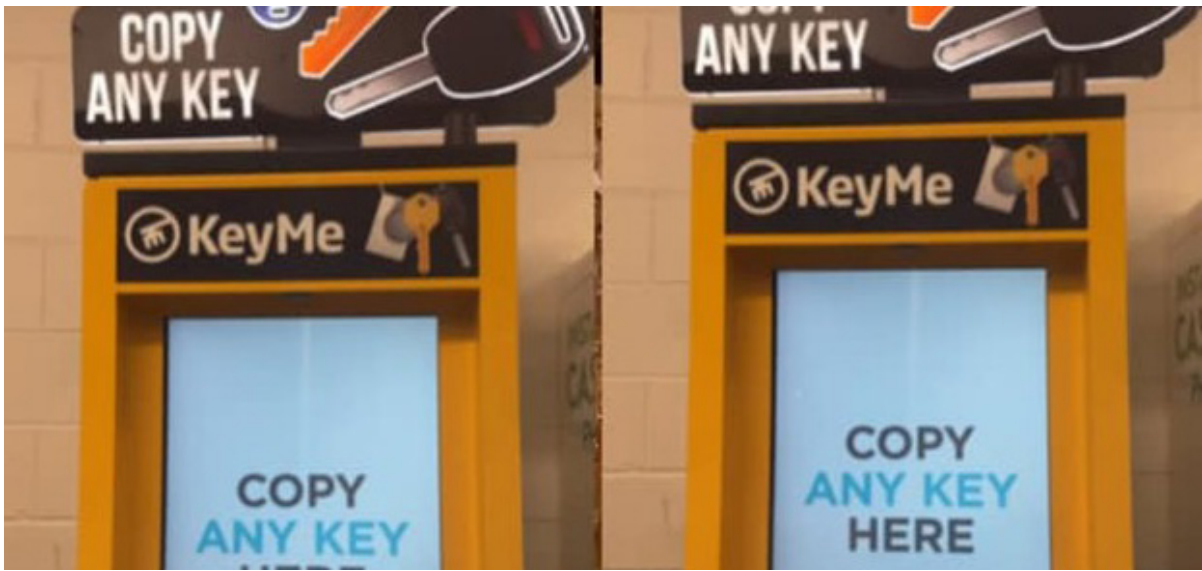
In the bustling city of Shenzhen, China, a new eatery is turning heads with its incredible speed of service, offering freshly cooked noodles in just 48 seconds. The Future Noodle Restaurant, a small but highly efficient establishment, has taken fast food to a whole new level. While most noodle dishes take at least two minutes to prepare, this restaurant uses a robotic system to make noodles from scratch in record time. The process is nothing short of fascinating. A robotic arm mixes flour and water, shaping the dough into perfect noodles in just eight seconds. The noodles are then plunged into hot water, where they cook with various ingredients like marinated eggs and grilled sausages for 40 seconds. The result is a hot, fresh, and delicious bowl of noodles, served in under a minute. The restaurant, which spans only eight square

meters, uses a self-service kiosk for ordering. Customers can choose from ten different noodle varieties, paired with sides such as marinated eggs and grilled sausages. The price of a meal ranges from 6 to 20 yuan (roughly Rs 122 to Rs 250), making it an affordable and quick dining option. A transparent window allows customers to observe the robotic cooking process, which has garnered praise for its speed, efficiency, and, most importantly, the flavor of the final product. With its cutting-edge technology and quick turnaround time, Future Noodle Restaurant is setting a new standard for fast food, proving that great meals don't need to take long to prepare. This innovative concept is a glimpse into the future of dining, where automation and robotics combine to deliver convenience and quality in record time.

US Vending Machine Goes Viral for Duplicating Keys in Minutes

A viral video is captivating social media users, showcasing a unique vending machine in the US that can duplicate keys within minutes. Shared by Tanvir Shaikh on Instagram, the video demonstrates an alternative to the traditional and often time-consuming process of visiting a locksmith. In the video, Tanvir walks up to a vending machine resembling an ATM and taps the screen to begin the key duplication process. The machine offers several options, including standard keys, vehicle keys, access cards, and key fobs. Tanvir selects the standard option for a basic key copy, inserts his original key into a scanning slot, and chooses his preferred key

type—brass in this case. After selecting the number of copies—two in this case—he proceeds to the payment section. Within minutes, the machine dispenses three keys instead of two, surprising Tanvir with a free extra key. This fast, automated process has drawn attention for its convenience and efficiency compared to traditional locksmith services, where customers often face longer waiting times. Tanvir's Instagram reel has sparked interest, highlighting how technology is transforming everyday services like key duplication, making it quicker, easier, and more accessible.



PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen Aim for Strong Show at Swiss Open



Star shuttlers PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen will look to regain their top form at the USD 250,000 Swiss Open in Basel, which begins on Tuesday. Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist and 2022 champion, is seeded seventh and will face Malvika Bansod in a clash between two generations of Indian women's singles players. Lakshya Sen will meet HS Prannoy, the 2016 Swiss Open winner, in his opening match. Sindhu is recovering from a hamstring

injury and suffered an early exit at the All England Championship, while Malvika gained confidence with a win in Birmingham. Lakshya reached the quarterfinals at All England, while Prannoy faced early exits. Indian shuttlers have a strong record at the Swiss Open, with past champions including Sindhu, Prannoy, and Saina Nehwal. The tournament will feature several other Indian players aiming for success in singles and doubles events.

National Women's Hockey League 2024-25 Final Phase to Begin on March 18

The final phase of the inaugural National Women's Hockey League 2024-25 will kick off on March 18 at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh AstroTurf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The U-21 Women's tournament will feature eight of India's top state teams: Hockey Haryana, Hockey Maharashtra, Hockey Jharkhand, Hockey Madhya Pradesh, Hockey Bengal, Hockey Mizoram, Manipur Hockey, and Hockey Association of Odisha. The teams will compete in a round-robin format from March 18 to 28, with each team facing the others once. Three points will be awarded for a win, one point for a draw, and no points for a loss. The team with the most points at the end of the league will be crowned champions. The opening match will see Hockey Haryana face Manipur Hockey at 7:00 AM IST.



The tournament will showcase young talent and provide valuable exposure for rising players in domestic hockey.

Mirra Andreeva Shocks Aryna Sabalenka to Win Indian Wells Title

Russian 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva stunned world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka with a 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory to claim her second WTA 1000 title at Indian Wells. This win follows Andreeva's historic triumph in Dubai, where she became the youngest player to win a 1000-level title. After a challenging start, Andreeva broke Sabalenka three times in the third set, showing resilience and determination. She will rise to a career-high world No. 6 following this victory. Reflecting on the match, Andreeva said, "I was running like a rabbit today," crediting her ability to fight to the end. Sabalenka, who had been in dominant form leading into the final, expressed



frustration with her performance, admitting to unforced errors and emotional struggles. This marks Andreeva's first

hard court victory over Sabalenka, after losses to the Belarusian earlier this year at the Australian Open and Brisbane.

Hockey India Names 36-Member Core Probable Group for Senior Men's National Camp

Hockey India has named a 36-member core probable group for the senior men's national coaching camp at SAI Bengaluru, which started on Monday and will run until March 28. The group includes goalkeepers Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Pawan, Suraj Karkera, and Mohith Honnena-halli Shashikumar, alongside defenders like Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Varun Kumar, and Yashdeep Siwach. Midfielders such as Rajkumar Pal, Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, and Vivek Sagar Prasad, along with forwards including Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, and Gurjant Singh, have also been called up.



Following a successful start to their FIH Hockey Pro League campaign, where they won five of eight home matches, the team will focus on fitness, conditioning, and evaluating

their recent performances. Chief Coach Craig Fulton emphasized preparing for upcoming Pro League matches in Europe and assessing new talent during the camp.

Panchal's 145 Guides Super Strikers to Elite Cricket Tournament Title

Super Strikers dominated the inaugural Elite Cricket Tournament, defeating Dynamic Daredevils by six wickets in the final on Sunday. Panchal was the hero of the match, blasting an astonishing 145 runs off just 34 balls, earning the 'Player of the Match' award. Dynamic Daredevils posted 200/6 in their 20 overs, with Sushant Singh scoring 83, Ansh contributing 31, and Amaan Alvi adding 43. However, Super Strikers made light work of the target, chasing down 201 in just 9.3 overs. Despite a shaky start at 15/2, Panchal's explosive innings, featuring 5 boundaries and 20 sixes, turned the match around. Jas-si's quick 26 off six balls helped seal the victory.



The tournament offered young cricketers a platform to compete along-

side experienced professionals, showcasing emerging talent and pro-

viding valuable exposure to high-level competi-tion.

Avani Prashanth Shoots 65, Finishes Tied-13th at Australian Women's Classic

Avani Prashanth shot an impressive 5-under 65 in the final round of the Australian Women's Classic, securing a solid top-15 finish in her first season on the Ladies European Tour. With earlier rounds of 72-70, she finished at 3-under 207, six shots behind winner Manon De Roey, who claimed her third LET victory. Starting on the tenth, Avani birdied five holes in a row before a couple of dropped shots. However, she regained momentum, adding a birdie on the seventh. Avani was pleased with her performance, especially after overcoming challenges with reading the greens earlier in the tournament. Pranavi Urs, the only other Indian to make the cut, finished tied-65th. Manon De Roey's victory moved her to second in the 2025 Order of Merit, while the LET heads to Wollongong for the WPGA Tour next.





Kangana Ranaut Confident ‘Emergency’ Will Win National Award



Kangana Ranaut, actor and director of the historical drama *Emergency*, has rejected suggestions that the film should compete for an Oscar. The movie, based on the 1975 Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, has been trending on Netflix, sparking polarized reactions. While some fans have suggested it should be considered for the Oscars, Ranaut has made it clear that she isn't seeking international recognition. Reposting a fan's praise on social media, Ranaut remarked, "America wouldn't like to acknowledge its real face... they can keep their silly Oscar, we have National Awards." Expressing confidence in her film's success, she emphasized her belief that *Emergency* would win a National Award, highlighting her pride in the Indian award system over foreign accolades.

Anushka Sharma Shares Cryptic Post After Virat Kohli Slams BCCI's Family Rule

Anushka Sharma recently posted a cryptic message on Instagram about the multiple versions of ourselves that exist in others' perceptions. Reflecting on how different people see us in varying ways, she shared, "A different version of you exists in the minds of everyone who knows you," emphasizing that our core identity remains elusive even to ourselves. This introspective post came

shortly after her husband, cricketer Virat Kohli, criticized the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) over their new restrictions on family time during international tours. Virat voiced his frustration at the lack of understanding about the mental well-being families provide to players. Anushka and Virat, who married in 2017, are parents to two children, Vamika and Akaay. Anushka's upcoming project is the biopic *Chakda Xpress* on cricketer Jhulan Goswami.



Shah Rukh Khan's Upcoming Movie in South: Collaboration with Sukumar

Shah Rukh Khan, fresh off the success of *Jawan*, is reportedly in talks with acclaimed South director Sukumar for an intense, rural-set political action drama. This collaboration is generating major buzz as it might mark a departure for SRK, who is expected to play an anti-hero, a significant shift from his usual roles. The film is rumored to explore caste and class struggles, with Sukumar's signature raw storytelling style. Adding to the excitement, the movie is believed to be linked to Sukumar's *Pushpa* universe, a franchise known for its



high-impact, mass-appealing moments. However, the film's production might take time, as both Shah Rukh Khan and Sukumar are currently busy with other commitments. Sukumar is working on a project with Ram Charan, while SRK is preparing for *Pathaan 2* and *King*.

Shruti Haasan's De-Glam Look Stuns Fans in Coolie BTS Photos

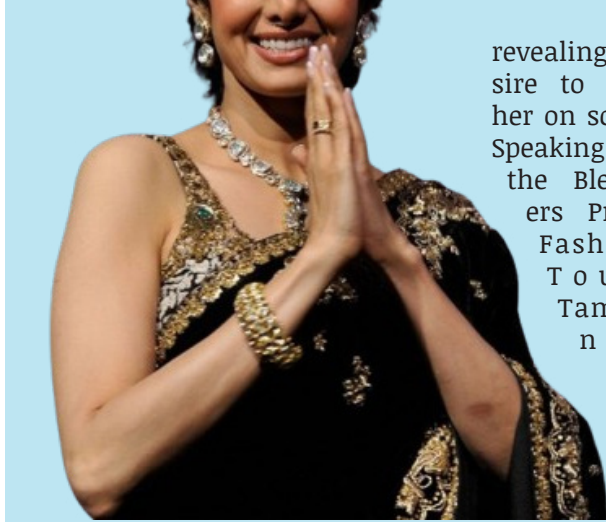
Shruti Haasan's simple yet striking look in the behind-the-scenes pictures from *Coolie* has taken the internet by storm. Shared on March 14, the images celebrate the birthday of director Lokesh Kanagaraj. In one photo, Shruti can be seen wearing a modest salwar-kameez with her hair tied in a neat braid, flaunting her natural glow with minimal makeup. Her un-

derstated appearance has garnered attention, showing her effortless beauty and charm. *Coolie*, featuring an ensemble cast including Rajinikanth, Nagarjuna, and others, is expected to release in 2025. The film, produced by Sun Pictures, marks the reunion of Rajinikanth and composer Anirudh Ravichander. Action choreographers Anbu-Arivu



are also part of the project. Fans eagerly await more updates following the film's first-look poster release in March 2024.

Tamannaah Bhatia Aspires to Play Sridevi on Screen



revealing her desire to portray her on screen. Speaking at the *Blenders Pride Fashion Tour*, Tamannaah called Sridevi "super iconic," highlighting her immense influence and versatility.



various genres, from comedy to drama. She remains one of Indian cinema's most celebrated actresses, known for her unforgettable performances in films like *Mr. India*, *Sadma*, *Khuda Gawah*, and *English Vinglish*. Tamannaah, who was last seen in the heist thriller *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar*, will next appear in the Telugu supernatural thriller *Odela 2*. She also expressed her ongoing admiration for Sridevi's legendary career and the wide range of characters she portrayed.

Sridevi, who passed away in 2018, was renowned for breaking stereotypes and portraying diverse roles across

Malaika Arora Rebukes 16-Year-Old Contestant for “Indecent” Gestures on Hip Hop India Season 2



Malaika Arora, a judge on *Hip Hop India Season 2*, schooled a 16-year-old contestant for making suggestive gestures during his performance. In a now-viral video, Malaika can be heard reprimanding the teenager, saying, "Mummy ka phone number do!" (Give me your mother's phone number!), expressing disbelief at his behavior. She pointed out his inappropriate actions, including winking and sending flying kisses.

Other contestants also voiced their objections to the participant's conduct. Malaika, known for her straightforward nature, emphasized the importance of respectful behavior, especially considering the contestant's young age. On the work front, Malaika recently appeared in the Marathi film *Yek Number* and continues to judge popular reality shows like *India's Got Talent* and *India's Best Dancer*.

Taapsee Pannu Wraps Up Shooting for Gandhari

Taapsee Pannu has officially wrapped up the shoot for her upcoming film *Gandhari*, an intense revenge action thriller. Sharing a series of pictures from the set, she reflected on the challenging experience, describing it as running on "fuel of grit and determination" and experiencing a "burnout like never before." The film's title, inspired by the character from the *Mahabharata*, follows a mother's emotional and powerful journey to rescue her kidnapped child. In her post, Taapsee expressed immense satisfaction with the project, saying, "Some bruises give a feeling of contentment like never before." *Gandhari* is directed by Devashish Makhija and marks

her sixth collaboration with writer-producer Kanika Dhillon. The film promises to be a powerful tale of revenge and redemption.

