



**Payal Rajput: I may fail, but I won't give up!**  
It may be recalled that last year, the actress had penned a post, expressing concerns about favoritism and nepotism overshadowing talent in the film industry.

**Prioritise rejuvenation of 'Buckingham Canal'**  
This historic canal, which used to be bustling with activity, is now ravaged with multiple problems like emitting untreated wastes by the industries and urban populates, encroachment of the canal land, siltation, and damage caused by natural disasters like floods.

**India-US trade deal to boost country's manufacturing: FM**  
The breakthrough follows a high-level telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump. In a reciprocal move, India has committed to reducing trade barriers for American goods.

**You can't build Viksit Bharat without innovation: IIT Hyd Director**  
At a time when AI is rapidly reshaping careers and Indian students remain caught in a relentless cycle of grades, rankings, Prof. B. S. Murty, Director of IIT Hyderabad, is quietly steering one of the country's boldest experiments in higher education.

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## WINDOWS



### NASA Artemis II launch put off to March

WASHINGTON: NASA has pushed back the Artemis II mission launch from February to March following technical hurdles during a critical wet dress rehearsal (WDR) of its Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, Administrator Jared Isaacman announced on Tuesday. "With the conclusion of the wet dress rehearsal on Tuesday, we are moving off the February launch window and targeting March for the earliest possible launch of Artemis II," he posted on X. With the conclusion of the wet dress rehearsal today, we are moving off the February launch window and targeting March for the earliest possible launch of Artemis II. The test, conducted at Kennedy Space Center in Florida, successfully filled the core stage and interim cryogenic propulsion stage tanks with liquid hydrogen and oxygen. However, teams paused operations multiple times to address a liquid hydrogen leak at a core stage interface, requiring hardware warming and propellant flow adjustments.

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### Turkey ready to host high-stakes US-Iran talks

ISTANBUL: Turkey is preparing to host high-level talks between the United States and Iran in Istanbul this Friday, marking a significant diplomatic effort to ease escalating tensions between the two powers. The discussions are expected to be led by the US special envoy Steve Witkoff and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, with Turkey playing a central mediating role-Bloomberg reported. According to Turkish officials, the priority of the planned Istanbul meetings is to de-escalate tensions and avoid conflict, as relations between Washington and Tehran have deteriorated in recent months. Several nations, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, have been invited to participate, possibly at the foreign minister level, underlining the broader regional effort to stabilise the situation.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

I know for sure nobody can quote from a book in Parliament. I read it on WhatsApp

# 'INDIA GOT BEST DEAL'

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

UNION Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday hailed the India-US trade agreement as a "tremendous opportunity" for the country, calling it "the best deal" New Delhi has secured compared to its neighbours.

Addressing a press conference a day after the agreement was announced, Goyal said, "This is the best deal India has received. It is a deal for all of us, bringing positive signals for the bright future of our citizens."

Goyal credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and his rapport with US President Donald Trump saying, "We all know that the Prime Minister, leveraging his friendly relationship and close ties with President Trump, has finalised a trade deal with the United States of America that is the best deal India has received compared to all our neighbours, all the surrounding countries, and all the countries that compete with us."

The minister criticised LoP Rahul Gandhi over claims that PM Modi had accepted the India-US trade deal under pressure. "Rahul Gandhi wants to mislead the public, he does not care about India's progress," the minister said.

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- Goyal hails trade pact with US
- Credits Modi for landmark deal
- Blasts Rahul for baseless talk



Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal addressing the media on the progress of the India-US trade deal in New Delhi on Tuesday

## ...in final stages: Goyal

### Sheds few details on India-US pact amid unanswered questions

NEW DELHI: Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal appeared on TV on Tuesday evening, purportedly to share some details and clear the air around the India-US trade deal but mainly heaped praises on the agreement. And then he said the final bits are still being worked out. The

deal will be formally inked thereafter. "Today, 140 crore Indians are celebrating a trade deal which is under final stages of detailing between the negotiating teams of both countries," Goyal said, hailing the "friendship" between PM Modi and US President Trump. Continued on Page 7

## Oppn stages walkout demanding debate on deal

NEW DELHI: Members of several Opposition parties on Tuesday staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha while raising the issue of the Indo-US trade deal and demanding a discussion on it. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh raised the issue of the Indo-US trade deal soon after the zero-hour ended and alleged that the information about the deal was being received from Washington instead.

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### PM buckled under pressure to sell out farmers' blood: Rahul

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi buckled under US pressure to finalise a trade deal and "sold out" the hard work of the Indian farmers through the agreement. Continued on Page 7

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Naidu calls US trade pact historic

### HAILS PM MODI FOR VISIONARY APPROACH

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday described the trade agreement between India and the United States as a historic milestone for global economic stability and growth.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on signing the landmark agreement with the United States. He said the deal reflected India's growing stature in the global economic arena under Modi's leadership.

Naidu stated that the decision to reduce tariffs to 18 percent would further strengthen ties between the world's two largest democracies. He noted that the move would deepen economic co-operation and promote long-term mutual prosperity.

Calling the agreement a visionary step, the Chief Minister said it was aimed at ensuring sustained global growth and enhancing India's competitiveness in international markets.

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## Markets rally on US trade deal

### Sensex up 2,073, rupee soars

MUMBAI: Indian equity markets ended sharply higher on Tuesday as investors welcomed the finalisation of the long-awaited India-US trade deal, triggering broad-based buying across sectors and lifting the rupee to its strongest single-day gain in more than six years. The benchmark BSE Sensex surged 2,072.67 points, or 2.54 per cent, to close at 83,739.13, while the Nifty 50 climbed 639.15 points, or 2.55 per cent, to settle at 25,727.55.

### India pledged zero-tariff barriers in US deal: Trump

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has announced the US-India trade deal, pledging to slash tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 25 per cent, bringing an end to months of uncertainty. Continued on Page 7



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu chairs Cabinet meeting in Amaravati on Tuesday

# Cabinet nod for panel to probe TTD laddu issue

## Inquiry aims to bring out truth, ensure strict action against guilty: CM

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

THE state Cabinet on Tuesday decided to entrust the alleged chemical and animal fat adulteration in the ghee used for Tirumala Srivari Laddu Prasad to a Commission of Inquiry to rectify lapses in the Special Investigation Team (SIT) report and identify the real masterminds behind the scam.

The Cabinet noted that

### Ministers express concern over investigation's failure to fix responsibility

while the SIT had named some individuals, several serious omissions were found in its final findings. Ministers expressed concern that the investigation failed to clearly fix responsibility and bring the main culprits to justice.

Continued on Page 7

# New baggage rules come into effect

## Duty-free limit hiked

NEW DELHI

THE Central government has introduced the Baggage Rules, 2026, along with the New Customs Baggage (Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2026 and a Master Circular. The new rules came into effect from midnight on February 2 and replace a decade-old baggage rules.

The key points are: Duty-free allowance for foreign tourists increased from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 and duty-free jewellery allowance for



returning residents is 40 grams for female passengers and 20 grams for others. Jewellery, for the purpose of this rule, means articles of adornment ordinarily worn by a person, made of gold, silver, platinum or such other precious metals, whether studded or not.

Continued on Page 7

# Eight Oppn MPs suspended from LS for 'unruly behaviour'

NEW DELHI

IN escalation of the tussle between the government and the Opposition, seven Congress members and one CPI-M MP were suspended from the Lok Sabha on Tuesday for 'unruly behaviour' after they tore papers and threw them at the Chair. Their suspension from the House for the remaining part of the Budget Session that concludes on April 2 will intensify the face-off with the government

over various issues, including Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi being denied an opportunity to cite an article based on excerpts from an unpublished 'memoir' of former Army Chief M M Naravane on India-China conflict of 2020. The Opposition has also raised concerns about American President Donald Trump announcing the India-US trade deal. As soon as the House met at 3 pm following multiple adjournments, Dilip Saikia,

who was in the Chair, named the eight Oppn members. Subsequently, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju read out a resolution seeking suspension of the eight members for the remaining period of the Budget Session. The suspended members are Gurjeet Singh Aujla, Hibi Eden, C Kiran Kumar Reddy, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Manickam Tagore, Prashant Padole and Dean Kuriakose (all Congress) and S Ventakesan (CPI-M).

# You can't play with right to privacy of this country: SC

## Tells WhatsApp, Meta to 'exit India if you can't abide by the rule of the land'

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday told WhatsApp's parent company Meta that it should leave India if it cannot follow the Constitution and protect users' data privacy.

The court was hearing Meta's plea against a Competition Commission of India (CCI) order that imposed a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore over WhatsApp's privacy policy. A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joydalya

Bagchi and Vipul Pancholi made it clear that "not a single digit" of user data should be shared if it goes against the public interest.

According to a report by Bar and Bench, the top court also questioned the lack of a clear option for users to opt out of WhatsApp's privacy policy. "Where is the question of opting out? Show me on your mobile. This is a decent way of committing theft of private information! You know your commercial interest, and you also know how you have made



consumers addicted to the app," it said.

"Everybody uses it. If the users have a right to opt-out, how will the users know this right exists? Let us see

the option and the situation with the user. When it comes to opting out, the information is in a newspaper. How will a person know?" the Chief Justice asked the

Meta representative. CJI Kant said, "You can't play with the right of privacy of this country, in the name of data sharing. You are making a mockery of the constitutionalism of this country. How can you play with the right to privacy of people like this? People pay you for this. Consumer has no choice you have created a monopoly!"

The Bench suggested that WhatsApp file an affidavit explaining its privacy policy and how data sharing works under it. The court

adjourned the hearing till February 9 and added the Central government as a party to the case.

"For the purpose of issuing interim directions, post the matter for next Monday. On the joint request made by senior counsel, the Union of India is impleaded as a respondent. Union may also file its counter affidavit," the court said. In January 2021, WhatsApp announced updates to its terms of service and privacy policy, to be effective from February 8, 2021. Users were told they

must accept the new terms to continue using the app.

Earlier, WhatsApp's 2016 privacy policy allowed users to opt out of data sharing with Facebook. The 2021 update made data sharing with Meta mandatory.

The CCI investigated the matter and in November 2024 ruled that WhatsApp had abused its dominant position under the Competition Act, 2002. It ordered WhatsApp to stop sharing user data with Meta and its products for five years and imposed the fine.