

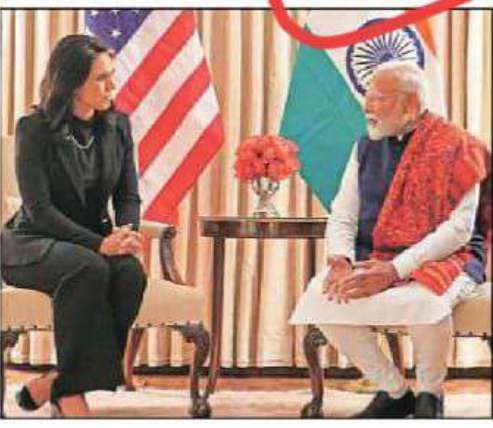
PM Modi meets Tulsi Gabbard, calls her 'strong votary' of India-US friendship

WASHINGTON, Feb 13 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi met Tulsi Gabbard, US Director of National Intelligence, and discussed various aspects of ties between the two countries with focus on enhancing intelligence cooperation in counter-terrorism and emerging threats.

Modi also congratulated Hindu-American Gabbard on her confirmation as the nation's top intelligence official. She was confirmed on Wednesday.

"Met USA's Director of National Intelligence, @TulsiGabbard in Washington DC. Congratulated her on her confirmation. Discussed various aspects of the India-USA friendship, of which she's always been a strong votary," Modi posted on X.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with USA's Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard in Washington DC. (PTI)

Discussions also focused on enhancing intelligence cooperation in counter-terrorism, cybersecurity and emerging threats, Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

"PM @narendramodi held a productive meeting with US Director of National Intelligence @TulsiGabbard in Washington DC today. Discussions focused on enhancing intelligence cooperation in counter-terrorism, cybersecurity & emerging threats," the post said.

Modi arrived in the US capital on Wednesday around 5.30 pm (Thursday, 4 am IST) after a visit to France where he had co-chaired Artificial Intelligence Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Narendra Modi meets NSA Waltz, Elon Musk



By Yoshita Singh

WASHINGTON, Feb 13 (PTI)

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PRIME Minister Narendra Modi said he had a "fruitful meeting" with US National Security Advisor Michael Waltz and they discussed defence, technology and security areas, which are important aspects of the India-US ties.

"Had a fruitful meeting with NSA @michaelgwaltz. He has (Contd on page 5)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi met SpaceX CEO Elon Musk here on Thursday. US President Donald Trump has chosen Musk to head a new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) last month.

Musk arrived at Blair House with his three young children, who were sitting with Musk when he met Modi.

Bilateral ceasefire on LoC in J&K continues: Army

JAMMU, Feb 13 (IANS)

THE Army said on Thursday the bilateral ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir continues to be observed as per the understanding between the armies of India and Pakistan.

This comes a day after sources said the Pakistan Army had resorted to an unprovoked ceasefire violation on the LoC in the Poonch district in the Krishna Ghati sector.

The same sources said the Pakistan Army had suffered casualties in the retaliatory firing by the Indian Army.

On Thursday, a statement issued by the Indian Army said, "The ceasefire on the LoC is intact and continues to be observed as per the understanding between both the armies (of India and Pakistan). Tension due to some stray incidents of cross LoC firing and a suspected IED blast on one of our ptls, Protected Vehicle of the Indian Army, on the LoC is being dealt with through the established mechanism. No exchange of fire of heavy-calibre weapons has taken place. Minor incidents are not unprecedented along the LoC. Concerns have been raised to the Pakistan Army at the appropriate level."

Tejasvi Surya takes sortie in HAL's indigenous basic trainer aircraft

BENGALURU, Feb 13 (PTI)

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on Thursday took a sortie in HTT-40, India's indigenous basic trainer aircraft at the ongoing Aero India-2025 here. He flew in the aircraft, designed and built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), for 30 minutes.

Speaking to media, the BJP MP lauded HAL calling it pride of Bengaluru and pride of India and a symbol of India's aeronautical progress. "Today I had the opportunity to fly in HTT 40, produced by our own HAL. HAL is the pride of India. It is the pride of Bengaluru," he said.

According to him, this particular aircraft has a very interesting and important story, a legacy, a lesson for people of India who are interested in the nation's progress and national security.

He alleged that in 2012 the UPA government placed an order to procure trainer jets from a Swiss company and purchased Pilatus aircraft. "This procurement was riddled with questions and in 2019 a CBI inquiry proved that there was an involvement of middleman. Indian companies like HAL



were not given prominence and the transaction was opaque. The investigation led to blacklisting of this Swiss company. The entire process led to indigenous trainer aircraft manufacturing project suffer tremendously. The project was almost shelved," he said.

President's Rule imposed in Manipur

NEW DELHI, Feb 13 (PTI)

PRESIDENT'S rule was imposed in strife-torn Manipur on Thursday and the State Assembly put under suspended animation, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post that led to political uncertainty in the north-eastern state.

The Manipur Assembly,

which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Singh, who was heading the BJP Government in Manipur, resigned as Chief Minister after nearly 21 months of ethnic violence that has claimed over 250 lives so far.

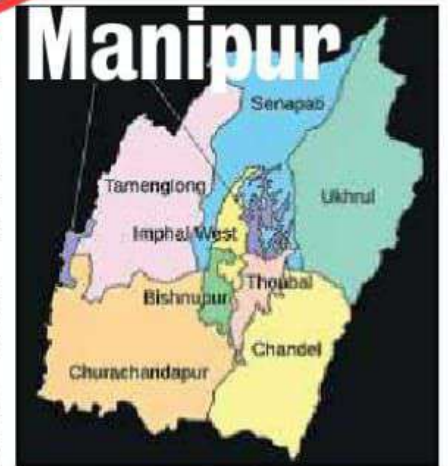
He resigned on February 9

and submitted his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla in Imphal, hours after his meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah here.

The decision to impose the Central rule was taken after the Governor sent a report to President Droupadi Murmu.

"After considering the report and other information received

(Contd on page 5)



Parl't panel seeks amendments in laws to regulate content on social media, OTT

NEW DELHI, Feb 13 (PTI)

A PARLIAMENTARY panel on Thursday asked the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to submit a note by February 17 on the amendments needed in existing laws to clamp down on controversial content like the one involving Ranveer Allahbadia amid bipartisan concern from MPs over the issue.

At the meeting of the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, members from different parties voiced concern over Allahbadia's crass comments at a YouTube programme and called for stringent measures to punish him

and to ensure that such an incident does not recur. Sources said, the committee's chairperson and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey shared their concerns at the meeting attended by Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju and other senior ministry officials.

The committee later dispatched a communication to Jaju under the subject "review of implementation of laws related to all forms of media", sources said. The letter said, "With the examination of the subject 'Review of Implementation of Laws related to all forms of Media', and in the light of recent episode of controversy generat-

ed by the vulgar remarks of YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia in a YouTube short, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is requested to provide a brief note regarding the amendments required in all the laws (Act, Code, Guidelines, etc) related to media due to the emergence of new forms of technology and media platforms."

Most members at the meeting, the sources added, were of the view that the existing laws should be amended to regulate content on social media and Over The Top (OTT) platforms. They said the extant laws should be used to take action against those airing controversial content like Allahbadia.

BJP's Anil Baluni, V D Sharma, Lahar Singh Siroya, BJD MP Sasmit Patra and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi were among those who raised the issue.

Police have registered a criminal case against the social media influencer, who has apologised for his comments. Though his remarks have received all-round criticism, there has been a debate on whether comments like these should be criminalised or be instead subject to better regulations.

The parliamentary committee has been engaged in a keen discussion over the need to amend the existing laws.

Budget's goal is to propel growth, boost private investments: FM Sitharaman in RS

■ Replying to a discussion on the general Budget in Rajya Sabha, the minister also said the Budget was prepared during a challenging time, with serious external challenges beyond estimates or forecasts

NEW DELHI, Feb 13 (PTI)

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the goals of the Union Budget 2025-26 is to accelerate growth, secure inclusive development, and invigorate private sector investments.

Replying to a discussion on the general Budget in Rajya Sabha, the minister also said the Budget was prepared during a

challenging time, with serious external challenges beyond estimates or forecasts.

Despite this, the Government has tried to keep the assessment as accurate as possible, keeping India's interests paramount, Sitharaman said.

"There are no models that you can build and understand how the trends will be because they are very dynamic. Despite that, we have tried keeping the assessments as close as possible, keeping India's interests as top-most... This immense uncertainty is still playing out and many Indian imports which are very critical for our economy to grow are also going to be left with uncertainty," she said.

The minister also stressed that the Budget has not reduced sec-



tional allocations and the effective capital expenditure during the next fiscal is estimated at Rs 19.08 lakh crore.

Sitharaman told the House that the first advance estimates from National Statistics Office (NSO) has projected India's economy will grow by 6.4 per cent in real terms and 9.7 per cent in nominal terms.

So for the Budget, "we have kept our goals" such that we are able to accelerate growth, secure inclusive development, invigorate private sector investments, she said.

The minister also highlighted that the government steered the economy very well during the Covid crisis, and the country emerged as 5th largest major economy in the world.

She also recalled after the global financial crisis of 2008, India was termed as among the "fragile five" economies.

11 out of 74 women in LS are from West Bengal: EC

NEW DELHI, Feb 13 (PTI)

WEST Bengal led the way in electing the highest number of women candidates in the Lok Sabha elections held last year, with 11 securing parliamentary seats.

Out of 543 members, the present or the 18th Lok Sabha has as many as 74 women members.

Uttar Pradesh elected the highest number of male candidates, at 73.

While West Bengal sends 42 MPs to the Lower House, Uttar

**From Maharashtra
111 female candidates
contested LS polls**

Pradesh sends 80.

According to the Atlas-2024 released by the Election Commission on Wednesday, in terms of women participation, Maharashtra once again led the race with 111 female candidates contesting, followed by Uttar Pradesh (80) and Tamil Nadu (77).

As many as 152 constituencies across the country had no women candidates at all.

Certain States and Union Territories made significant strides in electing women candidates. Tripura and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (DNH and D&D) recorded a remarkable 50 per cent representation of women among their elected MPs.

Delhi followed with 28.6 per cent, Chhattisgarh at 27.3 per cent, and West Bengal at 26.2 per cent.