



# THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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## Gaza summit: PM Modi gets invite, deputies MoS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi got a last-minute invite for the Gaza peace summit to be held in Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh on Monday

The summit, hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, will discuss ways to bring lasting peace to Gaza and the wider West Asia. It will be co-chaired by Trump



The Centre has deputed Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh to attend

US President Donald Trump and nearly 20 other world leaders, including UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Italian leader Giorgia Meloni and French President Emmanuel Macron, are expected to attend

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## From Delhi, Af minister issues stern warning to Pak over border clashes

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

TALIBAN-ruled Afghanistan's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, who is on a six-day visit to India, on Sunday issued a stern warning to Pakistan from Indian soil that Kabul has "other options" if Islamabad refuses diplomacy. His strong remarks come amid deadly border clashes and growing hostility between Afghanistan and



Amir Khan Muttaqi

Pakistan.

"The people of Pakistan, in the majority, are peace loving... We have no issues with civilians," Muttaqi said at a New Delhi press conference, adding "certain sections" in Pakistan are creating trouble.

"Afghanistan will safeguard its national interest," he said,

adding Kabul had already retaliated to border violations. "We achieved our military objectives last night," he said, before claiming he had heeded calls from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to pause escalation.

Muttaqi's warning follows attacks along the Durand Line.

The Taliban claimed to have killed 58 Pak soldiers and seized 20 border posts in retaliatory strikes against Pakistan's alleged territorial and airspace violations.

Islamabad disputed the claim, acknowledging 23 deaths and asserting it had "neutral-

ised" 200 Taliban fighters in its counteroffensive. Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi denounced the Taliban's actions as unprovoked violence against civilians, vowing retaliation "with a stone for every brick."

Border crossings have been shut. Closure of the Torkham and Chaman points has stranded trade caravans on both sides and deepened the humanitarian stress in landlocked Afghanistan.

Muttaqi's Delhi visit is being closely watched as a signal in the regional chess game. Without explicitly recognising the Taliban regime, India has upgraded its technical mission in Kabul to a full embassy—a bold step that underscores New Delhi's willingness to engage directly with Kabul's new rulers. Against that backdrop, Muttaqi's pointed remarks from a high profile Indian stage carry diplomatic weight.



### 'Women jurnos excluded due to technical issue'

After widespread criticism over excluding female journalists from his first press meet in India, Muttaqi said it was not deliberate. "It was a short notice and the list was prepared with specific journalists. It was more of a technical issue and not intentional," he said during a second press briefing in Delhi, which included female journalists

## WINTRACK BRIBE ROW

## Two senior Customs officials shunted out

SIDDHARTH PRABHAKAR

@ Chennai

TEN days after private firm Wintrack levelled corruption allegations against Chennai Air Cargo Customs, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on Saturday transferred the agency's commissioner and deputy commissioner.

Principal Commissioner of Chennai Airport Customs MG Thamizh Valavan and deputy commissioner Harendra Singh Pal were transferred to the Director General of Taxpayer Service (DGTS) and the Directorate General of Performance Management (DGPM), respectively.

CBIC sources said this was an administrative transfer to ensure a fair probe and did not indicate any wrongdoing. "The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs @cbic\_in-

dia has received the factual enquiry report from the Department of Revenue. Based on the prima facie findings, a thorough vigilance investigation is being initiated, which is proposed to be completed in 4-6 weeks," CBIC wrote on X.

The action came after Wintrack alleged corruption and harassment by Chennai Customs over clearing their cargo imported from China, which ignited an outpouring of anger. Celebrities like Mohandas Pai, the Chairman of Manipal Global Education Services, and Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor had joined the debate supporting the cause of Wintrack.

Chennai Customs had then posted a clarification denying allegations of bribery and said Wintrack's consignment had been misdeclared, and it submitted wrong documentation, and false exemption.



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## DEVI AWARDS PRESENTED

by Justice V Ramasubramanian, chairperson of NHRC and former SC judge, in the presence of Prabhu Chawla, editorial director of TNIE Group, on Sunday in Hyderabad

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## BJP, JD(U) TO CONTEST 101 SEATS EACH

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Sunday finalised its seat-sharing agreement for the upcoming Bihar assembly election

BJP and Janata Dal (United) will each contest 101 seats in the **243-member** assembly, while Union Minister Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party will contest on **29 seats**



Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and former Union Minister Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) will contest six seats each

This is the first time since 2005 that BJP and JD(U) will contest an equal number of seats

The JD(U) is understood to have not insisted on a lion's share this time in view of the party's poor performance in 2020, when it won only **43 seats**, far less than the BJP's 74 | **P10**

## 4 killed in 7-vehicle pileup on K'giri-B'luru NH

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Krishnagiri

FOUR men were killed in a multi-vehicle pileup along the Krishnagiri-Bengaluru National Highway at Berandapalli in Krishnagiri district early on Sunday. Police said the accident was caused by a container lorry braking suddenly, causing seven vehicles behind it to

crash into each other.

The deceased, all engineers, have been identified as T Madan alias Madan Kumar (28) of Erode, K Gokul (28) of Kanna-kurichi in Salem, M Mukilan (30) of Pachagoundanur in Salem and P Manivannan (27) of Pannapatti in Salem.

According to police, Madan, who was working at a tech firm in Canada, got married only



Police said the accident was caused by a container lorry braking suddenly along the Krishnagiri-Bengaluru NH | EXPRESS

five months ago and had arrived at the Bengaluru airport on Saturday night to be home during Deepavali. Gokul, Mukilan and Manivannan had driven to the airport in a car to pick him up. Manivannan, who was driving, was to be married on October 31, while Mukilan was awaiting results for the UPSC main exam — he had reached the interview stage twice before. **P7**

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