

Will Maha Kumbh Be Extended In 2025? Here's What Prayagraj DM Says

Prayagraj District Magistrate (DM) Ravindra Mandar on Tuesday categorically denied rumours circulating on social media regarding an extension of the Maha Kumbh Mela due to heavy crowds. Dismissing these claims, he clarified that the schedule of the event is determined based on religious "muhurats" (auspicious timings) and remains unchanged. The Maha Kumbh will conclude on February 26, under its pre-decided schedule, Mandar said.

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"According to (Uttar Pradesh) Chief Minister Yogi



Adityanath's instructions, the administration is ensuring a smooth travel and other arrangements for all the devotees. There is

no proposal from the government or the district administration to extend the mela dates. Pilgrims should not pay heed to such misinformation," he said. The DM asserted that all necessary arrangements are in place for the remaining days of the Maha Kumbh to facilitate hassle-free bathing at the Triveni Sangam. The administration is also focused on traffic management to maintain a balance between the movement of devotees and normal life in Prayagraj, he said. Regarding claims of railway station closures, the DM clarified that no station has been shut down without prior notice. "The closure of the Prayag Sangam station at

Daraganj on peak days is a routine practice, as it is located near the mela site. This is done to prevent overcrowding. However, all other railway stations are fully operational and passengers are travelling smoothly," he said. The DM also informed that no student has so far missed their board exams due to the mela. "We had earlier advised students and parents to reach the exam centres well in advance, and everyone has followed those instructions. Besides, the CBSE and ICSE boards have decided to provide an extra opportunity to those students who may miss their exams due to unavoidable circumstances," he said. The administration has requested devotees and residents to rely only on official sources for information.

Rahul Gandhi Seeking To Undermine Centre's Constitutional Mandate Through 'Malicious' Judicial Activism: BJP

The BJP on Tuesday dismissed Rahul Gandhi's criticism of the appointment of the chief election commissioner and an election commissioner as "politically motivated" and accused him of undermining an elected government's constitutional mandate through "malicious" judicial activism. The BJP's reaction came after the Congress leader said it was "disrespectful" and "discourteous" for the prime minister and home minister to have made a midnight decision to select the new CEC when the process of selection is being challenged in the Supreme Court. The government has announced the appointment of Gyanesh Kumar as the new CEC and named IAS officer Vivek Joshi as an election commissioner. In the Monday meeting of the panel, which includes the PM, HM and the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Gandhi had presented a dissent note. Hitting back, BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said Gandhi's dissent on the appointment of the chief election



commissioner (CEC) is not just politically motivated but also lacks merit. He said on X, "It is an attempt to undermine the constitutional mandate of the elected government through malicious judicial activism. Additionally, it conveniently misreads and misinterprets the Supreme Court's judgment on the CEC's appointment." He noted that a five-judge Constitution bench had revised the process for appointing members of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in 2023, ruling that the President

should appoint the CEC and election commissioners based on the recommendation of a committee comprising the PM, LoP in Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India. However, the court clarified that this arrangement would remain in place only until Parliament enacted a law establishing a permanent mechanism, he added. To determine the original intent of the Constitution's framers, Malviya said the court had analysed the 1949 Constituent Assembly debates and noted that it the appointment process was left to Parliament's discretion. He said the President appointed the CEC and election commissioners solely on the prime minister's recommendation before the ruling. Malviya said, "Thus, the current appointment process is more structured, transparent, and inclusive, involving multiple stakeholders, including the Leader of the Opposition". The new law that governs the appointment process puts in place a search committee led by the law minister and two

senior bureaucrats that shortlists five candidates. This list is then sent to a selection committee comprising the prime minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and a Union Cabinet Minister (in this case, the Home Minister), he added. Attacking the Congress, he said the party and the Gandhis, in particular, should be the last to sermonise on the appointment of the CEC, given their record of "abusing the office, appointing pliant candidates, and later doling out political appointments to incumbents as a reward for their services after stepping down". He shared a list of several former CECs who were later given different positions or honoured with Padma awards by the then government. Gandhi claimed that the Modi government violated the Supreme Court order by removing the chief justice of India from the committee. He said the government has exacerbated the concerns of hundreds of millions of voters over the integrity of our electoral process.

Delhi Next Chief Minister: Wait For New CM To End Today; PM, Ministers, Celebrities To Attend Feb 20 Oath

Delhi's wait for its new chief minister after the assembly polls will end on Wednesday, when the BJP Legislature Party is slated to choose the Leader of the House, even as preparations for the February 20 oath-taking ceremony are in full swing at the historic Ramlila Ground here. Party leaders said the chief minister and the entire Cabinet will take oath at a grand ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union minister and other dignitaries. A huge crowd is expected at the event and around 40 celebrities have been invited, sources said, adding the ceremony would be held around noon rather than 4.30 pm, as was communicated by party leaders earlier. BJP MP Yogender Chandolia said preparations for the ceremony are in full swing at the Ramlila Ground. "Around 50,000 people, including party workers, RWA, sections of society and saints, will be invited. It will be a grand event in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet ministers will be present. It will last around 25-30 minutes," the Northwest Delhi MP said. They will celebrate the occasion across Delhi with drum-beats and make people feel the change has now started, he said. He said the Ramleela



Ground was chosen as the venue for the ceremony as people from various walks of life want to be part of the event and the space at the Raj Niwas could not have accommodated them all. The newly-elected BJP legislature party will meet at the party's Delhi unit office to elect the Leader of the House in the Delhi Assembly on Wednesday. The meeting is expected to be held in the evening, party leaders said. The chief ministers of some BJP-ruled states, including Gujarat, may skip the oath-taking ceremony because of their preoccupa-

tion with presentation of budget in those states. The Ramleela Ground and surrounding areas, including roads, pavements and medians, were cleaned and freshly painted. Party leaders said around one lakh people are expected to throng the whole area as there was a lot of enthusiasm among residents over the BJP forming its government in Delhi after more than 26 years, party leaders said. The party ended the 10 year-rule of the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi by winning 48 of the 70 Assembly seats in the

February 5 polls. The venue will have three stages with dignitaries, including the prime minister, Delhi LG V K Saxena, BJP President J P Nadda, the new chief minister and members of his or her Cabinet seated at the central stage. It will be flanked by the two stages on which other dignitaries, including Union ministers, politicians, chief ministers of other states will be seated. Officials said that as per protocol, outgoing Delhi chief minister Atishi and her predecessor and three time chief minister Arvind Kejriwal will also be

invited to the oath ceremony. The names doing the rounds for the new chief minister include Parvesh Verma, who defeated Kejriwal; former Delhi BJP presidents Vijender Gupta and Satish Upadhyay; and other leaders such as Pawan Sharma, Ashish Sood, Rekha Gupta, and Shikha Rai. The names of Ravinder Indraj Singh, the MLA from Bawana (SC) seat, and Kailash Gangwal, who won the Madipur (SC) seat for the BJP for the first time, are also being discussed. Many within the party believe that the BJP leadership could choose a "dark horse" as Delhi's next chief minister, a strategy the party opted for in Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh. Earlier the day, BJP leaders Tarun Chugh and Vinod Tavde, in-charge of the swearing-in ceremony, and Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva took stock of the preparations at the Ramlila Ground, not very far from the New Delhi Railway Station. Chugh told reporters that the people of Delhi have blessed the BJP and Prime Minister Modi with a historic mandate, and they are eager to be part of the ceremony. It will be a historic event on February 20. Every section of society is excited and want to be part of the programme, he said.

Thalapathy Vijay's Schools In Chennai Follow 3-Language Policy: Annamalai Slams Actor's 'Hypocrisy'

Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai has attacked actor-turned-politician Vijay over his stand on the three-language policy. Days ago, Vijay criticised the Centre claiming that "enforcing the three-language policy is nothing but an attempt to strip states of their autonomy." Thalapathy Vijay's Schools In Chennai Follow 3-Language Policy Annamalai Slams Actor's Hypocrisy However, Annamalai has now accused the ruling DMK of hypocrisy over its standing on teaching the Hindi language in schools as the schools run by its leaders have adopted the three-language policy. He then questioned Vijay's stand asking him why his English-medium CBSE school located in Padur near Chennai is teach-

ing Hindi, contradicting his political position. What Annamalai Said? He said, "TVK chief Vijay runs a CBSE school in Padur. It is called Vijay Vidyashram. See the name, C Joseph Vijay. Who is this C Joseph Vijay? His land has been leased for 35 years from 2017 to 2052 to a trust. The trust is registered under the name of SA Chandrasekhar and the school run by this trust is Vijay Vidyashram. What do some political leaders think - they run CBSE schools and Hindi is taught in these schools, and their own children learn French. Anbil Mahesh Pooyamozhi's son is studying French. What do these politicians think when they say government school students should only study 2



languages - be it TVK leader Vijay or Seeman or TN's Education Minister Anbil Mahesh? I am not delving into the DMK family-run Sunshine school." Students are required to study English as their primary language in CBSE schools across Tamil Nadu. For the second language, they can choose from Hindi,

French, German, or any other regional language available in the state, the report added. Most CBSE schools in Chennai offer Tamil, Hindi, or French as second-language options. Additionally, students must study a third language until Class 8, which is typically Hindi. After Class 8, they continue with only two languages. If Tamil is chosen as the second language from Classes 6 to 8, it remains the second language in Classes 9 and 10. The same rule applies if Hindi is selected as the second language. The report claims that the land is in the name of Joseph Vijay in the Sale Deed. The actor-turned-politician has leased the 10,724-square-meter property to the school.

Pod Taxis In Maharashtra Soon: Connecting Mira-Bhayandar And Thane-Ghodbunder



The state government is planning a new pod taxi system to connect Mira-Bhayandar with Thane-Ghodbunder, according to a Hindustan Times (HT) report. This project aims to reduce urban traffic and improve connectivity to railway and metro stations, even as the current pod taxi plan for the Bandra-Kurla Complex progresses slowly. On Tuesday, state transport minister Pratap Sarnaik confirmed the new route after returning from Vadodara, where the pod cars are being developed. He was joined by the transport commissioner and other senior officials during his visit to the Futran Experience Centre at Nutran EV Mobility in the Special Economic Zone in Wagodiya. The Futran project aligns with the Make in India initiative, boasting that 70 per cent of its components are made locally, with plans to increase this to 85 per cent by 2028. This approach aims to provide cost-effective production and low maintenance, making it a sustainable option for urban transport in India. Minister Sarnaik stated, "This pod car will help solve congestion problems in Maharashtra using the state-of-the-art technology of the Futran system. We are focusing on Mira-Bhayandar Road to evaluate its potential deployment." The Futran system operates continuously, providing a solution to urban traffic congestion. Sources in the delegation noted that the pod taxi system could easily integrate with the existing metro network, enhancing access to metro stations and easing congestion in densely populated areas. The system is expected to improve the usage of metro rail services in Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). The pod cars feature a small turning radius and compact station designs, which can be installed along existing roads. Each pod car accommodates up to 20 passengers and operates at speeds of 60-70 kilometres per hour, powered by electric motors and battery systems. They are designed to run 24 hours a day and include safety features like an onboard collision avoidance system and a 25-metre following distance. The pod car tracks and stations will be elevated six metres above the road and require only four to six small pillars, allowing for efficient use of space. The high-capacity system can transport over 15,000 passengers in one direction every hour. In addition to the new project, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has appointed M/s Sai Green Mobility Private Limited from Hyderabad as the Concessionaire for the pod taxi service in Bandra-Kurla Complex. An official from MMRDA confirmed that the agreement was signed on October 9, 2024, and the company has one year to secure the necessary approvals for the project's implementation.

Why Are We Giving USD 21 Million To India? Donald Trump On Cancelling Voter Turnout Fund



US President Donald Trump on Wednesday defended his move to cancel USD 21 million fund marked for 'Voter Turnout in India'. Why US Cancelling The Fund? Claiming India is a growing economy with high taxation rates, the country does not need such financial support, Trump said after signing executive orders at Mar-a-Lago on Tuesday. Why Are We Giving USD 21 Million To India? US President Donald Trump On Cancelling Voter Turnout Fund? "Why are we giving USD 21 million to India? They have a lot

more money. They are one of the highest taxing countries in the world in terms of us; we can hardly get in there because their tariffs are so high. I have a lot of respect for India and their Prime Minister, but giving USD 21 million for voter turnout?" ANI quoted Trump as saying. His statement comes after DOGE released a list of cancelled US taxpayer-funded initiatives with a mention of USD 21 million earmarked for "voter turnout in India."

DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) is an initiative of the second Trump administration led by Elon Musk. It is a temporary contracted organization under the United States DOGE Service (formerly the United States Digital Service) which is been formed with an aim of eliminating wasteful spending. "US taxpayer dollars were going to be spent on the following items, all of which have been cancelled," the Musk-led department announced on February 16. BJP Reaction Meanwhile, BJP's Amit Malviya took to his X to react to the announcement. "\$21M for voter

turnout? This definitely is external interference in India's electoral process. Who gains from this? Not the ruling party for sure!" his post read.

"Mozambique voluntary medical male circumcision" is the other funding which has been cancelled by the US department which will save USD 10 million to the government. "USD 486M to the 'Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening,' including USD 22M for an 'inclusive and participatory political process' in Moldova and USD 21M for voter turnout in India," DOGE added. In addition to it, a USD 29 million intended for "strengthening the political landscape in Bangladesh" and a USD 39 million for "fiscal federalism" and "biodiversity conservation" in Nepal was also cancelled. Also, USD 1.5 million for "voter confidence" in Liberia, USD 14 million for "social cohesion" in Mali, USD 2.5 million for "inclusive democracies in Southern Africa," and USD 47 million for "improving learning outcomes in Asia" were also cancelled by DOGE.

KIIT Student Suicide: Justice for Prakriti Trends As

Boyfriend's Audio Clip Exposes Abuse And Harassment

A tragic incident at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar has sent shockwaves through India and Nepal. Prakriti Lamsal, a 20-year-old third-year B.Tech student from Nepal, was found dead in her hostel room on February 16, allegedly driven to suicide due to harassment and blackmail.

KIIT Student Suicide

Alarming revelations have emerged through an audio clip, in which fellow student also ex-boyfriend Advik Srivastava can allegedly be heard blackmailing Prakriti and using offensive language while she repeatedly apologised. The leak has sparked widespread outrage, leading to student protests, diplomatic concerns, and renewed scrutiny of the university's handling of harassment complaints. However, OneIndia could not independently verify the clip.

Repeated Complaints Ignored?

Reports indicate that Lamsal had approached KIIT's International Relations Office (IRO) multiple times,



raising concerns about Srivastava's harassment. However, the university reportedly responded with only counseling and a warning. Her cousin, Siddhant Sigdel, revealed that she was being blackmailed, and the now-viral audio recording has intensified public anger, putting KIIT under severe criticism. Following Prakriti Lamsal's death, over 500 Nepali students at KIIT staged protests, blocking roads and demanding justice. In a controversial move, the university ordered all Nepali students to vacate the campus, a decision widely condemned as retaliatory

and racially insensitive. The Nepalese government intervened, with Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli dispatching embassy officials to Bhubaneswar. Under mounting diplomatic pressure, KIIT retracted its eviction order, allowing students to return to their hostels. The Odisha government also stepped in, assuring a thorough investigation and safety measures for international students. Bhubaneswar police detained Srivastava as he allegedly attempted to flee the city. He has been arrested under Section 108 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for abetment of suicide. Investigators have seized Lamsal's mobile phone and laptop for forensic analysis, hoping to gather further evidence. The case has triggered widespread protests and diplomatic responses, with the Nepalese Embassy urging KIIT to ensure the safety of its Nepali students. Meanwhile, social media is flooded with demands for justice, with hashtags like #JusticeForPrakriti and #PunishAdvik gaining traction.

