

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Music in India weaves millions of hearts into one shared rhythm: Vice Prez

THRISSUR (KERALA), MAR 1: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Sunday said music in India is a powerful thread that weaves millions of hearts into one shared rhythm.

He addressed a gathering at the foundation stone laying ceremony of Ganashram, a music-spiritual centre. It is an initiative of the Kuriakose Elias Service Society at Nadathara here.

"Bharat has its own rich tradition of music dating back thousands of years. Music of Bharat is a spiritual journey, a meditation, a prayer and a celebration of life. Music in India is a powerful thread that weaves millions of hearts into one shared rhythm," Radhakrishnan said.

When speaking of Bharat, "we speak of an ancient civilisation whose soul finds its purest expression in music".

"From the hymns of the Vedas to the emotional outpourings of saints, music has flowed through our civilisation like the holy Ganga, pure, powerful and life-giving," he added.

He said the sacred chants of the Sama Veda are among the earliest foundations of structured music in the world.

"In the temples built by the Chola kings, we can see living testimony to the musical



culture of ancient South India. This proves that Bharat's musical heritage is as ancient as time itself," he said.

Radhakrishnan noted that India has a wide variety of musical traditions.

He said that classical musical traditions—Hindustani in the North and Carnatic music in the South—are profound systems of sound, enriched by great masters over the centuries.

"The immortal compositions of Thyagaraja continue to elevate hearts. The genius of Tansen echoes through history. The divine voice of M S Subbulakshmi carried Indian music to the global stage, while the sitar of Ravi Shankar mesmerised people across continents," he said.

Whether Western or Indian music, there are only seven notes worldwide. "Each of the saptaswaras resonates with emotions within us. A soothing raga can calm anxiety, a devotional composition can uplift the spirit, and a vibrant melody can energise the mind," he said.

The V-P added that music regulates breathing, steadies the heartbeat and reduces stress.

Individually, each musical note has its own identity, but together they create melody. "Likewise, human beings too can create harmony when aligned with a higher purpose," he said.

He said Ganashram would help people find peace and noted that the institution is managed by people of all

faiths and that legendary singer K G Yesudas is associated with it.

"I appreciate Ganashram for bringing people of all faiths under one spiritual umbrella through music and meditation. When seven notes align, they not only create music but also awaken souls," he said.

He said the purpose of prayer is to attain peace of mind and self-regulation.

"Yoga and music help us move closer to God with better concentration," he said.

Radhakrishnan said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, yoga has received international recognition.

"Today, yoga has become a symbol of India's soft power, acting as a bridge connecting nations beyond politics and boundaries," he said.

Indian music reflects the ancient philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," meaning the world is one family.

He said the importance of melody and music in today's fast-moving and stressful world is more relevant than ever.

Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar, Union Minister Suresh Gopi and Higher Education Minister R Bindu also spoke on the occasion. (Agencies)

BJP chief claims 'over 50 lakh infiltrators' removed from Bengal electoral rolls

COOCH BEHAR, MAR 1:

A day after the publication of West Bengal's post-SIR electoral rolls that saw 63.66 lakh names deleted, BJP national president Nitin Nabin on Sunday claimed that "more than 50 lakh infiltrators" had been removed from the voter list and said "time is up for illegal immigrants" in the state.

Addressing a rally in Cooch Behar while flagging off the party's 'Poriborton Yatra', Nabin alleged that those removed from the electoral rolls were "infiltrators", who had been availing government jobs and benefits of welfare schemes meant for genuine citizens.

"More than 50 lakh infiltrators have been removed from the voter list. These infiltrators were not only violating the rights of legitimate citizens but also jeopardising the security of the country," he said.

The BJP chief alleged that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had provided "protection to infiltrators by helping them obtain



fake documents".

"Mamata Banerjee rushed to the courts to protect infiltrators in the voter rolls, as they are her party's vote bank. But when women face humiliation, you choose to look the other way," Nabin said, in a sharp attack on the TMC leadership.

He also said, "Our message to the infiltrators is that the time has now come to drive them out from the soil of Bengal. We must not only drive out infiltrators but also establish a decisive government that can usher in devel-

opment." Allying "misrule" by the TMC, Nabin said the state needs to be "freed from the corrupt TMC government, which works only for infiltrators". "Bengal is yearning for a change. People want a real 'Poriborton'," he said.

His remarks came a day after the Election Commission published the post-SIR rolls, marking a sweeping electoral reset barely months before the assembly polls.

According to official data released on Saturday, 63.66 lakh names — around 8.3 per

cent of the electorate — have been deleted since the Special Intensive Revision began in November last year, reducing the voter base from 7.66 crore to just over 7.04 crore.

The 116-day statewide exercise — the first intensive revision since 2002 — has also placed over 60.06 lakh electors in the "under adjudication" category, with their eligibility now subject to judicial scrutiny in the coming weeks, a process that could further recalibrate constituency-level equations.

The draft rolls published on December 16 last year had already pared down the electorate from 7.66 crore to 7.08 crore, deleting over 58 lakh names on grounds such as death, migration, duplication and untraceability.

Following hearings and disposal of claims and objections, another 5.46 lakh deletions were recorded through Form-7 applications, taking the total SIR-linked omissions to around 63.66 lakh. (PTI)

Nation paying heavy price for substance, style of Modi's foreign policy: Cong

NEW DELHI, MAR 1:

The Congress on Sunday said the government's response to the war unleashed on Iran has been a betrayal of India's values, principles and interests, as it claimed that the nation is paying a heavy price for both the substance and style of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy.

Taking a swipe at Modi, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said India's foreign policy under the "self-styled 'Vishwaguru'" stands brutally exposed, notwithstanding all the grandstanding on it by the cheerleaders of the PM, led by himself.

"Modi visited Israel on February 25-26, 2026, at a time when the entire world was aware that a US-Israel military attack on Iran for regime change was imminent. The assault began just two days after Mr. Modi left Israel where his speech to the Knesset was a display of shameful moral cowardice," Ramesh said on X.

"The Modi government's response to the war unleashed on Iran that has involved targeted assassinations has been a betrayal of India's values, principles, concerns, and interests," he alleged.

Ramesh's remarks come after Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in a major attack by Israel and the United States. State media reported that the 86-year-old was killed in an air strike targeting his compound in downtown Tehran.

In his post on X, Ramesh lashed out at the Modi government's foreign policy.

"The US President continues his romance with Pakistan, applauding again and again the very man whose inflammatory remarks provided the backdrop to the terror attacks in Pahalgam on April 22, 2025. The US has also categorically come out in support of Pakistan's war on Afghanistan," he said.

The US President has, at last count, claimed a hundred times that he had intervened to halt Operation Sindoor on May 10, 2025 using the threat of increased tariffs on India's exports to the US, Ramesh said.

"But the PM is completely silent on these assertions of President Trump. The first announcement of the halt to Operation Sindoor was made by the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio at 5:37 PM on May 10, 2025," he said.

Ramesh further pointed out that on February 2nd,

2026 President Trump declared that — at Prime Minister Modi's request — the India-US trade deal had been finalised and is coming into effect immediately.

"That this was a desperate move by Mr. Modi who was attempting to divert the headlines from the issues raised by Rahul Gandhi in Parliament is clearly obvious," he claimed.

"Eighteen days later, the US Supreme Court announced that President Trump's tariff strategy that formed the foundations of the India-US trade deal was illegal and unconstitutional. This decision was widely expected but Mr. Modi pressured President Trump to sign the trade deal for his own political calculations," Ramesh said.

"The trade deal itself is now widely acknowledged as being one-sided, with India making firm pledges to significantly liberalise imports (including of agricultural commodities especially) with no corresponding pledges by the US on increased imports from India," the Congress leader said in his post.

The US has also repeatedly stressed that India has agreed to stop buying oil from Russia but the Modi government has not clarified the commitment given in

this regard, Ramesh said.

"Mr. Modi gave a clean chit to China publicly on June 19, 2020. This shocking statement came even as twenty of our brave jawans were martyred on the border in Ladakh. The clean chit greatly weakened our negotiating position and we are now being compelled to normalize relations with China on Chinese terms and conditions," he said.

"The nation is paying a heavy price for both the substance and style of Mr. Modi's foreign policy," Ramesh said.

The Congress on Saturday condemned the attacks launched on Iran by the US and Israel, and called upon the Indian government to help bring the hostilities to an end and ensure the safety of all Indians in the Middle East. The opposition party expressed concern over the escalating hostilities in the region and urged the government to ensure that all Indians living there are safe.

The United States and Israel launched a major attack on Iran on Saturday, with Trump calling on the Iranian public to seize control of their destiny and rise up against the Islamic leadership that has ruled their country since 1979. (PTI)

Lalu calls RJD parliamentary board meeting on Sunday amid Tejashwi's RS poll contest speculations

PATNA, MAR 1: Amid speculations that RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav may contest Rajya Sabha polls in Bihar, party supremo Lalu Prasad convened its parliamentary board meeting here on Sunday.

The meeting is scheduled to be held four days before the last date for filing nominations in the Rajya Sabha polls.

Talking to reporters, RJD state unit spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwary said, "I have nothing to comment on the speculations, but one thing is quite clear. People want our leader, Tejashwi ji, in the Upper House of Parliament. Let's wait. Things will soon become clear." Of the total 16 Rajya Sabha seats from Bihar, five will fall vacant in April, for which elections will



be held on March 16.

The Rajya Sabha terms will end next month for Hari-vansh Narayan Singh and Ram Nath Thakur of the JD(U), Prem Chand Gupta and Amarendra Dhari Singh of the RJD, and Upendra

Kushwaha of the RLM, a constituent of the NDA.

The RJD, the principal opposition party in the state, has only 25 MLAs, too few to secure a Rajya Sabha berth.

The RJD-led grand alliance, which includes Con-

gress, CPI(ML), CPI(M) and IIP, has only 35 members in the 243-strong state assembly, six less than the minimum number required to get a berth in the Upper House of Parliament.

The suspense remains over the fifth seat, given the current situation where neither the RJD-led Mahagatbandhan nor the NDA has sufficient numbers to win it on its own.

To win a Rajya Sabha berth, one needs the support of at least 41 MLAs in the 243-member Bihar assembly.

The last date for filing nominations is March 5, while scrutiny of papers will take place the next day.

Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations till March 9. (PTI)

Operation against Afghan Taliban still continuing: Pak Minister

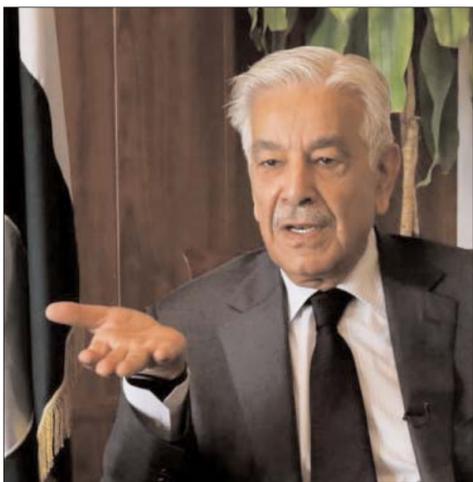
ISLAMABAD, MAR 1: A Pakistan minister on Sunday announced that the operation against Afghan Taliban was continuing, refuting social media reports about the conclusion of the blitz.

Pakistan launched its operation on Thursday night in response to the Taliban operatives attacking 53 locations along the more than 2,600km long border, targeting military installations deep in the country through air strikes.

Federal Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry refuted reports that Pakistan halted its operations, saying that "false and fabricated news is being spread on social media that Pakistan has stopped its operations against Afghanistan".

"The reality is the opposite. In view of the current regional situation, the sharing of PAF and drone footage with the media has been temporarily suspended. The purpose of this decision is to safeguard national security and operational strategy, not to prevent operations," he wrote on X.

He further said: "Opera-



tions are continuing. The operation against terrorist elements is moving forward with full intensity and wisdom."

Chaudhry concluded by saying that the nation stands with the Pakistani armed forces.

Pakistan information minister Attaullah Tarar said last night that Pakistan security forces had killed at least 352 Taliban personnel while injuring another 535. He also said that the attacks completely destroyed 130 mili-

tary posts, while the security forces captured another 26 border posts.

Tarar also said that 171 tanks, armoured vehicles have been destroyed, adding that Pakistan also hit 41 locations "with precision air strikes".

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on X that airstrikes on Kabul and Kandahar were led by Pakistan air force women fighter pilots.

"It was women pilots of the Pakistan Air Force who carried out successful airstrikes

in Kabul and Kandahar," he said.

He titled the post as "Revenge of Power" and said that "women pilots delivering hell to those attacking girls' schools" — a reference to Taliban demolishing girls schools in Pakistan.

Separately, leading journalist and Geo New anchorperson Hamid Mir claimed that Pakistan captured 32 square kilometers of Afghan territory.

"In Zhob Sector, Pakistan Security Forces have captured 32 Square kilometers of Afghanistan territory named Ghudwana Enclave," he claimed in a post on X on Saturday.

He then said: "Now Afghan Taliban must show the Pakistani pilot they reportedly captured. They cannot win a war with lies after losing 32 square kilometers."

The claim by the journalist could not be verified independently but Pakistan officially claimed that its forces captured 26 border posts of Afghanistan.

Earlier, the Afghan side made claims that they shot down a Pakistani fighter jet but it was rejected by the authorities. (PTI)

Pak cancels nearly 184 international flights to Middle East after Iran attack

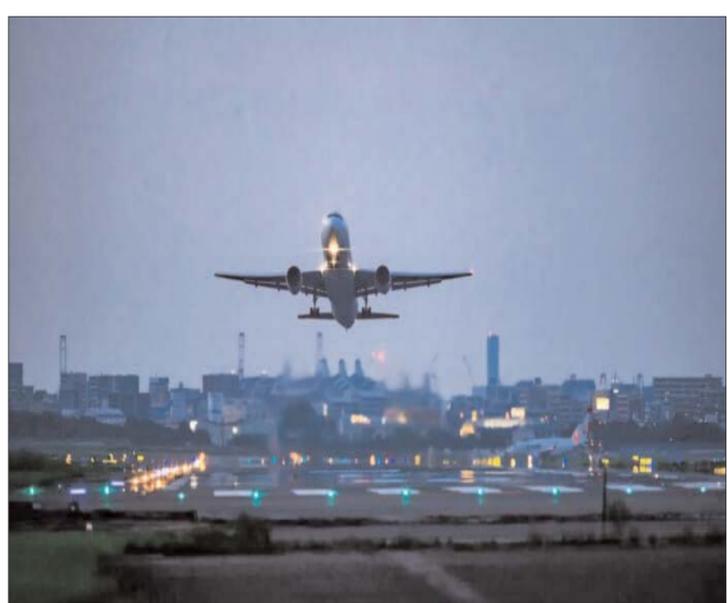
KARACHI, MAR 1:

At least 184 international flights of different airlines from Pakistan to the Middle East have been cancelled since Saturday owing to the escalating situation after the US and Israel attacked Iran.

A spokesperson for the Civil Aviation Authority confirmed that flights to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Muscat, Sharjah, Riyadh, Jeddah from Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Sialkot, Peshawar, Faisalabad had all been cancelled.

"The flights were on the schedule of different airlines," Hafeez Khan said.

International flights in the Middle East have all been badly disrupted or suspended after the closure of the Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports which serve as a major hub for connecting flights to Europe, USA, Canada, South America etc. Airline authorities have



suspended all air traffic in the region because of the increase in missile and drone

attacks by Iran on the US bases in the region.

The spokesperson said at

least 40 flights were cancelled from Islamabad and another 46 from Lahore.