



**Weather Forecast**

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
TEMPERATURE	TEMPERATURE	TEMPERATURE
H 28°C L 22°C	H 29°C L 24°C	H 26°C L 24°C

# War of Words in Telangana Assembly Over State Debts

**Bhatti Defends Government's Debt Management Strategy**  
**Harish Rao Challenges Claims, Calls for Special Discussion on Debts**  
**War of Words: Ministers Clash Over Financial Burden in Telangana**  
**State Debt Figures Disputed: Opposition Accuses Government of Misleading Public**  
**Bhatti and Harish Rao Spar Over Financial Handling and Policy Failures**

**TPN , Hyderabad:** A heated war of words erupted in the Telangana Assembly over the state's mounting debts, with Deputy CM and Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and former Minister Harish Rao exchanging sharp criticisms. The debate centered around claims of the state's financial burden and the management of loans.

Minister Bhatti Vikramarka accused the previous government of leaving a debt burden of Rs. 7 lakh crore, which the current government is now handling. He stated that the government had borrowed Rs. 52,000 crore during their tenure, but had to take on an additional Rs. 66,000 crore to pay off interest on loans inherited from the previous administration. Bhatti also pointed out that the government is now managing Rs. 40,000 crore in pending bills and is working to settle dues of Rs. 14,000 crore.

In response, Harish Rao strongly objected to Bhatti's claims. He countered that, according to the RBI's report, only Rs. 55,275 crore was borrowed, including Rs. 61,991 crore under corporation guarantees and Rs. 10,099 crore without guarantees. Harish Rao also stated that the debt incurred during the previous government's tenure amounted to Rs. 27,208 crore, and over five years, the debt would rise to Rs. 6.36 lakh crore. He further alleged that the BRS party was misleading the people by using the issue



of state debts to avoid fulfilling election promises.

Harish Rao demanded a special discussion on the state debts to clarify the figures and address public concerns. He challenged Bhatti to debate the matter, insisting that the people should know the true financial situation. He also accused Bhatti of misleading the Assembly and disrespecting the Speaker by avoiding discussions on debts.

Bhatti, in turn, dismissed Harish Rao's claims as misleading. He stated that Harish Rao was speaking "far from the truth" and suggested that his statements were an attempt to deflect attention from the BRS party's misman-

agement. Bhatti emphasized that the state's debts had been primarily used to address pending financial obligations, including a Rs. 67,000 crore payment to the discoms, and to provide Rs. 500 bonuses to farmers.

The debate also touched upon the government's approach to free electricity, with Bhatti defending the current administration's handling of discom dues, while Harish Rao criticized the failure to build new infrastructure projects despite significant spending.

The disagreement over the state's debt situation continues to fuel political tensions, with both sides calling for further discussions to settle the matter.

## Sri Tej's Health Critical, Undergoing Treatment at KIMS Hospital



**TPN , Telangana:** Sri Tej, the son of Revathi, who tragically died in a stampede during the Pushpa-2 premiere at Sandhya Theater in Hyderabad on December 4, is in critical condition. He is currently undergoing treatment at KIMS Hospital, where a health bulletin was released about his condition.

feeds well and his neurological condition remains static. Due to this, the medical team is planning a tracheostomy to help remove him from the ventilator.

In a show of support, CP CV Anand visited Sri Tej at the hospital and, along with Health Secretary Christina, inquired about his condition on behalf of the government. The authorities continue to monitor his health closely, hoping for an improvement in his condition. The tragic incident has drawn widespread attention, and the public remains hopeful for Sri Tej's recovery.

According to the bulletin, Sri Tej's health remains critical, and he is on a ventilator with artificial respiration. However, his fever is reportedly decreasing, and vital parameters are stable with minimal inotropic support. The hospital noted that Sri Tej is tolerating

## KTR Warns Government Over Lagacharla Arrests

**KTR Calls for Extended Assembly Sessions to Address Key Issues**  
**KTR Accuses Revanth Reddy of Failing Farmers' Promises**  
**KTR Criticizes Congress Leadership for Misleading the Public**

**TPN , Telangana:** BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has called for a 15-day session of the Telangana Assembly, asserting his readiness to discuss pressing state issues, including allegations of corruption. He emphasized that he was open to addressing topics like the e-car race if the government had the courage to hold a debate in the Assembly.



KTR expressed strong displeasure over the arrests of farmers from Lagacharla and social media users, warning that authorities were threatening to invoke the PD Act against those posting online. He also highlighted the suffering of farmers in Kodangal and Lagacharla, stating that it had been 35 days since the arrests of Patnam Narender Reddy and the farmers. He vowed to take the cases to higher courts if justice was not served in the lower courts. KTR further stated that Patnam Narender Reddy had the potential to defeat Congress leader Revanth Reddy in Kodangal and deserved recognition for his courage.

es during the election campaign, particularly regarding the Rs. 2 lakh farmer loan waiver. He challenged Revanth to prove that the loan waiver had been implemented in even one village, threatening to quit politics if it could be shown otherwise. KTR accused the Congress leader of failing to fulfill his promises, including the Rs. 10,000 farmer bond and the loan waiver scheme.

In his scathing remarks, KTR claimed that Congress leaders, from Rahul Gandhi to Revanth Reddy, had misled the public with false promises. He added that the people of Telangana were now regretting their vote for Congress, questioning if there was a way to bring down the Congress government.

KTR also criticized Revanth Reddy for making unfulfilled promis-

# Telangana Assembly Passes Three Key Bills Amid Protests

**TPN , Telangana:** The **Telangana Assembly** approved three important bills on Wednesday, despite protests from BRS and BJP members. The **Young India Physical Education and Sports University Bill**, the **Universities Act Amendment Bill**, and the **Telangana GST Amendment Bill** were passed without any discussion.

While the government moved swiftly to pass the bills, both BRS and BJP insisted on discussing the **Lagacharla incident** in **Vikarabad district**, where a farmer was allegedly flogged. The opposition parties demanded an adjournment resolution to address the issue, but the Assembly proceeded with the passage of the bills amidst their protests.

Following the bill approvals, there was a brief discussion on the state's tourism policy, after which the House was adjourned until the following day.

The lack of discussion on the controversial Lagacharla incident led to dissatisfaction among the opposition, who ex-

pressed concerns over the government's handling of the matter. Despite the protests, the government moved forward with the legislative agenda, pushing through the key bills for approval.



## Opposition Voices: Criticism from Congress and Allies

# Support from NDA Allies: TDP Backs the Bill

**TPN , Delhi :** The much-discussed Jamili Election Bill, proposing simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday by Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal. The bill, officially known as the 129th Constitutional Amendment Bill, has generated strong reactions from political parties, with both support and opposition.

The bill, which advocates for the One Nation, One Election concept, seeks to synchronize elections across the country every five years. A key provision in the bill

suggests that if a government collapses mid-term, the new government will serve only the remaining tenure.

The introduction of the bill was marked by a division in the house. Out of 467 votes, 269 MPs voted in favor, while 198 MPs opposed it. An electronic vote was then conducted to send the bill to the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), with 220 MPs supporting the motion and 149 MPs opposing it.





## Governor Welcomes President Murmu in Hyderabad



TPN , Hyderabad: The Hon'ble Governor of Telangana, Shri Jishnu Dev Varma, extended a warm welcome to the Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, upon her arrival at

the Air Force Station, Hakimpet, Hyderabad, as part of her southern sojourn. Also present at the welcoming ceremony were the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri Anumula Revanth

Reddy, and the Hon'ble Minister for Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, Women & Child Welfare, Smt. D. Anasuya Seethakka. Several other dignitaries from various sectors were also in

attendance to greet the President. The event marks an important moment in the President's visit to the southern states, with Telangana's leadership offering their hospitality and support.

## Fee Reimbursement to Be Cleared in Phases: Deputy CM



TPN , Telangana: Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu assured on Wednesday that the pending fee reimbursement dues for engineering and technical colleges in Telangana will be cleared in phases. Speaking at a meeting with private college owners and senior education officials at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat, the Deputy CM provided an update on the state's financial situation and the government's plans for addressing the dues.

from the previous government includes loans totaling 66,000 crore for interest and principal, along with an additional 21,000 crore for the farmer loan waiver, amounting to 87,000 crore this year. Despite these challenges, he emphasized that the government is tackling financial issues systematically and assured that the pending dues for private colleges will be paid after the upcoming assembly sessions, in phases.

tional institutions and that the payment of dues is a priority for their continued survival.

The Deputy CM's statement comes as a relief to many private colleges struggling due to financial constraints. The meeting was attended by key officials, including Higher Education Principal Secretary Sridhar, Finance Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultanya, and Deputy CM Special Secretary Krishna Bhaskar, who were also involved in the discussions regarding the payment plan.

Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu explained that the financial burden inherited

He further assured that the government understands the importance of supporting private higher educa-

## CM Reviews Saree Samples for Women Self-Help Groups

TPN , Telangana: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy recently examined the samples of sarees that will be distributed free of cost to the 63 lakh women self-help group members in the state. The distribution will be carried out through the Rural Poverty Eradication Organization (SERP).

The event was attended by several prominent figures, including Ministers Dhanasari Seethakka, Ponnamm Prabhakar, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud, and Advisor Vem Narendar Reddy. Many MLCs, MLAs, and high-ranking officials were also present to support the initiative.

The public government has decided to provide two sarees annually to each member of the women's self-help groups. These sarees will be produced by the State Handloom Cooperative Society (TGSCO) and distributed without any cost to the beneficiaries. The Chief Minister carefully examined the samples of these sarees in his chamber at the Telangana Assembly.

This initiative is part of the state government's efforts to empower women and improve their economic conditions by supporting self-help groups. The free saree distribution is expected to benefit millions of women across Telangana, furthering the government's commitment to their welfare and social inclusion.



## Minister Reddy Assures Better Healthcare for the Poor



TPN , Telangana : Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy emphasized the Telangana government's commitment to providing high-quality medical care to the poor during his inspection of the construction work for the TIMS (Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences) Hospital in Sanath Nagar (Erragadda) on December 17. The hospital is slated to be inaugurated on Telangana Formation Day by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

ening of Arogyasri, which now covers up to ten lakh people. Addressing the media, Minister Reddy criticized the BRS party for alleged scams, stating that while the government is actively working for the people's welfare, opposition parties are engaging in corruption. He stressed that the government's plans for providing quality education and healthcare, similar to those in developed countries, would soon be implemented in Telangana.

Minister Reddy assured that the government is fast-tracking the construction of the hospital to ensure the poor have access to world-class medical treatment without resorting to corporate hospitals, which often lead to debt. He said that the government's primary focus remains on the welfare of the poor, with schemes like Arogyasri and the expansion of healthcare services being a testament to this commitment.

He further pointed out that the government had already disbursed around Rs. 1500 crores for Local Area Committees (LOCs) and Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) this year. He also mentioned the strength-

The Minister highlighted ongoing work on the hospital, including the completion of Block-A slab work, while work on Blocks B and C is nearing completion. He also discussed plans for a green garden, advanced medical facilities, and affordable food options for patients and their attendants through an agreement with Akshayapatra Sanstha.

Minister Reddy further announced the expedited construction of the LB Nagar TIMS hospital and Osmania New Hospital at Goshamahal Stadium, aiming to enhance healthcare infrastructure across the state.

## Conveners Appointed for TG SETS-2025 Admissions in TG

TPN , Telangana: The Higher Education Board of Telangana has appointed conveners for the various SETs (State Eligibility Tests) to be conducted for admissions to higher education in the state. In an official announcement on December 17, 2024, the board issued orders assigning conveners for seven different sets and specified the universities

responsible for conducting each test.

**The appointed conveners for the TG SETS-2025 are as follows:**

**TG EPCET:** Professor B Dean Kumar (JNTU Hyderabad)

**TG PG CET:** Professor Aruna Kumari (JNTU Hyderabad)

**TG ICET:** Professor

**Aluvala Ravi** (Mahatma Gandhi University)

**TG ECET:** Professor P Chandrasekhar (Osmania University)

**TG LACET & TG PG LACET:** Professor

B Vijayalakshmi (Osmania University)

**TG EDCET:** Professor B Venkatram Reddy

(Kakatiya University)

**TG PECET:** Professor N S Dilip (Palamoor University)

The Higher Education Board also mentioned that the dates for the conduct of these sets will be announced soon. These appointments are crucial in overseeing the smooth execution of the admission tests for students seeking higher education opportunities in Telangana.

## CM Revanth Invited to Lord Mallikarjuna Swamy's Wedding

TPN , Telangana: Minister for Forest, Environment, and Endowments, Smt. Konda Surekha, invited Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to attend the wedding of Lord Mallikarjuna Swamy at Komuravelli. The Chief Minister was welcomed with Vedashirvachana by temple priests, who also presented him with the Lord's relics, theertha prasadam, and a portrait. Earlier, the temple authorities had visited Minister Surekha at her residence in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, to extend the invitation for the wedding and offered the same blessings.

The wedding is scheduled for December 29 at 10:45 AM, and a grand fair will take place from January 19, 2025, to March 23, 2025. Minister Surekha discussed the arrangements with the temple executive officer Balaji, emphasizing the need for robust facilities for the expected large crowds.

Jangaon District Congress President Kommuri Pratap Reddy, Temple EO Balaji, and other officials attended the event.



## Support from NDA Allies: TDP Backs the Bill

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SP MP Dharmendra Yadav criticized the bill as a "testament to dictatorship," while Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi claimed it undermines citizens' right to vote and demanded a JPC referral.

In contrast, the TDP, a key NDA ally, ex-

pressed support for the bill, aligning with the central government's vision.

The Lok Sabha session was adjourned at 3 PM after the bill's introduction. The consultation process for the bill will now proceed, with intense political debates expected to continue.

The bill has faced staunch opposition from several parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP), Trinamool Congress (TMC), DMK, Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), and Shiv Sena (UBT). Congress MP Manish Tewari argued that the bill exceeds the legislative competence of the Lok Sabha and called for its withdrawal.



# Minister Ponguleti Clears Air on District Reduction

**TPN , Telangana:** Telangana State Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy made a significant statement in the Assembly regarding the speculation around district reduction in the state. He categorically clarified that the state government has no intention of removing any districts or creating new ones.

Minister Reddy emphasized that the existing administrative framework, comprising 33 districts, 621 mandals, and 76 revenue divisions, will remain unchanged. He assured the public that there was no reason for concern regarding the restructuring of districts and that the government was focused on continuing the present administrative setup.

In his address, Minister Reddy also shared insights into a house-to-house



survey conducted in rural areas of Telangana during June and July. He revealed that the survey identified a significant issue regarding basic infrastructure,

particularly the lack of drinking water and sewage connections. The survey found that 4 lakh 49 thousand homes did not have access to either drinking water or sewage systems.

Minister Reddy further explained that out of these, sewage connections had already been provided to 3 lakh 21 thousand households. However, the survey highlighted the ongoing need to provide drinking water and piped water connections to an additional 1 lakh 28 thousand homes.

Minister Reddy's statement aims to reassure the people of Telangana regarding the stability of administrative divisions, while also stressing the government's focus on improving essential infrastructure such as drinking water and sanitation in rural areas.

# Madhusudana Chari Criticizes Govt's Land Grab Actions



**TPN , Hyderabad:** Opposition Leader Madhusudana Chari has strongly criticized the state government's treatment of farmers from Lagacharla, accusing it of conspiring to evict them from their lands. Speaking to the media at the Legislative Council, Chari condemned the government's actions, highlighting the recent protests by farmers who opposed the land grabs.

He pointed out that the farmers

who protested against the government's actions were arrested and put in jail. Chari expressed outrage over the case of a farmer who had a heart attack and was brought to the hospital while still handcuffed, calling it "proof of the corrupt government's attitude."

Chari lamented that the government has ignored the issues of the farmers, even adjourning the House when attempts were made to discuss their problems. He reminded the public of how former Chief Minister KCR had supported farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic and pledged that the opposition would continue to stand by the tribal farmers until their issues are fully addressed. Madhusudana Chari concluded by emphasizing that the opposition will not back down in its fight for the rights of the farmers.

# Seethakka Criticizes BRS Leaders Over Protest



**TPN , Hyderabad:** Seethakka, a senior leader of the Congress party, made strong comments on the recent protest by BRS leaders, particularly regarding

the issue of handcuffing. She stated that while KTR and Harish Rao did not put handcuffs on BRS MLAs, they were the ones responsible for handcuffing farm-

ers during the TRS regime. Seethakka accused the BRS leaders of showing arrogance during their protest and claimed there was no equality among them.

Seethakka pointed out that during the previous TRS government, farmers were handcuffed on at least ten occasions, but no action was taken against the officials involved. She praised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for his serious approach and actions taken regarding the handcuffing of farmers. Referring to the current situation in the Telangana Assembly, Seethakka criticized the BRS leaders for breaking the very rules they had set in the past. She noted that previously, members were suspended for entering the well of the House, but now, the same leaders were disregarding these rules, showing their inconsistency in maintaining decorum.

# Reddy Demands Legal Action Against Revanth and Bhatti

**TPN , Hyderabad:** BJP Legislature Party leader Maheshwar Reddy has called for cases to be registered against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka, accusing them of deceiving the public over the six guarantees promised during the elections. Reddy criticized the government's failure to implement these promises even a year after they took power, describing the situation as a betrayal of the people's trust.

Speaking to the media at the Assembly, Reddy condemned Bhatti Vikramarka's statement that there was not enough budget to fulfill the six guarantees, calling it an excuse for not following through on election commitments. He demanded that a case for cheating be filed against both the Chief Minister and Deputy CM for their failure to deliver on the promises made during the



election campaign.

Reddy also expressed frustration over the government's treatment of the opposition, claiming that Congress representatives, who came to power on false promises, should apologize to the people. He further alleged that the Assembly Speaker had rejected a resolution passed by the opposition on the issue and accused the government of suppressing their voices by preventing them from speaking in the Assembly.

# BRS is Like a Ship Without a Captain: Deputy CM Bhatti

**TPN , Hyderabad:** Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has made sharp comments about the BRS party, likening it to a "ship without a captain." Speaking in the Assembly, Bhatti criticized the BRS leadership, stating that the party is directionless, much like a ship caught in a storm with no clear destination. He pointed out that the lack of leadership within the party was evident in the behavior of its MLAs in the House.

Bhatti further accused the BRS of avoiding important discussions in the Assembly, claiming that the party was misguiding the House by not engaging in meaningful debates. He also expressed frustration over the BRS's stance on various issues, particularly the lack of support for landless laborers and farmers. According to Bhatti, the BRS is not interested in improving the welfare of farmers or helping them financially.

He also expressed anger at the BRS's failure to understand the reasons behind the privilege motion and criticized the party's reluctance to address key concerns in the Assembly.



# CPI Leader Calls for Job Security for Contract Workers



**TPN , Hyderabad:** Former MLA and CPI national executive member Chada Venkat Reddy has written a letter to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy demanding the regularization of contract employees working in Samagra Shiksha. Reddy emphasized that the CM had promised during the last election to regularize these jobs and establish a pay scale for the employees.

In his letter, Reddy pointed out that various posts in Samagra Shiksha were filled through merit-based written tests, the roster system, and reservation rules at the district, mandal, school complex, and school levels. More than 19,600 employees, aged 18 and above, are currently performing duties across the state.

However, these workers are reportedly discouraged as their job regularization promises have not been fulfilled. Reddy called for the immediate regularization of their employment and merging them with the Education Department. He also demanded that the employees be given job security, a pay scale, and life and health insurance worth Rs. 10 lakh each.

Reddy urged the government to address the pressing concerns of these contract workers, stressing the need for prompt action to ensure their welfare and security.

# BRS Not Against Musi Project, Says Kavitha

**TPN , Hyderabad:** BRS MLC Kavitha made key comments regarding the Musi project during a media briefing at the Legislative Council. She questioned the state government's transparency on the project, specifically raising concerns about the World Bank loan for Rs. 4,100 crores. Kavitha sought clarification on whether the government had indeed approached the World Bank for funding, as there were rumors circulating about the matter.



The MLC also highlighted that the government had informed the House that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Musi project had not yet been prepared. She emphasized that project work should only begin after adequate rehabilitation measures for the affected people.

Kavitha recalled how former Chief Minister KCR had stopped the project earlier, citing concerns over the displacement of poor families for the beautification of the Musi River. She suggested that the focus should be on setting up sewage treatment plants (STPs) to improve the water quality of Musi.

Despite the concerns, Kavitha clarified that the BRS party is not opposed to the Musi project but remains committed to supporting the people of the Musi catchment area in case they face any challenges due to the project.



# Ranganath Clarifies: Hydra Won't Demolish Poor Homes

Hydra to Focus on Illegal Constructions Post-July  
Commissioner Assures No Action Against Poor Families' Homes  
Ranganath Clarifies Demolition Plans and Conservation Efforts



without the necessary permits will be demolished as part of Hydra's efforts to ensure urban development follows the law. He emphasized that this action is in accordance with regulations and is not considered wrongful.

Ranganath further reassured the public that Hydra's primary goal is to conserve local ponds in line with government policies and environmental objectives. He stressed that Hydra will not target the poor or their homes, countering the rumors that the project aims to demolish residences of low-income families.

**TPN , Hyderabad:** In a recent statement, Hydra Commissioner Ranganath addressed concerns about the ongoing demolition efforts under the Hydra project. He clarified that Hydra will not target structures that existed prior to its formation but will focus on demolishing illegal constructions built after the project's inception in July. Speaking on Tuesday, Ranganath explained that the authorities will not go after buildings that were legally constructed or are under construction with proper permissions obtained in the past. However, structures built

"We will not demolish the homes of the poor. Please do not believe the false propaganda circulating about Hydra targeting the poor," Ranganath urged the citizens.

The Commissioner also addressed the process of issuing new permissions and stated that Hydra will review these cases in due course. His statement aims to provide clarity and alleviate concerns among the public regarding the demolition process and the future of urban development in the region.



# BRS MLAs Protest in Assembly with Handcuffs and Black Shirts

**TPN , Hyderabad:** BRS MLAs staged a bold protest in the Telangana Assembly, wearing black shirts and handcuffs to demand the right to discuss the controversial Lagacharla incident. The protestors used this innovative form of demonstration to voice their opposition to being denied the opportunity to raise the issue in the legislative session.

The protest was marked by the unusual sight of MLAs wearing handcuffs, symbolizing their claim of being 'silenced' by the government.

BRS MLA K.P. Vivekananda Goud spoke during the protest, accusing political rival Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy of changing his name to "Bambuleti Srinivas Reddy" and highlighting attempts to involve KTR in the Formula E race controversy. The protest aimed to draw attention to the issues that the party feels have been overlooked in the assembly.

As they entered the assembly, the BRS MLAs shouted slogans such as "This is a kingdom, this is a looted kingdom" and "Shame on the farmers, shame on them," expressing their discontent.

# Officials Begin Removal of Hyderabad's Cycle Track



**TPN , Hyderabad:** In a surprising move, Telangana state officials have started removing the Hyderabad cycle track, a project that was hailed as a milestone in the city's infrastructure. The cycle track, which spanned 23 kilometers, was the first solar rooftop cycle track in India and was launched during the previous government's tenure. A video showing the ongoing removal of the track has gone viral, raising concerns among the public.

The decision to dismantle the cycle track has sparked anger among BRS party leaders, who question why the track, a major initiative of the previous administration, is being removed without explanation. City residents have also expressed frustration over the sudden removal of the track, which was designed to encourage cycling and promote eco-friendly transportation.

Details surrounding the reasoning behind this decision are still unclear, and the situation has sparked a debate on the future of cycling infrastructure in the city. As more information is awaited, the removal of the cycle track continues to draw attention and criticism from various quarters.

# Medical PG Candidates Get Relief in High Court

**TPN , Hyderabad:** In a significant development, the Telangana High Court has granted relief to medical PG candidates, delivering a major blow to the Revanth Reddy government. The court ruled that students who completed their MBBS and BDS degrees in Telangana should be considered locals. This decision came as the High Court stayed the government's recent order, which had stated that such students would not be classified as locals.



This ruling has been a major relief for many medical PG candidates who were concerned about their eligibility for state-level medical admissions. The government's recent order had sparked outrage among students, as it would have limited their chances of securing

medical PG seats within the state. The High Court's decision overturned that policy, bringing joy and relief to the affected candidates.

The controversy began when the Revanth Reddy government issued a government or-

der (GO) stating that MBBS and BDS graduates from Telangana should not be considered locals, a move that had caused widespread concern among students. However, with the court's intervention, the decision was halted, allowing students to continue as locals for the purpose of medical PG admissions.

As news of the verdict spread, medical PG candidates and students alike expressed their happiness, while the state government faced criticism over its initial move. The High Court's intervention has brought a sense of relief to the students, who can now pursue their postgraduate medical education without the added concern of being excluded from local quota benefits.

# Police Issue Show Cause Notice on Sandhya Theater

**TPN , Hyderabad:** Chikkadapalli police have issued a show cause notice to Sandhya Theater, questioning why its license should not be canceled following a fatal incident at the theater. The notice comes after a woman lost her life during a stampede at the venue. Authorities have given the theater management one week to respond, warning that failure to do so may result in the cancellation of the theater's license.



Hyderabad Commissioner of Police, CV Anand, addressed the situation, stating that it has been two weeks since the tragic stampede. He confirmed that the government, along with Health Secretary Shri Tej, has been monitoring the health of the victims. Shri Tej, who sustained brain injuries during the incident, is expected to have a long recovery process. The treatment is likely to take an extended period, and doctors will soon release an official health bulletin on his condition.

The police investigation into the incident continues as authorities examine the circumstances leading to the tragic event at Sandhya Theater.

# Mohan Babu's Wife Nirmala Responds to Family Dispute

Nirmala says Vishnu did not cause a fight at home  
Manoj has as much right to the house as Vishnu has.. comments that Vishnu also has the same right  
Nirmala says there is no truth in Manoj's complaint

**TPN , Hyderabad:** In the midst of the ongoing family dispute involving famous actor Mohan Babu, his wife Nirmala has issued a statement in response to the allegations against their son Vishnu. The issue had recently made headlines when a complaint was filed by their other son, Manoj, claiming that Vishnu caused a fight at home.



Nirmala addressed the matter in a letter to the Pahad Sharif Police Station, where she clarified that no fight occurred on December 14, the day of her birthday. She explained that Vishnu had come home to celebrate, bringing a cake, and there was no altercation. According to Nirmala, Vishnu spent some time with the family, took his belongings from his room, and then left

peacefully.

In her letter, Nirmala emphasized that both Vishnu and Manoj have equal rights to the house. She strongly refuted Manoj's complaint, stating that it was false. Nirmala also denied claims that Vishnu was involved in any issues with the household staff, who reportedly stopped working due to the alleged dispute.

This letter marks Nirmala's first public statement addressing the ongoing family tensions and her defense of her son Vishnu.

# Police Arrest Ganja Smuggling Gang Ahead of New Year Celebrations

**TPN , Hyderabad:** Malakpet police arrested a gang of suspects involved in transporting 30 kg of ganja intended for sale during the upcoming New Year celebrations. The suspects were caught in a Belino car, escorted by a KTM bike, heading toward Gaddi Annaram X-road in Malakpet, Hyderabad.



Following a tip-off, police intercepted the vehicle and seized the ganja, the car, the KTM bike, and five mobile phones. The arrested individuals include Ikkiri Bhaskar (27), Vallandas Vamsi (25), Jitta Kiran (22), Boini Shiva (28) from Motkur village in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, and Alla Bharat Kumar Reddy (32) from Mahabubnagar district. They have

been booked under the NDPS Act of 1985.

Investigations revealed that Bhaskar has six prior cases against him. The gang had procured the ganja from Odisha and planned to sell it at inflated prices in Hyderabad. Police are continuing their investigation into the operation.



# Dhanvantari Victims Forum Protests in Front of Hyderabad CCS

**TPN , Telangana:** The Dhanvantari Victims Forum, led by Convener Giri Prasad Sharma, held a protest in front of the Hyderabad Central Crime Station (CCS) demanding strict punishment for MD Kamalakar Sharma. Sharma, along with his company, has been accused of cheating Brahmins by taking crores of rupees in investments. The forum is seeking justice for the victims, with claims that the company has defrauded nearly a thousand crores from approximately 3,000 individuals.

In a bold statement, Sharma threatened that if the money owed to the victims is not paid by January 15, they will escalate the protest and launch direct attacks on CCS and Kamalakar Sharma. The forum also accused Sharma of attempting to delay the case with repeated adjournments in court and alleged that he colluded with police officers at CCS.

Sharma demanded intervention from Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to ensure justice is served. He pointed out that several high-ranking officers, including IAS,

IPS, and IFS officials, were allegedly involved in the irregularities at the Dhanvantari Foundation. The forum further called for the immediate closure of the Dhanvantari Foundation's Amberpet office and the cancellation of bail for the company's lady directors. They also demanded that a charge sheet be filed against Kamalakar Sharma without delay. If their demands are not met by January 15, the forum has warned that they will take more drastic actions, including physically attacking Kamalakar Sharma.



## Rat Bites Student in Khammam Gurukulam

### Student Receiving Treatment

**TPN , Telangana:** In a shocking incident at the BC Welfare Gurukulam in Danavai Gudem, Khammam district, a student named Bhavani Keerthi was bitten by a rat. The student suffered injuries to her hand and leg and is currently receiving treatment at a hospital.

The incident came to light on Sunday night, and the student's condition was reported to be serious. The alarming situation has raised concerns about hygiene and safety conditions at the gurukulam. Authorities are expected to take necessary actions to prevent such incidents in the future.



## BHEL Employee Found Unconscious After Fire Incident in Quarters

**TPN ,Sangareddy:** Devendra Singh, an employee of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), was found unconscious in his quarters on the BHEL campus following a fire accident on Tuesday afternoon.

The fire, reportedly caused by a short circuit, filled the house with smoke, rendering Singh unconscious after inhaling the fumes. Neighbors, noticing smoke emanating from quarter



number 2017A, alerted authorities.

A fire tender was rushed to the scene, and after an hour-long effort, firefighters managed to extinguish the flames and rescue Singh. He was immediately taken to the BHEL hospital, where he is currently undergoing treatment.

The incident highlights the importance of regular electrical maintenance and fire safety measures to prevent such accidents.

# Sridhar Babu Linked to 300-Acre Land Scam



**TPN , Telangana:** In a shocking turn of events in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district, serious allegations of a large-scale land scam have surfaced in Palimela Mandal. Former MLA Putta Madhu has accused IT Minister Sridhar Babu of being

involved in a land grab of over 300 acres of land for the benefit of his relative.

According to Putta Madhu, the scam dates back to 2008, when several Congress leaders allegedly used a person named Kamaluddin to register the lands. Despite facing resistance from farmers at the time, they continued to protest. The former MLA has claimed that Minister Sridhar Babu illegally registered 200 acres of land meant for SC/ST communities.

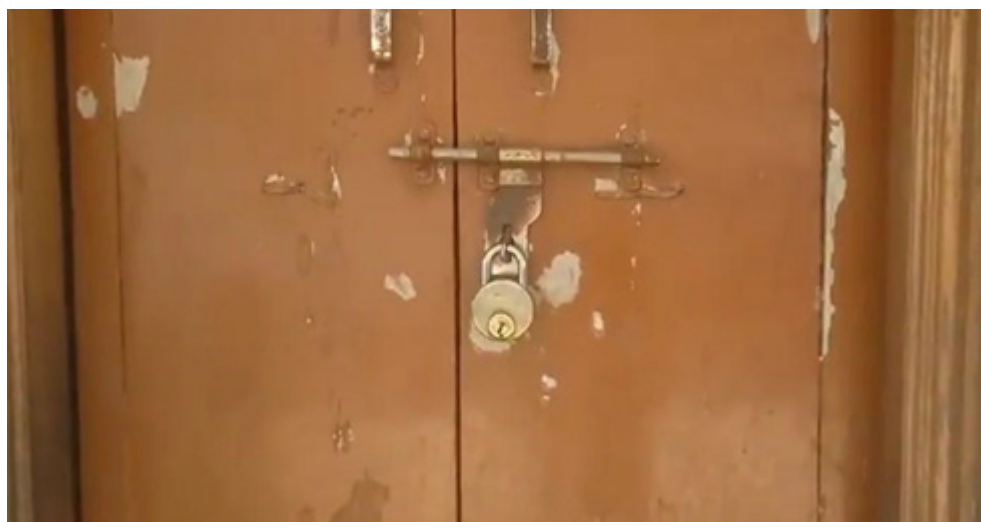
At the time, farmers in Palimela were facing issues with land usage due to backwater flooding, which rendered some lands useless. Madhu further alleged that Minister Sridhar Babu facilitated the illegal registration of land for a cement company, using deceptive means to bypass official procedures. Instead of registering the land through the normal channels in the Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO) office, it was registered illegally with Dacca Cement Company through unauthorized routes.

The former MLA's claims have sparked protests from the affected farmers, who have been struggling to reclaim their land. As the situation escalates, the allegations against Minister Sridhar Babu have drawn significant attention, with demands for an investigation into the matter.

## MPDO Office Locked by Landlord

**TPN , Hyderabad:** In Nizamabad's haM-opal Mandal, the landlord of the MPDO office building has locked the office in protest over unpaid rent. The landlord expressed frustration, stating that the office had not paid rent for the past year.

As a result, essential services at the MPDO office have come to a halt, causing inconvenience to the public. The suspension of these services has led to growing anger among the people, who are demanding immediate action to resolve the issue. The situation remains tense as the community waits for a resolution.



## BRS Leaders Petition Dr. Ambedkar for Justice for Lagacharla Victims

**TPN , Telangana:** In a significant move, BRS party leaders submitted a petition to the statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, located at Banjara Hills Road No. 1, demanding justice for the victims of the Lagacharla incident. The program was organized by BRS Khairatabad constituency leader Manne Govardhan Reddy and attended by prominent party figures, including Dasoju Sravan, Ravula Sridhar Reddy, Vipul Kumar, Corporator Manne Kavitha, and others.

The leaders expressed deep concern and sorrow over the illegal arrest

of innocent farmers in Lagacharla, along with the mistreatment of their family members. They criticized the government's actions and voiced their demand for immediate justice for the victims.

The petition highlighted the party's commitment to standing by the victims, with leaders stating that the BRS would continue to support them until justice is achieved. The protest at Ambedkar's statue was a symbolic gesture, reflecting the party's ongoing fight for the rights of the affected farmers.



## DCA Raids Quack's Clinic in Wanaparthy

### Seizes Medicines Worth Rs 1.5 Lakh

**TPN , Hyderabad:** On Tuesday, December 17, the Telangana Drug Control Administration (DCA) conducted a raid at a quack's clinic in Wanaparthy district, seizing medicines worth Rs 1.5 lakh. The clinic was being operated by Battula Ramulu in Jangamaipally Village, Peddamandadi Mandal.

During the raid, DCA officials discovered 42 varieties of illegally stocked medicines, including analgesics, antibiotics such as Cefpodoxime, Cefixime, and Amoxicillin, as well as steroids and anti-ulcer drugs. Among

the seized items were steroids like Prednisolone and Dexamethasone.

The clinic was found to be operating without the necessary drug license, violating the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. Under the law, stocking and selling drugs without a valid license is a punishable offense, with penalties including imprisonment of up to five years.

The DCA continues to crack down on illegal medical practices to ensure public safety and compliance with health regulations.

## Students Fall Ill at Minority Gurukula School



**TPN , Telangana:** In a concerning incident at the Minority Gurukula School in Chincholi (B) village, Nirmal district, several students fell ill due to severe vomiting and diarrhea since last night.

The affected students were immediately rushed to the hospital, where they received medical treatment. Ac-

ording to the District Medical and Health Officer (DM & HO), the students' health conditions have now stabilized.

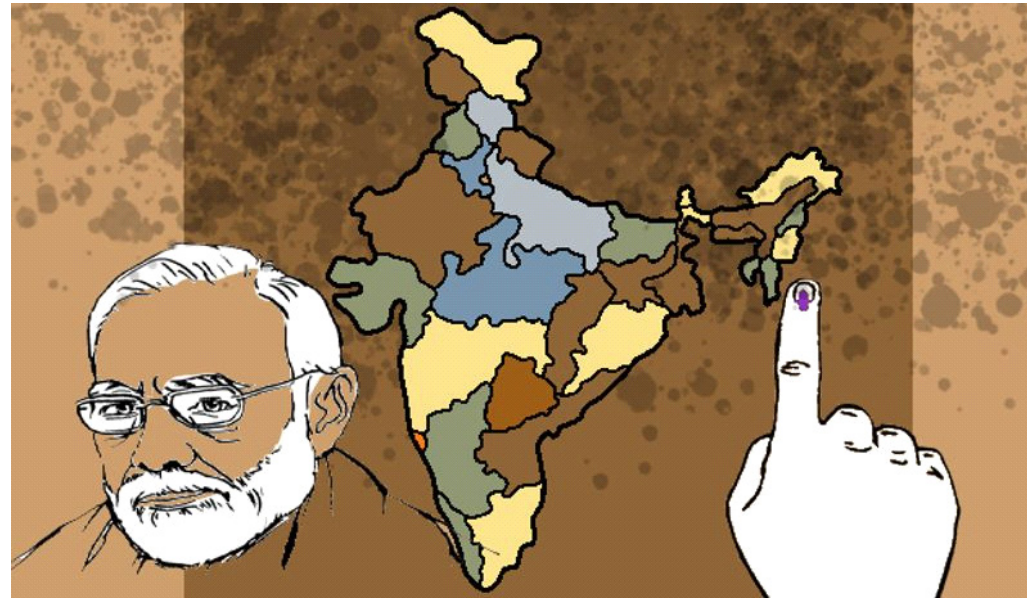
Authorities are investigating the cause of the illness and taking necessary steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the students.

# One Nation, One Election: A Controversial Reform Facing Opposition

The BJP-led NDA government's proposal for "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE), a reform aimed at synchronizing parliamentary and state assembly elections, has sparked significant opposition as the government prepares to introduce two key Bills in the Lok Sabha. These include the "Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill", which seeks to facilitate simultaneous elections at the Centre and state level, and the "Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill", which aims to synchronize assembly polls in Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, and Puducherry. However, the government has delayed the introduction of these Bills, which were initially slated for presentation today, to later in the week, toward the end of the current winter session of Parliament.

ONOE is seen as a potentially transformative electoral reform, one that the BJP and its allies argue would save valuable time, money, and resources while eliminating the disruptions caused by frequent impositions of the Model Code of Conduct. Supporters believe this change could streamline the election process, ensuring that elections occur simultaneously, reducing the frequency of electoral campaigns and their impact on governance.

However, Opposition parties, particularly the Congress, have raised concerns, arguing that ONOE could undermine



India's federal structure. They fear that synchronizing national and state elections would lead to an undue advantage for the party in power at the Centre, as voters may be more inclined to vote for the same party at both levels. This could stifle regional diversity in voting preferences, as seen in recent elections where state-level outcomes have diverged significantly from national results. For instance, while the BJP-led alliance emerged victorious in Maharashtra's Lok Sabha elections, the Congress-led coalition, Maha Vikas Aghadi, triumphed in the subsequent assembly polls, highlighting how separate elections can produce differing outcomes. Another important aspect of the ONOE

proposal is its long timeline for implementation. Even if the Bills pass Parliament, experts suggest that it could take up to a decade to fully implement the reform. Given the significant implications for voters, political parties, and the country's democratic framework, critics question the urgency behind pushing for such a monumental change.

In light of these concerns, a more democratic approach would be for the government to refer the Bills to a "Joint Parliamentary Committee" for further scrutiny and for efforts to be made to build a broad consensus across political parties before moving forward with this high-stakes reform.



## Everyone is Gifted: Gukesh Dommaraju's Journey to Becoming the World's Youngest Chess Champion

(Gukesh is the 18th World Chess Champion at 18!)

On a day of remarkable achievement, when millions celebrate the triumph of Gukesh Dommaraju, I find myself reflecting on the deeper meaning behind his historic success. Gukesh's victory is not just another sporting milestone; it is a story of focus, dedication, and the nurturing of natural talent.

At just 18 years old, Gukesh Dommaraju has become the youngest World Chess Champion, a feat that has made the entire nation proud. This extraordinary accomplishment, however, did not happen overnight. It is the result of years of perseverance, discipline, and the unwavering support of his family and mentors. Gukesh's parents, Dr. Rajnikanth Dommaraju and Dr. Padma Kumari, played a pivotal role in shaping his journey. Rather than pushing him into the traditional rat race of marks and ranks, they chose to nurture his curiosity and love for chess. They gave him the freedom to pursue his passion, showing us the importance of patience, long-term vision, and trust in a child's abilities.

This journey also highlights the invaluable role played by Gukesh's teachers, coaches, and mentors, whose guidance turned his raw talent into world-class skill. Their combined sacrifices and efforts have culminated in a moment that will inspire generations to come.

### Qualities That Made Gukesh a Champion

Gukesh's success holds life lessons that extend far beyond the chessboard. The qualities that brought him to this stage are ones we can all learn from:

- Unwavering Focus
- Continuous Practice and Discipline
- Resilience and Mental Strength
- Strategic Thinking
- Passion-Driven Excellence

These traits are not just the foundation for champions but essential lessons for everyone—be it students, parents, or professionals striving for greatness.

### A Message to Parents

Gukesh's journey teaches us a powerful lesson: every child is gifted in their own way. As parents, we must ask ourselves if we are creating an environment that nurtures our children's natural curiosity and talents. Are we encouraging them to follow their interests, or are we steering them into predefined paths?

Gukesh's parents understood that success comes not from fitting into a mold but from mastering a craft driven by passion. Their approach should inspire all of us to support and guide our children in



**Venu Bhagavan**  
Author, Speaker, and Believer in the Power of Gifts

discovering their unique abilities. **The Power of Curiosity**

Gukesh's story began with a simple curiosity about chess. It was this curiosity, nurtured by his parents, that set him on the path to becoming a world champion. This reinforces an important truth: curiosity is the key to unlocking potential. When children are encouraged to explore what excites them, they find purpose and direction.

### The World Needs Masters, Not Commodities

In today's rapidly changing world, success is no longer about following the crowd; it is about mastering one's unique craft. Gukesh's journey is a shining example of what happens when passion aligns with purpose. It reminds us that we need to guide our children to become masters in their fields, rather than commodities in a competitive world.

### To everyone reading this, I ask:

- What is your gift?
- Have you discovered it?
- Are you developing it?
- Are you using it to make a difference?

Every one of us has been given a gift, and it is our responsibility to develop it and use it to its fullest potential. Gukesh has shown us what is possible when talent meets dedication. His story is a call to action for each of us to embrace our own gifts and bring value to the world.

As we celebrate Gukesh's success today, let us also reflect on our own journeys. Whether you are a student, a professional, or a parent, remember that the world is waiting for the light that only you can bring.

Congratulations to Gukesh, his family, and his mentors for this extraordinary achievement. May his journey inspire us all to discover, develop, and share our unique gifts.

# The Future of Test Cricket: Will It Survive the T20 Era?

As the world of cricket continues to evolve, the future of Test cricket remains a topic of significant debate. Despite the massive popularity of T20 formats, particularly franchise leagues, Test cricket continues to capture attention, but for how long? With shifting viewership patterns, shorter formats like T20 are dominating the cricketing landscape, but the allure of Test cricket still has a place, even if it's dwindling.

In 2024, 23 bilateral men's Test series are scheduled, but most feature fewer matches than in the past. Of these, 12 consist of just two games, five have three, and only two series—England vs India and India vs Australia—will have five matches. This reduction reflects a growing trend where Test series are becoming more compact and less frequent, with many teams playing fewer Tests against each other.

Interestingly, the viewership patterns are showing a dichotomy. While the demand for Test cricket may have shifted towards T20, some high-profile Test matches continue to draw large crowds. For example, the day-night Test between Australia and India in Adelaide attracted over a million viewers per session, while the Perth Test set a record for stadium attendance. This reveals a crucial fact: Test cricket still commands a solid fanbase, especially when major cricketing nations are involved. But outside of these marquee matchups, many



fans are less inclined to watch Tests, especially when their own country isn't participating.

This poses a significant challenge for the format's future. While T20 leagues, such as the Big Bash League, continue to grow in popularity, attracting global audiences—particularly from India—Test cricket is struggling to capture similar attention. The rise of franchise-based T20 leagues is evident in the choices made by players themselves. For instance, Quinton de Kock retired from Test cricket at 29 to focus on T20s, while Kane Williamson stepped down as New

Zealand's white-ball captain to participate in the SA20 tournament. These developments raise questions about the long-term sustainability of Test cricket in an age dominated by shorter formats. Moreover, the stark gap between the top cricketing nations and lower-ranked teams creates another hurdle. While teams like Australia, India, South Africa, and England maintain high interest, lower-ranked nations like Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, and Ireland rarely generate excitement. For Test cricket to regain its appeal, it needs more unpredictable results—such as when Afghanistan upset Australia in the 2024 T20 World Cup.

# Another Pandemic Is Inevitable: Are We Prepared?

Every week, experts issue another warning that the H5N1 bird flu is steadily advancing toward a potential pandemic. Despite the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic that struck just a few years ago, the U.S. still lacks a comprehensive plan to manage a new crisis. Furthermore, there has been little effort from government leaders to incorporate the lessons from their flawed response to Covid-19 into future preparedness strategies.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted significant shortcomings in the public health system. Many lives were lost because authorities were slow to issue warnings, delayed in creating essential testing protocols, and sluggish in adjusting their response to evolving data about the airborne transmission of the virus. One of the biggest criticisms was the handling of lockdowns, which, had they been implemented

more strategically and adjusted based on data about risk levels, could have saved more lives.

Unfortunately, the same mistakes are already emerging in the response to H5N1. Originally confined to poultry, the virus has now begun affecting dairy cows in the U.S. Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced it would begin testing the nation's milk supply for the virus. In California, a recall was issued for certain raw milk and milk products after they tested positive for the H5N1 strain. The slow and reactive response echoes the failures seen during the earlier pandemic and raises concerns about the nation's preparedness for a more widespread outbreak.

The lack of preparedness is further compounded by the political landscape. President-elect Donald Trump's appointments to lead public health

agencies have drawn alarm from scientists and health experts. One controversial pick is Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a vocal vaccine skeptic with ties to the California farm involved in the recent milk recall. Appointing such figures to lead crucial health agencies raises serious concerns about the direction of the U.S. pandemic response, especially if H5N1 begins spreading more rapidly. To prevent another public health disaster, the U.S. needs to overhaul its approach to pandemic preparedness, learning from the mistakes made during Covid-19. It must implement more agile and data-driven strategies for dealing with emerging health threats, invest in timely research and testing, and appoint leaders with the expertise needed to guide the country through future health crises. Without these steps, the country remains vulnerable to the next pandemic, whether it's H5N1 or another viral threat.



# Congress Promoted water Disputes Between States, Does Little For Farmers: PM Modi

TPN CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR  
DECEMBER.18

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while attending the 'Ek Varsh-Parinaam Utkarsh' event in Jaipur on Tuesday, launched a scathing attack on the Congress party, accusing it of making false promises to farmers while failing to deliver on its commitments. Addressing a public gathering in Dadiya, Jaipur, to mark the completion of one year of the Rajasthan government, Modi criticized the delay in the implementation of the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP), which he claimed was evidence of Congress's lack of action on farmer welfare.

"Congress talks big in the name of farmers, but they neither take concrete steps for their well-being nor allow others to do so," Modi said. The Prime Minister referred to the ERCP delay as a clear demonstration of Congress's intentions, arguing that the project's prolonged stalling had directly affected the welfare of farmers in the region.

During the event, Modi also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for 24 key infrastructure projects in Rajasthan, totaling an investment of over Rs 46,300 crore. These projects are focused on crucial sectors such as energy, roads, railways, and water, aimed at driving the state's development and improv-



ing the quality of life for its citizens.

The 'Ek Varsh-Parinaam Utkarsh' event marked the completion of the first year of the state government, and the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of such initiatives in fostering economic growth. Modi stressed that the ongoing development projects would not only benefit the people of Rajasthan but also enhance the state's infrastructure, creating long-term positive impacts on its econ-

omy and development trajectory.

As Modi addressed the crowd, his comments on Congress's failures resonated with the public, signaling his continued push for political and infrastructural reforms in the state. The event served as both a celebration of Rajasthan's achievements under the current government and a strategic moment for the Prime Minister to call attention to ongoing challenges.

## Uddhav Thackeray Meets Devendra Fadnavis For 1st Time After Poll Rout



TPN CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI  
DECEMBER.18

In a surprising move, Uddhav Thackeray, the leader of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Nagpur on Tuesday for the first time since last month's Assembly elections. Despite his party's ongoing protests regarding the credibility of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) after their poor performance in the polls, Thackeray congratulated Fadnavis on the victory of the ruling coalition.

Aaditya Thackeray, Uddhav's son and a senior leader in the party, accompanied his father to the meeting and described it as a step toward political cooperation. Speaking to the media, Aaditya emphasized that both parties needed to demonstrate political maturity. "We may be in the opposition, and they may be in the ruling coalition, but we are all elected representatives. They (the ruling parties) can also listen to us, and this could lead to constructive actions for Maharashtra's benefit," he said.

Sources revealed that the meeting, held in Fadnavis' chambers at the Vidhan Bhavan during the ongoing winter session of the Assembly, was a courtesy call. Thackeray, who was the leader of the united Shiv Sena before parting ways with the BJP in 2019, congratulated the Chief Minister on the coalition's victory. The Shiv Sena, under Thackeray, had been in an alliance with the BJP until a disagreement over the Chief Minister's post led to a split. Thackeray later formed a government with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress, but his administration collapsed in 2022 following a rebellion by Eknath Shinde, who later became the Chief Minister with Fadnavis as his deputy.

The meeting marks a significant moment, given the history of rivalry between Thackeray and Fadnavis. Both leaders have clashed over ideological differences, particularly regarding the interpretation of 'Hindutva.' While Thackeray's alliance with Congress and NCP had a strong showing in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, it faced a crushing defeat in last month's Assembly polls, with the BJP winning a landslide.

Despite this, the Shiv Sena, NCP, and Congress have continued to raise concerns about the integrity of the elections, claiming that the ruling coalition's success was due to alleged EVM manipulation. This controversy has sparked protests and accusations within the Assembly.

## 'One Nation, One Election' Bill introduced in Lok Sabha with 269 votes in favour



TPN CORRESPONDENT DELHI  
DECEMBER.18

In a significant move, the government introduced two Bills in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, outlining the framework for simultaneous elections across India. The Bills, which include a Constitution amendment Bill and an ordinary Bill, aim to implement the 'One Nation, One Election' concept. However, the pro-

posal sparked a fiery debate, with opposition parties vehemently criticizing the draft laws, calling them an attack on the federal structure of India.

The government, on the other hand, rejected these claims, asserting that the Bills would streamline the electoral process and ensure greater efficiency. Following the debate, opposition parties demanded a division of votes.

The voting process, conducted electronically with a subsequent count using paper slips, saw 269 members voting in favor of the Bills and 198 against them. This marked the first use of the electronic voting system in the new Parliament House.

The 'One Nation, One Election' proposal has been a subject of intense political discourse, with supporters arguing that simultaneous elections would reduce election-related costs, prevent election fatigue, and bring about greater governance stability. Critics, however, argue that it could weaken India's federal structure by diminishing the autonomy of state governments and potentially sidelining regional issues in favor of national concerns.

The introduction of these Bills marks an important step in the government's push for electoral reform. While the government aims to expedite the process of simultaneous elections, it remains to be seen how the proposed changes will be received in the Rajya Sabha and beyond, where further debates and discussions are expected.

## One Nation, One Election: Kiren Rijiju slams Congress for 'baseless' opposition

TPN CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI  
DECEMBER.18

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday strongly criticized the Congress party for its opposition to the 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) proposal, calling their stance "baseless and contradictory." Rijiju's comments came in response to Congress' claims that the initiative would harm India's federal structure and was unconstitutional. He pointed out that similar elections were held simultaneously for two decades after 1947 under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, asking, "If elections were held together then, was the Nehru government unconstitutional?"

Rijiju, who has been vocal in defending the proposal, emphasized its importance for India's progress. He also took aim at Congress' historical governance, stating, "Congress ruled for six decades and left the country in poverty. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India is now moving towards becoming a 'Viksit Bharat.' Yet, Congress continues to obstruct national progress instead of collaborating."

Rijiju's remarks were made on the same day the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) introduced the ONOE bill in the Lok Sabha, with the party issuing a three-line whip for MPs to attend the session. While opposition leaders raised concerns about potential difficulties, such as the dissolution of Assemblies or scenarios where the state or Union government may fall before completing their tenure, Rijiju urged them to view the proposal from a broader perspec-



tive of national development.

The minister also weighed in on the ongoing controversy surrounding Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). The Congress party has raised questions about the reliability of EVMs, even though the party has benefited from them in past elections. Rijiju pointed out that Congress won elections in 2004 and 2009 using the same EVMs, asking, "Were their victories illegal?" He further criticized Congress for questioning a system that has helped their own party come to power.

Rijiju concluded by urging opposition parties to work constructively for the nation's development instead of hindering reforms.

## Amit Shah Accuses Congress of Treating Constitution as 'Private Fiefdom' to Retain Power

TPN CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI  
DECEMBER.18

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched a strong critique of the Congress party on Tuesday, accusing it of treating the Indian Constitution as the "private fiefdom" of one family and making several amendments to ensure its continued grip on power. Speaking during a discussion on the "Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India," Shah said that the Congress party had altered the Constitution for its own benefit rather than for the greater good of the nation.

Shah highlighted various amendments made by the Congress over the years, suggesting that these changes were designed to serve the party's interests and help it maintain political control. He also took aim at the Congress for its stance on reservations, accusing the party of being "anti-reservation" and claiming that it had failed to work for the advancement of backward classes.

The Home Minister's remarks extended to the issue of electronic voting machines (EVMs), with Shah criticizing the Congress for blaming the EVMs after its electoral defeats. He referred to the party's complaints about the credibility of EVMs as an attempt



to avoid responsibility for their loss in elections.

Shah emphasized that the Indian Constitution, which marks its 75th anniversary, has played a crucial role in strengthening the country's democracy by ensuring peaceful transitions of power. He praised the Constitution for its resilience and the smooth transfer of power, which, according to him, happens without any violence or bloodshed.

The Home Minister's statements served as a sharp reminder of the long-standing political battle between the Congress and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with Shah accusing the opposition party of undermining the integrity of India's democratic institutions. His remarks on the amendments, reservations, and the controversy over EVMs were a direct attack on Congress's track record and its approach to governance.



# Trump Urges Zelenskyy To Prepare For Negotiations To End Russia-Ukraine War

WASHINGTON: Former President Donald Trump has urged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to be ready to negotiate a deal to end the ongoing Russian invasion. Speaking at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, Trump downplayed the importance of recovering occupied territories and emphasized the need for a settlement to stop the bloodshed. He stated, "He should be prepared to make a deal, that's all," adding that too many lives were being lost in the conflict.

Trump, reflecting on the devastation of Ukrainian cities, argued that it could take a century to rebuild areas leveled by Russian forces. He questioned the value of recapturing the territory, saying, "You look at some of those cities, and not one building standing. So you know, when you say, 'Take over the country,' take over what?" Trump emphasized the long-term challenge of reconstruction, calling it a "110-year rebuild."

The former president also criticized the Biden administration for its approval of using U.S. weapons, including Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), to strike deeper into Russian territory. The missiles have a range of about 300 kilome-



ters (190 miles). Trump suggested that such actions might escalate the conflict and indicated that, under his leadership, U.S. support for Ukraine would be significantly reduced.

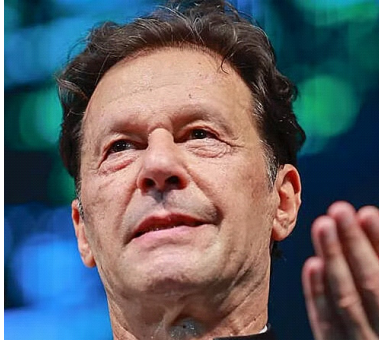
Trump's remarks signal a shift in his approach to the conflict, suggesting that if he were president, he would pursue a more isolationist stance regarding Ukraine. He argued that Russia would not have invaded Ukraine if he were still in office, further criticizing President

Biden's handling of the situation. While Trump's position contrasts with the Biden administration's support for Ukraine's right to decide its course of action, the White House reaffirmed that it is up to Zelenskyy to decide when and under what terms to negotiate with Russia. National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby emphasized, "Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine," underlining the administration's commitment to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and decisions regarding negotiations.

## Former PM Imran Khan And Bushra Bibi's Bail Extended In Toshakhana Case

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani court has extended the interim bail of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in the second Toshakhana case until January 7. The hearing was conducted on Tuesday at the District and Sessions Court in Islamabad, where Judge Muhammad Afzal Mujoka presided over the bail petitions.

Khan, who remains in custody due to other ongoing cases, and his wife Bibi, who was released in October following the Islamabad High Court's approval of her post-arrest bail, both face charges related to the alleged violation of Toshakhana rules during Khan's tenure as prime minister. The case involves accusations that they illegally retained a set of Bulgari jewelry gifted to them during a trip to Saudi Arabia in May 2021.



The Toshakhana case, often referred to as Toshakhana 2.0, centers on allegations that the couple unlawfully kept valuable gifts from foreign dignitaries, violating the rules of the state gift repository. In the latest development, both Khan and Bibi were formally indicted last week by a trial court, where Special Judge Shahrukh Arjumand read out the charges against them. Following the indictment, the court postponed further proceedings until December 18, when the prosecution, led by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), is set to present its first batch of witnesses.

The ongoing case has drawn significant attention, given Khan's high-profile political career and his contentious relationship with the ruling government. The Toshakhana case is one of several legal battles the former cricketer-turned-politician faces. Khan's political future remains uncertain as he confronts multiple charges, with the legal proceedings continuing to unfold.

## "Preposterous": China On Spying Claims Involving UK's Prince Andrew

BRITAIN: China has dismissed claims that businessman Yang Tengbo used his links with Prince Andrew to spy for Beijing, calling the accusations "preposterous." The allegations, which emerged last week, have raised significant concerns within the UK government, leading to heightened scrutiny of China's actions in the country.

Yang, a businessman who had been banned from entering the UK, was reportedly invited to Prince Andrew's birthday party in the past. He has strongly denied the spying allegations, asserting that he had "done nothing wrong or unlawful." In a statement, Yang claimed to have been caught in a shifting "political climate" and emphasized that the label of "spy" was completely untrue. He also noted that he had waived his anonymity and was appealing the UK's decision regarding his exclusion.

The UK government has expressed growing concern about China's increasing influence, particularly regarding alleged espionage activities. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, speaking during a visit to Norway, acknowledged the challenge China poses but defended his strategy of "engagement" with Beijing. He emphasized that Britain seeks to cooperate with China on issues like climate change, while also challenging Beijing when necessary.

In response to the allegations, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry stressed that accusations of espionage were unfounded, calling them "preposterous." Lin Jian, the spokesperson, also underscored the importance of developing strong China-UK relations, which he argued were beneficial for both countries and crucial for addressing global challenges. The UK's decision to ban Yang from entering the country was upheld by British judges, who agreed that the government's actions were justified. The judges noted that Yang's position made him well-placed to foster relationships between senior Chinese officials and prominent UK figures, potentially leading to political interference.

## Reverse Gear To Overdrive: Ajit Doval's Top China Meet To Boost Border Talks



DELHI: India and China have shown a renewed commitment to improving their bilateral ties, especially following the disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) just over a month ago. The relationship between the two countries had been strained since the military standoff in Ladakh more than four years ago. However, in a surprising turn of events, both sides seem to be accelerating efforts to repair their ties, recognizing the importance of resolving their boundary dispute for lasting peace in Asia.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is set to meet Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on December 18 for high-level discussions on the boundary issue. Although New Delhi has not officially confirmed the meeting, Beijing's foreign ministry has announced it. This marks the 23rd meeting in a series of talks between the two countries aimed at finding a resolution to the long-standing boundary question.

The two nations, which share a border spanning over 4,000 km, have often experienced military face-offs due to their differing perceptions of where the LAC lies. The LAC, located in the harsh and challenging terrain of the Himalayas, lacks clear demarcations, which has contributed to regular border tensions. Historically, the boundary between India and Tibet was understood as the boundary between India and China after China's takeover of Tibet in 1959. Over the years, multiple military clashes have occurred, notably the deadly skirmish in Galwan Valley in 2020, which led to casualties on both sides.

The last such high-level meeting was held in December 2019, but the progress in discussions halted after the Galwan Valley clash. It took over four years of diplomatic and military dialogue to reach an agreement for disengagement, with both sides reaching an understanding in October 2023. This agreement culminated in a rare meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia.

As India and China continue to prioritize the resolution of their border dispute, the upcoming meeting between Doval and Wang Yi is seen as a critical step toward de-escalation and peaceful coexistence between the two nations.



## Sri Lankan President Dissanayake Prays at Mahabodhi Temple

BIHAR: Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake visited Bodh Gaya in Bihar's Gaya district on Tuesday, where he offered prayers at the Mahabodhi Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Dissanayake's visit marked a significant moment as he paid his respects at one of the holiest sites in Buddhism, associated with the life and enlightenment of Lord Buddha.

Upon his arrival at Gaya International Airport, the Sri Lankan President was warmly received by Bihar ministers Prem Kumar and Santosh Kumar Suman, along with senior district administration officials. Dissanayake, accompanied by key local figures including Gaya District Magistrate Thiyagarajan SM and Mahashweta Maharathi, the secretary of the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC), made his way directly to the historic Mahabodhi Temple.

The Mahabodhi Temple, which dates back 1,500 years, is one of the four primary sites that commemorate significant events in Lord Buddha's life, particularly his attainment of Enlightenment. The temple is renowned for its sacred connection to Buddhism, and the President's visit underscored the spiritual importance of the site.

In addition to offering prayers at the temple's sanctum sanctorum, President Dissanayake also paid homage to the sacred Bodhi Tree. This tree is believed to be a direct descendant of the original Bodhi Tree under which Buddha attained Enlightenment. The President placed flowers and offered prayers at this revered location, further honoring the legacy of Lord Buddha.

The BTMC secretary shared that Dissanayake's visit included a tour of other significant areas within the temple complex, all of which are deeply connected to the life and teachings of Buddha. The visit highlighted the ongoing cultural and religious ties between Sri Lanka and India, particularly in the context of shared Buddhist heritage.

## India's Diplomatic Move In North Korea Marks Significant Shift In Policy

DELHI: As global attention remains focused on the conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, India has quietly shifted its focus eastward, pursuing its Act East policy. One of the significant developments in this strategy is New Delhi's renewed efforts to strengthen diplomatic ties with North Korea, a country often shrouded in secrecy.

In July 2021, India made the decision to shut its embassy in Pyongyang, with Ambassador Atul Malhari Gotsurve and the entire diplomatic staff returning to New Delhi via Moscow. Although the Indian Ministry of External Affairs never officially declared the embassy's closure, the government attributed the withdrawal to the COVID-19 pandemic when questioned. Since then, there had been no updates on India's diplomatic presence in North Korea. However, in a surprising move this month, India decided to resume normal operations at its



embassy in Pyongyang. A team of technical and diplomatic personnel was dispatched to North Korea to reestablish the mission, which had been closed for over three years.

The embassy now requires a thorough inspection and cleaning before it can resume full functions. Given North Korea's reputation for surveillance and espionage, the embassy building will need

to be carefully checked and "debugged" before it becomes operational. This process, along with the bureaucratic delays common in North Korea, suggests that the arrival of a new ambassador and the full diplomatic team could take several months.

North Korea's growing military capabilities, particularly in nuclear and missile technology, make its diplomatic importance significant for India. Maintaining a presence in Pyongyang is crucial for India, especially to prevent any transfer of such technology to adversaries like Pakistan. Furthermore, North Korea's increasing alignment with Russia, China, and Iran poses a challenge to the Quad alliance, which includes the US, Japan, India, and Australia. With strong ties already established with Moscow and Tehran, India's cautious engagement with North Korea remains vital to countering this growing geopolitical influence.





# Markets Tumble on Global Cues and Profit Booking

Sensex Falls 1,064 Points, Nifty Ends at 24,336

Domestic stock market indices continued to fall on Tuesday. They unexpectedly ended with huge losses. This was due to negative signals from international markets, foreign institutional investors resuming their selling in the wake of the US Fed meeting, and investors taking profits at peak levels. Largecap shares in particular fell the most. Nifty 300 and Sensex rose more than 1000 points. On the other hand, sectoral indices suffered limited losses. Banking, finance and metals shares were volatile. Depending on the US Fed's announcement on interest rates, the markets are likely to move in a decisive direction.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 81,745 in the previous session, opened at 81,511 today. It touched an intraday low of 80,612. It reached an intraday high of 82,613. It eventually fell 1064 points to close at 80,684. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 24,584 on Tuesday, touched a low of 24,303 and a high of 24,624. It fell by a total of 332 points to close at 24,336. The Bank Nifty fell 746 points to settle at 52,834.

In the Nifty50, 2 companies gained while 48 lost. Cipla and ITC were the top gainers. Shriram Finance, Gramsim, Hero Moto, Bharti Airtel and JSW Steel were the biggest losers. While the media index ended flat, all other sectoral indices turned red. Bank, auto, finance, metal, PSU bank, private bank, consumer durables, oil and gas indices fell the most.

Market breadth on NSE turned completely in favor of sellers. Of the 2899 shares traded, 955 gained, 1862 fell. Shares of 122 companies reached 52-week highs while 17 stocks reached 52-week lows.

Rupee strengthened by 3 paise to settle at 84.90 against the dollar. Infosys strengthened its strategic partnership with Google Cloud. Pidilite Industries shares suffered the most losses in seven months today. Gulf Oil Lubricants renewed its partnership with Pogo Vehicles. Ion Exchange shares recovered from four consecutive days of losses. Jefferies maintained its buy call on IndiGo. NMDC has set December 27 as the record date for the issue of bonus shares. Lemon Tree and Indian Hotels shares rose more than 20% in the month due to the travel, tourism and wedding season. Maruti Suzuki produced 20 lakh vehicles this calendar year. Zen Technologies shares rose for the tenth consecutive session. Asian Energy shares rose after receiving an order of Rs 200 crore from Assam Gas Company. International Gemological Institute IPO received a response of 11.93 times.

**Coforge Limited (COFORGE)**

**Coforge**

Coforge has established a strong presence in the IT services sector, focusing on digital transformation initiatives for clients worldwide. The company has demonstrated consistent revenue growth over the past few years, with a notable increase in operating margins, reflecting efficient cost management and value-added services. Coforge continues to expand its



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service offerings and has been investing in emerging technologies to stay competitive in the rapidly evolving IT landscape.

**PB Fintech Limited (POLICYBZ)**

**policybazaar.com**

As a pioneer in the Indian insurtech space, PolicyBazaar holds a significant market share, leveraging technology to simplify insurance purchases for consumers. The company has experienced substantial revenue growth, driven by increased adoption of digital insurance platforms. However, it has also reported net losses, attributed to high marketing and customer acquisition costs. PolicyBazaar has been expanding its product portfolio and enhancing its technological infrastructure to improve user experience and operational efficiency.

**Max Healthcare Institute Limited (MAXHEALTH)**

**MAX Healthcare**

The company operates a network of hospitals and has a strong brand presence in the Indian healthcare sector. Max Healthcare has shown steady revenue growth, with improving profit margins, indicating effective cost control and increased patient volumes. The company has been focusing on expanding its facilities and services, as well as adopting advanced medical technologies to enhance patient care.

**HealthCare Global Enterprises Limited (HCG)**

As a dedicated cancer care provid-

**HCG CARE**

er, HCG has established itself as a leader in oncology services in India. The company has reported revenue growth, though profitability has been impacted by high operational costs and investments in expanding its network. HCG continues to invest in new centers and advanced treatment technologies to broaden its reach and improve patient outcomes.

**Arvind Limited (ARVIND)**

**ARVIND**  
FASHIONING POSSIBILITIES

Arvind Limited is a leading textile manufacturer in India, known for its denim production and apparel brands. Arvind is a prominent player in the textile industry, with a diversified product portfolio and a strong presence in both domestic and international markets. The company has experienced fluctuations in revenue growth, with a recent decline in sales. Return on Equity (ROE) has also declined compared to the three-year average, standing at 8.2%. Arvind has been focusing on sustainability initiatives and expanding its technical textiles segment to drive future growth.

## India's Iron and Steel Imports Drop 28% Amid Concerns from MSMEs



India's iron and steel imports saw a significant decline of 28% in November, according to official data released on Monday. The fall, from \$2.4 billion in November of the previous year to \$1.7 billion this year, has raised concerns among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) regarding the availability of affordable imported steel.

The reduction in imports comes as the Steel Ministry faces delays in issuing No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for steel consignments at ports, which has hindered the timely entry of cheaper imported steel into the market. The import restrictions have been further exacerbated by the lobbying efforts of large steel manufacturers, who have pushed for the imposition of safeguard duties to limit the entry of foreign steel. These efforts aim to protect domestic steel producers but have sparked concerns among smaller businesses, particularly MSMEs.

MSMEs, which rely heavily on access to affordable steel for manufacturing and production, have expressed fears that these protective measures could severely impact their operations. They argue that the restricted access to cheaper imported steel would lead to higher costs for raw materials, making it difficult for them to compete in the market. Additionally, smaller businesses may find it challenging to meet the increased prices of domestically produced steel, which could ultimately affect their production capacity and exports.

The Indian government's move to curb steel imports through safeguard duties has drawn mixed reactions. While large steel companies argue that these measures are necessary to protect domestic industries and jobs, MSMEs stress that such steps could have a detrimental effect on the broader economy, particularly for smaller enterprises that do not have the same bargaining power as larger manufacturers.

As the debate over import restrictions continues, MSMEs are calling for a balanced approach that ensures affordable steel remains accessible to all businesses, without harming the growth prospects of small and medium-sized enterprises that are crucial to the country's industrial ecosystem.

## India Sees Rise in Per Capita Availability of Fruits and Vegetables: Report

India has witnessed a significant increase in the per capita availability of fruits and vegetables over the past decade, according to a recent report by SBI Research. The availability of fruits per person has risen by 7 kg, while vegetables have increased by 12 kg. The report highlights that the primary growth in production has been observed in states such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Jammu & Kashmir, where agricultural output has seen substantial improvements.

Currently, India produces 227 kg of fruits and vegetables per person annually, which exceeds the general dietary recommendation of 146 kg per person each year. However, despite the increase in production, a significant portion of the produce is lost due to its perishable nature. Losses occur during harvesting, storage, grading, and transportation, reducing the actual availability for consumption.

The report also sheds light on the negative impact of extreme climate events on foodgrain production. Extreme weather, including heat and cold waves, has

adversely affected agriculture production and supply chains in recent years. The report indicates a negative correlation between foodgrain production and extreme weather conditions in most states. For example, the Indian Council for Agricultural Research notes that a 1-degree Celsius rise in temperature above 30 degrees Celsius during the grain-filling period can reduce wheat yields.

These climate shocks have also contributed to a rise in food inflation, pushing prices up by 3-4% in recent years. Additionally, the report mentions that increased urbanization in states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan is also contributing to higher demand for fruits and vegetables. Urbanization, which has grown by more than 5% in the past decade, is driven by factors such as rising incomes and better job opportunities in cities, leading to a greater need for fresh produce.

As urbanization continues to increase, the demand for fruits and vegetables is expected to rise, further shaping India's agricultural landscape and consumption patterns.



## India's Q2 Economic Growth Weaker Than Expected: FM Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday downplayed the lower-than-expected GDP growth rate of 5.4% for the second quarter of the fiscal year, calling it a "temporary blip." She reassured lawmakers that the Indian economy would see healthy growth in the coming quarters, asserting that the country continues to be the fastest-growing major economy in the world.



my would recover strongly in the upcoming quarters.

During a debate in the Lok Sabha on the first batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants, Sitharaman highlighted that India's GDP growth has averaged 8.3% over the past three years, reflecting "steady and sustained" growth. The second quarter's 5.4% growth was a dip from the 6.7% growth recorded in the first quarter (April-June) of the year, but the finance minister emphasized that there was no cause for long-term concern.

Sitharaman further stated that there is no broad-based slowdown in the manufacturing sector, noting that half of the sectors within the overall manufacturing basket remain robust. She attributed the minor dip in growth to temporary factors and insisted that the econo-

On inflation, the finance minister pointed out that inflation control has been more effective under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, contrasting it with the double-digit inflation witnessed during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) era. Sitharaman highlighted that retail inflation for the period of April-October 2024-25 stood at 4.8%, the lowest since the Covid-19 pandemic, further bolstering the government's track record on economic stability.

With these remarks, Sitharaman assured the Parliament that the Indian economy, despite the temporary slowdown, remains on a solid growth trajectory, supported by strong fundamentals and effective governance.



## Is Alkaline Water Good For Health?



Alkaline water has recently gained popularity, with many health influencers promoting its supposed benefits. A First Check reader asked whether drinking alkaline water offers any health advantages. This query reflects the growing interest in alkaline water, which is often marketed as a solution to health issues such as weight loss and acidity. But is it really beneficial?

Alkaline water, also known as alkaline ionized water, has a higher pH level than regular drinking water. pH measures the acidity or alkalinity of water on a scale from 0 to 14, with 7 being neutral. While regular drinking water typically has a pH between 6.5 and 8.5, alkaline water is artificially created by adding minerals such as calcium and magnesium, then electrolyzing the water to produce a pH of 9-10. Proponents suggest that drinking alkaline water can help neutralize acid in the body, improving health and aiding in weight loss.

However, the idea that altering the body's pH with alkaline foods or drinks can lead to significant health benefits is unsupported by scientific evidence. The body maintains a tightly controlled pH balance, espe-

cially in the stomach, where the pH typically ranges from 1 to 3.5. Even if alkaline water slightly raises the pH of the blood, the kidneys quickly work to restore balance, making any lasting changes from drinking alkaline water negligible.

One minor benefit of alkaline water is that it may provide temporary relief from acidity and heartburn by neutralizing excess stomach acid. However, there is no solid evidence to support long-term health benefits, and drinking large amounts of alkaline water may have unintended side effects. For example, water with a pH of 9 or above can have a bitter taste and may interact negatively with certain medications, especially those used to reduce stomach acidity. It can also potentially harm individuals with kidney disease by altering potassium levels, leading to conditions such as hypokalemia, which can result in serious issues like cardiac disease or kidney failure.

In conclusion, while alkaline water may offer short-term relief from acidity, there is no compelling evidence to suggest it provides any significant health benefits.



## One In A Billion Perfect Sphere Egg Sold For Around Rs 21,500 In England

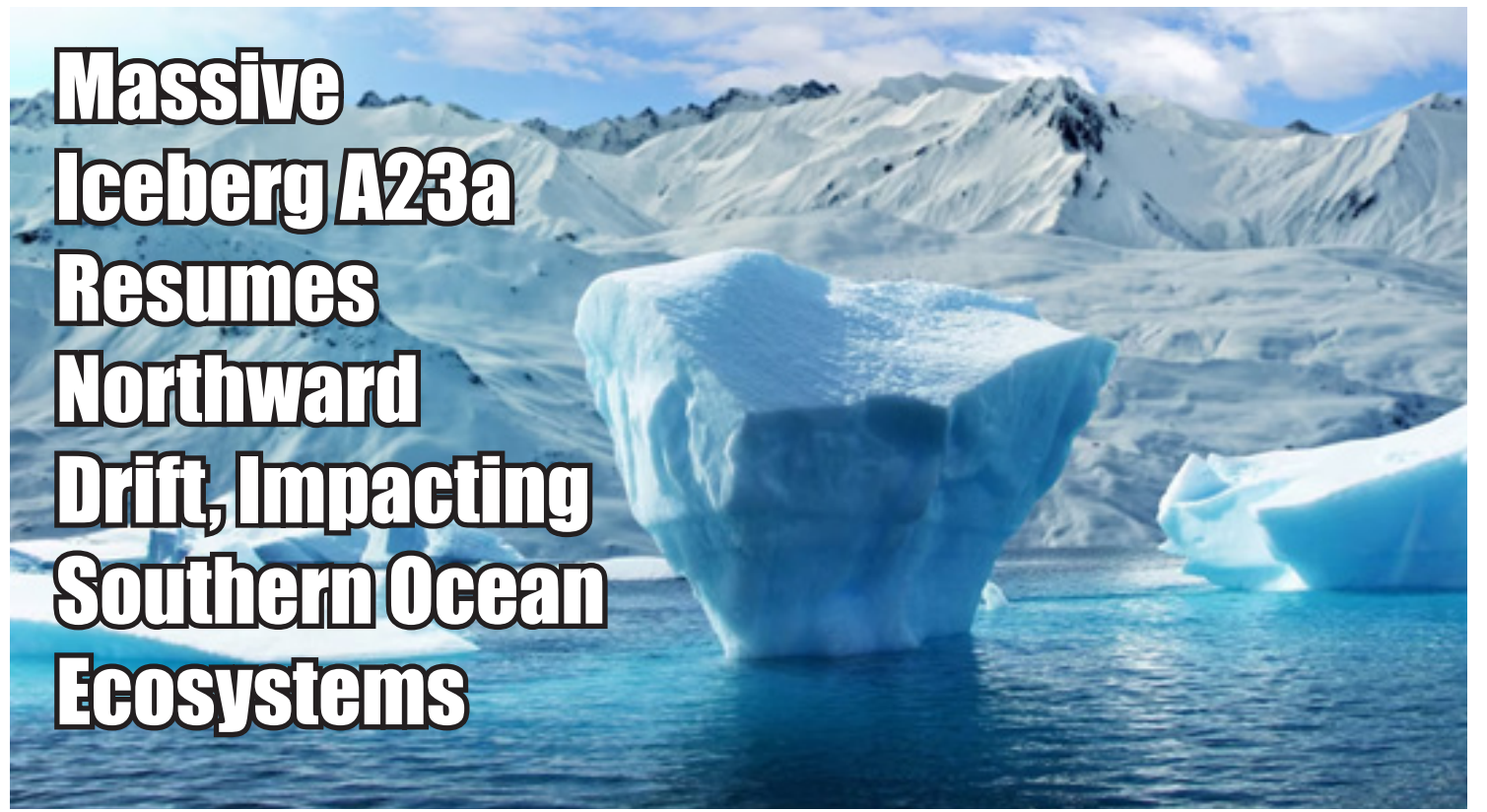
A rare spherical egg has been sold for £200 (around Rs 21,500) in Oxfordshire, England, after being donated to the Iuventas Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports young people with mental health issues, life coaching, and mentorship. The egg, originally bought by Ed Pownell, was sold as part of a charity auction that raised a total of £5,000 for the foundation's programs.

Roz Rapp, a representative for the Iuventas Foundation, expressed her delight over the sale, stating, "We're delighted and thrilled that the egg is sold, as it means we can continue our work." She clarified that the spherical hen's egg was just one of many items featured in the auction. The funds raised will go toward helping 13-25-year-olds struggling with mental health challenges, enabling the foundation to support more young people who are on long waiting lists for assistance.

The rare egg was originally discovered in a box of eggs from a local grocery store in Ayr, Scotland, by a woman who found the spherical shape unusual. According to David Miller from the auction firm Thomson Roddick Callan, where the egg was sold, spherical eggs are considered a "one-in-a-billion" phenomenon. This unique feature contributed to the egg's appeal at the auction, making it a highly sought-after item.

The money raised from the auction will help the Iuventas Foundation extend its outreach to more youths in need, providing crucial support for mental health and well-being. This sale highlights the power of community involvement, where a rare item can make a significant impact on a worthy cause, enabling the charity to reach more young people who need help and guidance.

## Massive Iceberg A23a Resumes Northward Drift, Impacting Southern Ocean Ecosystems



The massive iceberg A23a, which is both the largest and oldest iceberg in the world, has resumed its northward movement after being trapped in a rotating water column near the South Orkney Islands for several months. Weighing around one trillion tonnes and covering an area twice the size of Greater London, A23a had been stationary in the Weddell Sea for over three decades before beginning its gradual drift in 2020. Recent reports indicate that it is now being carried by the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, which could potentially lead it towards South Georgia.

A23a's temporary stall was caused by a rare oceanographic event known as a Taylor Column. This phenomenon

occurs when rotating water above an underwater seamount prevents objects from moving freely. The Taylor Column trapped A23a in the Weddell Sea, stalling its anticipated drift. Dr. Andrew Meijers, an oceanographer at the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), explained the significance of this change in movement. He noted that the BAS team is now eager to track whether A23a will follow the same path as other large Antarctic icebergs, and assess its potential effects on the surrounding marine ecosystems.

Scientists aboard the British Antarctic Survey vessel, RRS \*Sir David Attenborough\*, have been monitoring A23a to better understand its impact on local ecosystems. The iceberg's influence

on nutrient distribution and carbon cycles is a focus of the BIPOLE project, which aims to assess how large icebergs affect the Southern Ocean's ecology. Laura Taylor, a biogeochemist involved in the study, stated that large icebergs, like A23a, often enrich the waters they pass through, stimulating biodiversity in otherwise barren areas. Further research will investigate how the size and origin of an iceberg influence these environmental processes.

As A23a continues its drift, its effects on the Southern Ocean ecosystem remain a key area of study for scientists monitoring this colossal iceberg's journey.

## Instagram Introduces Feature to Schedule Direct Messages

Meta-owned Instagram is quietly rolling out a new feature that allows users to schedule Direct Messages (DMs), making it easier for individuals and creators to manage their interactions on the platform. The feature enables users to send memes, text messages, or updates at a specific time, ensuring that the recipient sees it at the right moment, whether they're awake or engaged with their phone.

This functionality is particularly useful for creators who want to engage with their followers at optimal times, or for users who prefer to send messages later but don't want to forget. Whether it's a friendly message, an important reminder, or a funny meme, the scheduling feature ensures the message is delivered exactly when intended.

Meta confirmed the feature is being gradually rolled out to users globally, with Instagram's parent company noting that it would be available to everyone soon. To schedule a message, users need to type out their DM and then long-press the send button until the option to 'Schedule message' appears. From there, they can select the date and time they want the message to be sent.

This addition to Instagram's suite of features offers



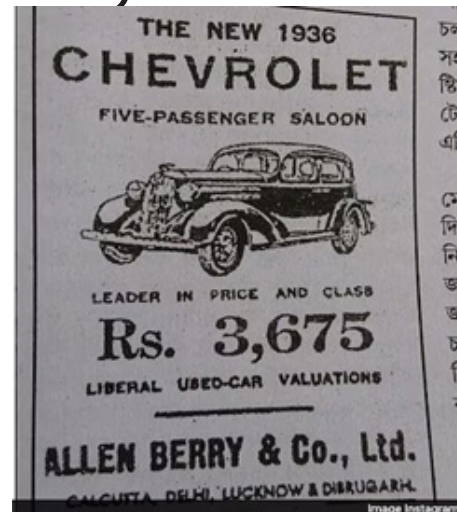
more flexibility for users, giving them the power to manage their interactions more effectively. Whether for personal or professional use, the ability to schedule messages ensures that communication is more timely and efficient.

With this new feature, Instagram continues to evolve as a more user-friendly platform, offering tools that cater to both casual users and content creators looking to engage with their audience more strategically.

## Vintage Chevrolet Ad for a 5-Seater at Rs 3,600 Stuns Social Media

A vintage newspaper advertisement featuring a Chevrolet 5-seater priced at just Rs 3,600 has recently gone viral, sparking both nostalgia and amazement online. The ad offers a fascinating glimpse into a time when automobiles were not only emerging as a mode of transport but also becoming a symbol of status for the masses.

The ad, published in a bygone era, highlights a "cheap and best" Chevrolet motorcar available for just Rs 2,700, showcasing the affordability of cars during that time. The advertisement goes on to present an upgraded 5-seater version of the same vehicle, priced at Rs 3,675, making it an attractive proposition for potential buyers. Additionally, one version of the ad specifies that the car is available in Lucknow, while another mentions delivery options to various cities, including Calcutta, Delhi, Lucknow, and Di-



bugarh.

In today's market, a budget-friendly 5-seater car in India starts at several lakhs, making the Rs 3,600 price tag feel almost like a dream from a bygone era. Social media users have been quick to react to the ad, with many expressing awe at the vast difference in pricing between then and now.

Several commenters pointed out that when adjusted for inflation, the Rs 3,600 from the past would be equivalent to several lakhs in today's money.

This discovery has ignited discussions on the changing value of money and how far the automobile industry has come over the decades. While cars today are packed with advanced technology and safety features, the simplicity and affordability of the past have left many internet users reflecting on a time when a car was an achievable dream for the average person.



## New Zealand Celebrates Tim Southee's Farewell with Dominant Win Over England

New Zealand wrapped up their Test series against England with a massive 423-run victory on December 17, 2024, at Hamilton's Seddon Park, offering a perfect farewell to Tim Southee in his final Test match. After a dominant 3-0 sweep of India earlier this year, the Black Caps had been outplayed in the first two Tests in Christchurch and Wellington. But they bounced back in style, rediscovering their form to claim their biggest-ever win by runs, and leaving England with one of their heaviest defeats.

The match, which concluded in just four days, saw New Zealand's Mitchell Santner shine with both bat and ball. The recalled spinner took 4-85 in England's second innings, ending with a match tally of seven wickets. Santner also contributed with the bat, scoring 76 and 49 runs in the two innings. His performance earned him the

Player of the Match award.

However, it was a collective team effort that secured the win. Kane Williamson played a key role, scoring a remarkable 156 in the second innings, pushing England's victory target into record-breaking territory. Will O'Rourke also impressed with a spell of tight bowling on day one, further contributing to the team's strong performance.

For New Zealand, this win was a welcome relief after the heavy losses in the earlier matches of the series. It was also a fitting tribute to Southee, who led his team to victory in front of a home crowd as he played his final Test match. With this victory, New Zealand not only sent Southee off on a high note but also claimed a consolation win in a series that had otherwise been dominated by England.

## India to Host World Boxing Cup Final and Congress in 2025

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) announced on Tuesday that India has been awarded the hosting rights for two major international boxing events—the World Boxing Cup Final 2025 and the World Boxing Congress 2025. These prestigious events are scheduled to take place in November 2025, marking a significant milestone in India's growing prominence in the global sports arena.

The World Boxing Cup Final 2025 will serve as the culmination of three World Boxing Cups held earlier in the year, bringing together the world's top boxers to compete for the highest honours and solidify their global rankings.

This elite event is expected to showcase the best of boxing, providing a platform for athletes to make their mark on the international stage.

In addition to the Cup Final, the World Boxing Congress 2025 will bring together boxing stakeholders, officials, and dignitaries from around the globe. The Congress will focus on key developments in the sport, as well as discussions on future strategies and the direction of boxing in the coming years.

BFI President Ajay Singh expressed his pride in India's ability to host such high-profile events, stating, "It is a proud moment for India to be recognised by World Boxing for hosting these presti-



gious events. This opportunity highlights India's organisational excellence and our commitment to ensuring that boxing remains a vital part of the Olympic movement. We are honoured to contribute to the sport's legacy and look forward to welcoming the global boxing community to India in 2025."

The hosting of these events is expected to inspire young athletes, attract global attention to Indian boxing, and further cement India's position as a major player in international boxing. Preparations are already underway to ensure that the World Boxing Cup Final and the World Boxing Congress set new standards for hosting world-class sporting events in the country.

## India Fights Back with Rain Threatening Final Day of Gabba Test

India's resilience on the fourth day of the third Test in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at the Gabba gave them a fighting chance to avoid a follow-on and potentially stave off an innings defeat. Despite facing a challenging target set by Australia, India finished the day at 252/9, trailing by 193 runs.

KL Rahul (84) and Ravindra Jadeja (77) provided the backbone of India's fight-back, helping the team recover from early setbacks. Their half-centuries, along with a crucial 39-run partnership between Bumrah (10\*) and Akash Deep (27\*), kept India in the game. However, with just one wicket remaining, they have a long way to go to reach Australia's first innings total of 445 all out.

the middle," he said. "It was a challenge for both teams, stopping and starting again."

Australia, having dominated the first half of the match, are on course for victory, but rain could disrupt their plans. The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast a "high chance of showers" on the final day, with the possibility of a severe thunderstorm during the late morning and afternoon. This could affect the progress of the match and India's hopes of securing a draw or better.

KL Rahul, speaking after the day's play, expressed his frustration with the weather interruptions. "I think I got more tired running up and down from the dressing room than I did being in

the middle," he said. "It was a challenge for both teams, stopping and starting again."

India's struggle began when they chose to field first on day one, with Australia quickly moving to a strong position. Steve Smith and Travis Head's 241-run partnership turned the tide in Australia's favour, despite Bumrah's (5/72) efforts. India then fought hard on day four, with Rahul and Jadeja's efforts to avoid the follow-on.

With rain looming, India faces a race against time to avoid defeat as they seek to push past Australia's formidable total.



## Chelsea's Mykhailo Mudryk Fails Doping Test, Club Supports Investigation

Chelsea forward Mykhailo Mudryk has been provisionally suspended after failing a doping test, the Premier League club confirmed on Tuesday. The Football Association (FA) informed Chelsea of an "adverse finding" in a routine urine sample provided by the 23-year-old Ukrainian winger.

In an official statement, Chelsea FC said, "Both the club and Mykhailo fully support the FA's testing programme and all our players, including Mykhailo, are regularly tested." The statement also clarified that Mudryk had categorically denied knowingly using any banned substances and pledged to work with the relevant authorities to determine the cause of the adverse result.

Mudryk himself addressed the issue on Instagram, expressing shock at the news. He said, "I have been notified that a sample I provided to the FA contained a banned substance. This has come as a complete shock as I have never knowingly used any banned substances or broken any rules, and am working closely with my team to investigate how this could have happened." He added that he is confident he has done nothing wrong and remains hopeful about returning to the pitch soon. He also emphasized his commitment to maintaining confidentiality as the investigation continues.

The UK Anti-Doping Agency (UKAD) warns athletes that intentional use of banned substances can lead to a four-year ban. However, if the violation involves a specified



substance or contaminated product, and the athlete can demonstrate no significant fault, the ban could be reduced to two years or a reprimand.

Mudryk has made 15 appearances for Chelsea this season, scoring three goals, including one in their 2-0 win over German side Heidenheim in the Conference League on November 28. He has not featured in Chelsea's past five matches across all competitions. The winger joined Chelsea in January 2023 from Shakhtar Donetsk for a reported £88.5 million (\$112 million).

Chelsea, currently second in the Premier League and top of the Conference League, is closely monitoring the situation as Mudryk works through the process.



## Smriti Mandhana Climbs to Top 3 in Both ODI and T20I Rankings

India's star batter, Smriti Mandhana, has achieved a significant milestone by securing a place in the top 3 of both the ICC Women's ODI and T20I rankings. In the latest rankings update, Mandhana has risen three spots to second in the Women's ODI batting rankings, and moved up one place to third in the T20I rankings. Her impressive performances in recent series against Australia and the West Indies have been instrumental in this ascent. Mandhana's 105 runs in the final ODI against Australia in Perth and her 54 in the opening T20I against the West Indies in Mumbai have solidified her position among the world's elite players.

Mandhana is the only Indian

batter to feature in the top 10 of both formats, with her captain, Harmanpreet Kaur, dropping two spots to 13th in the ODI rankings. Meanwhile, Jemimah Rodrigues made a notable climb of six places to 15th, and Harleen Deol surged nine places to 64th. In the bowling rankings, Deepti Sharma slipped two places to fifth.

In addition to the Indian players' movements, several international players also made strides in the rankings. England's Tammy Beaumont climbed two places to 11th following her unbeaten 65 against South Africa, while Australia's Ashleigh Gardner moved up to third in the bowling rankings with a stellar five-wicket haul in Perth. Gardner also climbed from fourth to second

in the all-rounders' list. Annabell Sutherland's match-winning 110 saw her move up 15 places to 29th.

In the T20I rankings, Kaur returned to the top 10, while Rodrigues' fine 73 against the West Indies helped her rise six spots to 15th. Deepti Sharma's solid bowling performances saw her climb to second in the T20I bowling rankings. Meanwhile, Titas Sadhu also made progress, moving up to 52nd.

Among the West Indies players, all-rounder Deandra Dottin made a significant jump, advancing 21 places to 59th after a half-century, with Qiana Joseph and Karishma Ramharack also making notable gains.



## Mohanlal's Directorial Debut "Barroz" Unveils Fascinating Fantasy Trailer

Mohanlal, the celebrated actor known for his versatility, is all set to make his directorial debut with the highly anticipated fantasy film *Barroz*. The film, which has already generated buzz, recently released its Telugu trailer, offering a glimpse of the magical world it will transport audiences to. *Barroz* is set for a Pan-India release on December 25, with the distribution rights for the Telugu version acquired by Mythri Movie Makers.

The trailer highlights Mohanlal in a dual role—both as the director and the lead actor. He plays the character of a genie who has been entrusted with the monumental responsibility of guarding the hidden treasure of the famed explorer Vasco da Gama. This treasure, consisting of im-

mense riches like gold and diamonds, has been safeguarded by the genie for over 400 years, patiently awaiting the arrival of its rightful heirs. The story revolves around this fascinating quest, blending elements of fantasy, adventure, and mystery in a captivating narrative.

The trailer suggests a thrilling and fun-filled adventure that will likely appeal to audiences of all ages, especially children, with its magical elements and action-packed sequences. The film is produced under Mohanlal's own production banner, Aashirvad Films, with Antony Perumbavoor as the producer. This ambitious project marks a significant milestone in Mohanlal's illustrious career as he steps behind the camera to direct a film that brings his vision to life.



*Barroz* is set for a global release in five languages—Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam—ensuring that the film will reach audiences across the country. As Mohanlal takes

on this exciting new venture, *Barroz* promises to be a visual spectacle, combining state-of-the-art 3D technology and an engaging story that is sure to capture the imagination of viewers.



## Nithiin's Robinhood Postponed: New Release Date to Be Announced Soon

Nithiin's much-anticipated film *\*Robinhood\**, which was slated for a grand release on December 25th, has been officially postponed. The team behind the film confirmed the delay and shared a statement regarding the change in the release schedule.

"Due to unforeseen circumstances, *Robinhood* will not be releasing on December 25th as planned. A new release date will be announced soon. Hold on to your excitement. The entertainment will be worth the wait. This adventurous entertainer promises to be an unforgettable experience when it arrives in theaters!" said the team in an official update.

Fans of Nithiin were eagerly awaiting the film's release during the holiday season, and the sudden delay has left many disappointed. However, the makers reassured the audience that the film, described as an "adventurous entertainer," will deliver plenty of excitement and entertainment once it hits the big screen.

Directed by Venky Kudumula, *Robinhood* stars Nithiin alongside Sreeleela in the lead roles, with music composed by the talented GV Prakash Kumar. The film is being produced by Mythri Movie Makers, a banner known for its successful ventures. With a promise of high-octane action and captivating performances, *Robinhood* is expected to offer a thrilling cinematic experience.

Although the delay has created some uncertainty regarding the film's release date, the team expressed confidence that the final product will be worth the wait. Fans are now eagerly awaiting the official announcement of the new release date, while holding onto their excitement for what is sure to be an entertaining and adventurous journey on the big screen.

## Mrunal Thakur Replaces Shruti Haasan in Adivi Sesh's Dacoit

Tollywood actor Adivi Sesh is celebrating his birthday today while gearing up for a string of exciting film releases, with one of the most eagerly awaited being *\*Dacoit\**. Directed by newcomer Shaniel Deo, the film is a gripping love story that has already piqued the interest of audiences. In a recent update, the makers revealed an exciting change in the lead cast, announcing that Mrunal Thakur will be replacing Shruti Haasan in the heroine's role.

To tease this change, the film's team unveiled two new posters featuring Mrunal. In the first, Adivi Sesh is seen with a serious expression, gazing into the distance, while Mrunal's face reflects sadness, hinting at a troubled past between the characters. The second poster presents a more intense contrast, with Sesh stylishly sitting in a car, lighting a cigarette, while Mrunal drives the car, her stern gaze accompanied by a gun in hand. These images highlight the complexity of their characters and

their volatile relationship, building anticipation for the film.

*\*Dacoit\** tells the story of two former lovers who are forced to come together for a series of daring robberies that will ultimately change the course of their lives. The film promises to be an action-packed, emotional rollercoaster, with the chemistry between the leads playing a pivotal role.

Produced by Supriya Yarlagadda, co-produced by Suniel Narang, and presented by Annapurna Studios, *\*Dacoit\** is a bilingual project being shot in both Hindi and Telugu. The screenplay and story are written by Adivi Sesh and Shaniel Deo, and the film is currently being shot in Hyderabad, followed by an extensive schedule in Maharashtra. Fans are eagerly awaiting more updates as the film progresses, with the new casting change further raising expectations.



## Vennela Kishore's Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes – Trailer Unveiled



The theatrical trailer for *\*Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes\**, a crime thriller featuring renowned comedian Vennela Kishore in the lead role, has been unveiled, creating a buzz among fans. Written and di-

rected by Writer Mohan, the film is produced by Vennapusa Ramana Reddy under the banner of Sri Ganapathi Cinemas, with Lasya Reddy presenting it. The trailer offers a gripping glimpse into the suspenseful world of the film, building anticipation for its release.

The plot centers around a series of murders on a beach, with the murder of a young girl named Mary becoming a media sensation. Struggling to crack the case, the police hire a private detective known for his proactive and creative methods. The detective narrows

down the list of suspects to seven, including a pair of lovebirds from the village, portrayed by Raviteja Mahadyam and Ananya Nagalla.

The story, penned by Writer Mohan, promises to keep viewers on the edge of their seats, with engaging twists and a tightly woven narrative. Vennela Kishore takes on the role of the detective, bringing the character to life with his distinctive charm and conviction. Siya Gautam plays a crucial role as a police constable, while Bahubali Prabhakar and Muralidhar Goud contribute to the ensemble cast in pivotal roles.

Mallikarjun N's cinematography adds depth and intensity to the film, perfectly capturing the suspenseful atmosphere of the thriller. Sunil Kashyap's impactful background score heightens the tension, ensuring a captivating cinematic experience.

*Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes* is set to release theatrically on December 25th, and Vamsi Nandipati, known for distributing successful films like *Ka*, *Polimer 2* is handling its distribution. Fans of crime thrillers can look forward to an exciting and suspense-filled journey when the film hits the theaters this holiday season.

## Upendra UI – A Psychological Thriller Set for Pan-Indian Release

After an eight-year hiatus, star actor and director Upendra is making a grand return to the director's chair with his highly anticipated film *\*UI\**. The movie, which Upendra also stars in, is set for a pan-Indian release on December 20, 2024. The recently released trailer has generated immense excitement, leaving audiences eager to see what the versatile actor-director has crafted this time.

During the film's promotions in Telugu, Upendra described *\*UI\** as a psychological version of *\*Kalki 2898 AD\**, a statement that has only added to the growing anticipation. The comparison to the iconic *\*Kalki\** has sparked curiosity, raising expectations for a unique and thought-provoking cinematic experience.

Known for his humility and simplicity, Upendra won the hearts of Telugu audiences during his media interactions. Despite his star status, he continues to maintain his down-to-earth na-



ture, making him even more beloved by his fans.

*\*UI\** is produced by Lahari Films, G. Manoharan, and Venus Entertainers, with K. P. Sreekanth as the producer and Naveen Manoharan as the co-producer. The film features a stellar ensemble cast, including Sunny Leone, Reeshma Nanaiah, Murali Sharma, Nidhi Subbaiah, Sadhu Kokila, Murali Krishna, and Indrajit Lankesh in significant roles. The music for *\*UI\** is composed by the talented Ajaneesh B Loknath, promising a captivating soundtrack to complement the film's intense narrative.

With its psychological thriller elements, strong performances, and Upendra's return to the director's seat, *\*UI\** is poised to be a major hit across India. The film's release on December 20 is eagerly awaited, and fans are excited to see how Upendra once again pushes the boundaries of storytelling in his latest venture.