



# Actor Interrogated in Theater Case

**Actor Faces Intense Police Questioning Sandhya Theater Incident Footage Reviewed**  
**Allu Arjun Assures Full Cooperation Investigation Draws Public Attention**

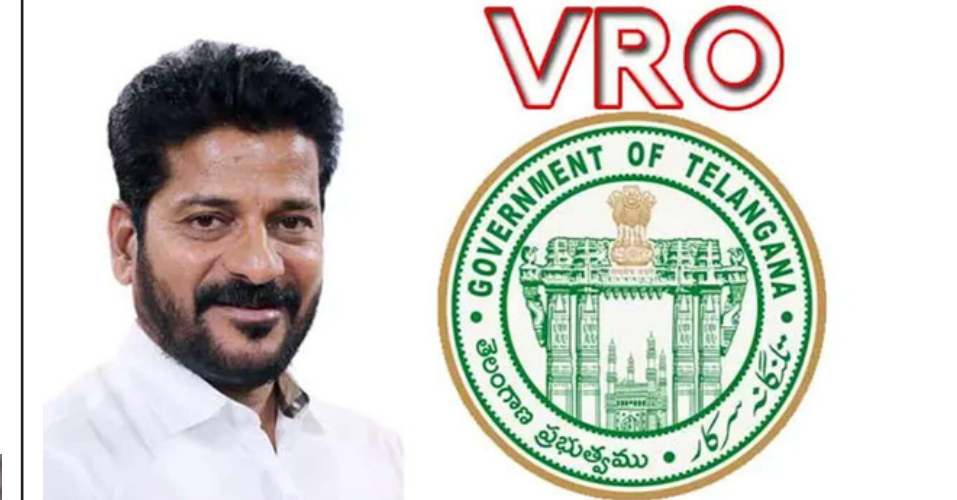
TPN , Hyderabad : Popular Tollywood actor Allu Arjun faced over three and a half hours of questioning by the Chik-kadapalli police on Monday regarding the Sandhya Theater incident. Arriving at the police station at 11 a.m., the actor was interrogated under the supervision of Central Zone DCP Akanksh Yadav. The investigation, conducted in the presence of his lawyer Ashok Reddy, included ACP Ramesh and Inspector Rajunayak as part of the inquiry team.



During the interrogation, Allu Arjun was reportedly asked 18 questions, answering 15 while expressing his inability to respond to three, citing a lack of clarity due to darkness inside the theater. Sources revealed that video footage of the incident was shown to the actor, causing him to become emotional. He admitted to making some mistakes and assured the police of his full cooperation in the ongoing investigation.

car, along with tea, during breaks. The police have recorded the entire session on video as part of the investigation. While details of the Sandhya Theater incident remain undisclosed, this high-profile interrogation has drawn significant public and media attention. The police have yet to reveal the next steps in the case but emphasized their commitment to uncovering all relevant facts. This questioning underscores the seriousness of the case and highlights Allu Arjun's cooperation with the authorities. The actor assured the police of his availability for any future inquiries, as necessary. The investigation into the Sandhya Theater incident continues, with updates expected in the coming days. Both fans and the general public are closely following the developments in this case, which has cast a spotlight on the actor's involvement.

Despite the intense scrutiny, Allu Arjun refrained from addressing the media gathered outside the station. His car left the premises amidst tight security as the police escorted him back to his residence. The actor reportedly consumed water three times during the session and had biscuits and dry fruits in his



## Government Takes Steps to Revive VRO System

**Experienced Officers to Be Re-Hired CCLA Sets December 28 Deadline**  
**Bhubharati Act to Enhance Land Administration**

TPN , Hyderabad : The Revanth Reddy-led government in Telangana is taking concrete steps to reinstate the Village Revenue Officer (VRO) system. Reports suggest that this revival aims to strengthen local governance and streamline administrative functions in revenue villages across the state.

implementation of the VRO system, with a deadline set for December 28. The revival is being undertaken as part of the Bhubharati Act, a legislative initiative aimed at enhancing land administration and revenue management.

As part of the plan, the government has announced the appointment of an officer for each revenue village. Furthermore, there are indications that experienced former VROs will be re-hired to ensure the system operates efficiently.

The reintroduction of the VRO and Village Revenue Assistant (VRA) system is expected to address administrative gaps at the grassroots level, providing a dedicated officer for each village to handle land-related matters, resolve disputes, and maintain records.

The Chief Commissioner of Land Administration (CCLA) has already issued directives regarding the re-

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## 18 Accused in Sandhya Theater Incident

**Allu Arjun Listed as A11 in Case Theater Owners Among Accused Personal Assistant and Staff Implicated**



TPN , Hyderabad: A total of 18 individuals have been implicated in a case related to the Sandhya Theater incident, with Allu Arjun's name included as the A11 accused. The case involves theater owners and several individuals connected to the event. Among the accused are Agamati Peddarami Reddy and Agamati Chinnarami Reddy, the owners of the theater, along with their partners M. Sandeep and Sumit. Other names include Agamati Vinay, Ashutosh Reddy, Renukadevi, Aruna Reddy, Nagaraju, and Vijaychander.

Additionally, Allu Arjun's personal assistant Santosh (A12), Sarath Bunny (A13), Ramesh (A14), Raju (A15), Vinay Kumar (A16), Farvez (A17), and Mythri Movies Producers (A18) have also been named in the case.

The incident occurred during the premiere of Pushpa and has raised significant concerns within the film industry. Authorities are expected to continue their investigation, with Allu Arjun and others involved in the ongoing inquiry. This has drawn considerable attention from officials, as well as those within the entertainment sector.



TPN , Hyderabad : Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu announced the launch of solar power generation in farmers' fields under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Component-A scheme. In a statement released on Tuesday, he highlighted the Telangana government's commitment to promoting renewable energy while pro-

## Bhatti Vikramarka Launches Solar Power Scheme for Farmers

**Solar Plants to Be Set Up on Abandoned Agricultural Lands Farmers Can Lease Land for Solar Power Projects DISCOMs to Purchase Solar Energy at Rs. 3.13/kWh**

viding additional income sources for farmers. Under the scheme, solar power plants with capacities ranging from 0.5 megawatts to 2 megawatts will be established on dry or unused agricultural lands. The initiative aims to generate pollution-free electricity and financially empower farmers by enabling them to lease their land to developers. The lease payments will be facilitated by the state's power distribution companies (DIS-

COMs), as per agreements between landowners and developers.

Applications for the scheme can be submitted online via the Telangana State Renewable Energy Development Corporation (TGREDCO) portal. Farmers can select the nearest sub-station from a provided list to set up their solar power plants.

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# CM Reddy on Telangana Legacy, National Issues

**Yadava Reddy's Role in Telangana Movement Call for Comprehensive Telangana History Book CM Urges Action on National Crises**

TPN , Hyderabad : Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy delivered a thought-provoking speech at a book launch event held at Ravindra Bharathi, addressing the legacy of Telangana's movement and key national issues.

and the realization of development goals," he said.

Praising Yadava Reddy, the CM described him as a man of principles who actively contributed to the Telangana movement behind the scenes. "While people like Suravaram are hard-core communists, and Jaipal Reddy and Yadava Reddy are soft-core communists, they worked in the Congress party not for positions, but for public welfare

The Chief Minister highlighted Yadava Reddy's role in advocating for Telangana statehood, including his discussions with Sonia Gandhi during the passing of the Telangana Bill. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive book documenting the Telangana movement, from the Mulki-Nan Mulki struggles to the state's formation, for future generations.

Turning his attention to national concerns, CM Reddy criticized the silence surrounding the Chinese



occupation of 2,000-4,000 square kilometers of Indian territory and the ongoing civil unrest in Manipur. He accused corporate interests of fueling a civil war to exploit the region's mineral wealth. "When two

tribal communities clash, sophisticated weapons escalate the violence. The Indian forces must seize these weapons to restore peace," he urged.

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## Revive VRO System

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This decision underscores the Revanth Reddy government's commitment to revamping governance structures in Telangana, ensuring better service delivery and accountability in rural areas. Further updates on the implementation process are expected as the December 28 deadline approaches.

## National Issues

continued from P-1

The CM also called for an open discussion on issues like the undeclared war-like atmosphere in the country, Chinese aggression, and the Manipur crisis. "Only by addressing these challenges can peace and stability be ensured," he concluded. The event underscored the need for meaningful dialogue on historical and contemporary challenges, drawing attention to the enduring relevance of public responsibility and governance.

## Solar Power Scheme for Farmers

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The power generated will be purchased by DISCOMS at a fixed rate of Rs. 3.13 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for a period of 25 years, ensuring long-term financial stability for participants. Bhatti Vikramarka emphasized that the program not only supports the state's green energy goals but also addresses the economic challenges faced by farmers. By transforming unused agricultural lands into hubs of solar energy production, the initiative represents a significant step toward sustainable development in Telangana. This move underscores the government's dual focus on renewable energy adoption and the welfare of the agricultural community, paving the way for a cleaner and more prosperous future.

## Dil Raju Responds to Incident at Pushpa



**TPN , Hyderabad:** Renowned producer Dil Raju has expressed his concern over the unfortunate incident that occurred during the \*Pushpa\* premiere, acknowledging that such occurrences are occasionally seen in the film industry. Speaking on the matter, Dil Raju, who was recently appointed as the Chairman of the Film Development Corporation (FDC), assured that he would serve as a bridge between the government and the film industry.

Currently in the United States for another program, Dil Raju met with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy upon his arrival and discussed the situation. He expressed his commitment to supporting the family of Revathi's husband, Bhaskar, and said that efforts would be made to find him a job within the industry. He also pledged to take responsibility for Bhaskar's family, ensuring that they receive the necessary support through FDC initiatives.

Dil Raju also mentioned that the CM had given him directives regarding the situation and that he had discussed providing assistance with CM Revanth, who supported the initiative. While expressing regret over the incident, Dil Raju emphasized that no one in the industry would want such things to happen and that they would stand by Bhaskar's family during this difficult time.

## KCR, Harish Rao Secure Major Relief in Medigadda Landslide Case

**TPN , Hyderabad:** Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) and Minister T. Harish Rao received significant relief from the Telangana High Court in the Medigadda landslide case. The High Court has suspended the notices issued earlier by the Bhupalpally District Court and adjourned the hearing to the 7th of next month.

The controversy revolves around allegations of corruption in the construction of the Medigadda Barrage, a crucial part of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project. Following the landslide incident, the Bhupalpally District Court recently issued notices to both KCR and Harish Rao.



In response, KCR and Harish Rao challenged the notices in the Telangana High Court. The High Court, in turn, suspended the District Court's

notices and issued directives to notify the complainant, effectively granting relief to the two leaders.

This development comes amidst rising political tensions in Telangana, with opposition parties frequently targeting the state government over alleged irregularities in key infrastructure projects. The High Court's intervention has temporarily eased legal pressures on KCR and Harish Rao, allowing them to focus on governance ahead of the next hearing. The case continues to draw significant attention as further legal proceedings are awaited.

# KTR Slams Govt for Failing Farmers and Paddy Procurement Issues

### KTR Criticizes Government's Handling of Paddy Procurement

### Failure to Meet Promised Bonus and Procurement Targets

### KTR Attacks Government for Discontinuing Rythu Bharosa Scheme



**TPN , Hyderabad:** Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) on Tuesday, December 24, sharply criticized the Telangana government for its mishandling of paddy procurement, accusing the Congress of abandoning the state's farmers.

In a post on X, KTR condemned the government's failure to effectively purchase paddy, despite a bumper yield of 1.53 crore tonnes during the Vaanakalam season. He pointed out that only 46 lakh metric tonnes were procured, far below expectations, and attributed this to the refusal to procure coarse varieties and imposing stringent conditions on fine variety paddy purchases. He also highlighted that the promised Rs 500 bonus per quintal was unmet, with only Rs 530 crore disbursed under restrictive conditions.

The Sircilla MLA further criticized the Congress-led government for discontinuing the Rythu Bharosa scheme, leaving farmers without the promised financial support. He claimed that farmers were deprived of Rs 26,000 crore.

In contrast, he reminded the public that under the previous BRS government, farmers not only received Rythu Bandhu investment support but were also assured of direct procurement from their fields.

KTR also lashed out at the state government's broader failures, including power cuts, administrative chaos, and political instability, labeling it a period of "riots, lies, deceit, political vendetta, and anarchy." He questioned, "What is left in Telangana except demolitions, debts, and diversions?" and urged immediate action to address the concerns of farmers. The BRS working president's remarks come at a time when the state's farmers are grappling with significant challenges in securing fair prices for their crops.

## Munneru Retaining Wall to Safeguard Khammam from Floods

**TPN , Khammam :** Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy have issued urgent directives to accelerate the construction of the Munneru retaining wall, a crucial project aimed at permanently protecting Khammam from flood inundation. The ministers recently reviewed the progress of the project with irrigation officials at the Secretariat.

Minister Ponguleti emphasized that the RCC concrete retaining walls are being built on both sides of the Munneru River to prevent flooding in Khammam town. The primary objective is to direct floodwater away from the city and ensure the safety of the residents. He stressed that the wall should be designed in such a way that it efficiently channels floodwaters, leaving no possibility for flooding within the city.

The ministers outlined the importance of completing the project on a war footing and requested an



expedited timeline for the work. To ensure smooth progress, Minister Ponguleti announced that he would personally oversee the project's development twice a month.

This project involves the construction of a 23-kilometer-long wall that will benefit the people

of Khammam and Paleru assembly constituencies. The ministers have also emphasized the importance of addressing any challenges that arise during construction to guarantee the project's success.

Officials have been instructed to take all necessary measures to

expedite the work while ensuring that the wall's design meets the required standards to withstand potential flood situations. The completion of this retaining wall is expected to be a significant step toward safeguarding the residents of Khammam from recurring flood risks.

## Health Minister Pushes for Better Public Health Care Standards



**TPN , Hyderabad :** In a bid to enhance the quality of public health services, Telangana Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha has called on hospital managements across the state to prioritize the maintenance and optimal use of medical equipment and infrastructure.

The minister emphasized that the focus should be on strengthening the management systems of all government hospitals to ensure better healthcare delivery.

During a recent review meeting, Narasimha instructed hospital management teams to submit detailed reports on the status of medical equipment repairs, infrastructure upkeep, the recruitment of technical staff, and lab technicians. He highlighted the importance of maintain-

ing equipment and ensuring its full utilization to provide effective healthcare services.

"The emphasis should be on strengthening the management system of all government hospitals in the state, ensuring the full utilization of equipment, and prioritizing infrastructure maintenance and repairs," the health minister stated.

Narasimha urged hospital management teams to focus on improving the healthcare experience for the people of Telangana and called for a collective effort to raise public health standards in the state. This initiative reflects the government's commitment to providing better healthcare infrastructure and services to all residents of Telangana.





# Harish Rao Backs Allu Arjun

TPN , Hyderabad: Telangana Minister Harish Rao has entered the scene amid the ongoing controversy involving actor Allu Arjun, defending the actor while strongly criticizing Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for his alleged personal targeting of the film star.

Harish Rao expressed his frustration, accusing Revanth Reddy of ignoring critical state issues while focusing on Allu Arjun. He alleged that a farmer had committed suicide due to harassment linked to Revanth Reddy,

but no case was registered against the Chief Minister.

Harish Rao did not hold back in his criticism, citing the deaths of 50 Gurukul students in Telangana, as well as 500 farmers and 80 auto drivers, stating that Revanth Reddy remained silent on these tragedies. "He does not have time to address these issues, but he has time to target the film industry," Harish Rao remarked, suggesting political bias in the Chief Minister's actions.

The controversy has escalated following the Sandhya Theater stampede incident, which tragically claimed the life of Revathi, a resident of Dilsukh Nagar. Actor Allu Arjun has been under police investigation for his alleged involvement in the event, with questioning taking place earlier today.

Harish Rao's intervention marks a significant turn in the controversy, as the issue becomes increasingly politicized. His statements highlight the perceived neglect of press-



ing state issues in favor of targeting high-profile individuals in the entertainment industry.

Meanwhile, the police investigation into the Sandhya Theater incident

continues, with authorities questioning key figures, including Allu Arjun, to uncover the events leading to the tragedy. The case remains a focal point in both public and political discourse in Telangana.

## DK Aruna Alleges Conspiracy to Shift Tollywood from Hyderabad



TPN , Hyderabad: BJP MP DK Aruna has made explosive allegations, accusing the Telangana government of a conspiracy to relocate the Tollywood film industry from Hyderabad. Speaking at a public meeting, Aruna claimed that actor Allu Arjun was being targeted as a distraction from the government's failures.

She further alleged that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's leadership involved unnecessary showmanship, stating, "Revanth Reddy is the only politician in Telangana who roams with bouncers." Aruna criticized the Congress party, accusing it of insulting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and questioning its commitment to his legacy. She remarked, "If Amit Shah spoke about Ambedkar in Parliament, why did Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, remain silent in the Lok Sabha?"

Aruna also criticized the government's handling of real estate and infrastructure issues, claiming that mismanagement is evident. "There is a calculated attempt to undermine Hyderabad as a hub for the film industry," she alleged, adding that BJP leaders would go to the people to expose these issues.

Her comments have sparked debates in political and entertainment circles, with opposition parties rejecting her allegations. The controversy adds to the ongoing tensions between the BJP, Congress, and the ruling government in Telangana.

## KA Paul Slams CM Revanth Reddy

TPN , Hyderabad: Evangelist-turned-politician KA Paul launched a scathing attack on Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, likening him to former dictators Saddam Hussein and Gaddafi. In a series of sensational remarks, Paul accused Reddy of running a dictatorial regime and suppressing dissent.

KA Paul alleged that the Chief Minister had been consistently embroiled in controversies throughout the year. "One day he fights with farmers and handcuffs them; another day, he arrests sarpanches who come to him with grievances," Paul charged.

He further accused Reddy of targeting the unemployed, claiming they faced arrests and



lathi charges for questioning the government or demanding job opportunities. Paul went on to allege that Revanth Reddy had orchestrated attempts to kill him and claimed, "He stopped my press conferences 58 times while I was questioning him. He even tried to kill me, but he failed."

Additionally, Paul raised concerns over alleged "RR tax" collection and the suppression of dissent. The political firebrand concluded his statements by calling for accountability and urging the public to stand against what he termed as dictatorial governance. These remarks add fuel to the ongoing political controversies in Telangana as elections approach.

## MP Raghunandan Criticizes Government

TPN , Hyderabad: BJP MP Raghunandan Rao has criticized the Telangana government's handling of the Sandhya Theater stampede incident, calling it an overreaction. He stated that the case filed against actor Allu Arjun was minor and accused the government of sensationalizing the issue.



Raghunandan Rao highlighted that the government was unfairly placing the blame solely on Allu Arjun while overlooking the apparent security lapses that led to the incident. "The government seems to be making several mistakes to cover up one mistake. It is not appropriate to act in a biased manner," he remarked.

He also questioned the release of CP (Commissioner of Police) videos when the actor was not allowed to hold a press conference. Rao alleged that the government was creating unnecessary controversy around the incident and warned against any retaliatory actions by the police.

The MP emphasized that the court had already granted Allu Arjun 30-day bail, and urged the authorities to act impartially. Rao's remarks come amid growing debates over the state government's approach to the case, drawing attention to broader concerns about accountability and fairness.

## Congress MLA Criticizes Allu Arjun, Calls Him an "Andhra Person"

TPN , Hyderabad : The controversy surrounding actor Allu Arjun continues to escalate as Congress MLA Bhupathi Reddy from Nizamabad Rural expressed strong criticism. The MLA reacted sharply to the ongoing debates, warning Allu Arjun to "stay as an Andhra person" and refrain from interfering in Telangana matters. During his remarks, Bhupathi Reddy criticized the actor's influence in Telangana and questioned the contribution of filmmakers like Allu Arjun to the state. He warned that if such behavior continues, they would ensure that Allu Arjun's films do not play in Telangana.



In a harsh tone, the MLA referred to the actor as "Kodaka Allu Arjun"

and accused him of living in "day-time disguise." Bhupathi Reddy specifically targeted Allu Arjun's upcoming film, "Pushpa 2", calling it a "bad movie" and dismissing its value to Telangana's cultural fabric. The remarks have added fuel to the ongoing tension, with political leaders and public figures engaging in heated exchanges over the actor's role and status in Telangana. As the controversy unfolds, it remains to be seen how both Allu Arjun and his supporters will respond to these strong statements.

## Kavitha Accuses Govt of Neglecting BCs' Promises

TPN , Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has criticized the Congress government in Telangana for failing to fulfill promises made to the Backward Classes (BCs) under the Kamareddy Declaration. Kavitha, during a meeting with leaders from the Telangana Mudiraj Mahasabha and Vishwakarma Kula Sangham on December 24, stated that despite a year in power, the Congress party has not implemented any of its commitments to BCs.

Kavitha warned that if the government tries to disregard the allocation of 42% reservations for BCs in local body elections, "they will not remain silent." She emphasized that the BRS would not tolerate any injustice towards BCs by the Congress government.

During the meeting, Kavitha expressed concern over the government's neglect of BCs, particularly accusing the Congress of undermining traditional occupations. She highlighted the lack of support for those engaged in these livelihoods and raised alarms about delays in funding for important schemes like fee reimbursement and the Phule Scholarship, which primarily benefit BC students.

Kavitha called for unity among BCs, urging them to stand together and demand that the government fulfill its promises. She pointed out that the Congress government was attempting to dismantle welfare schemes initiated during the tenure of former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR). Kavitha demanded accountability from the government regarding the expenditure on BC welfare and reiterated that BRS will continue to fight for the rights of the BC community in Telangana.



## Farmer Loan Waivers and Water Plans for 2024

TPN , Hyderabad : Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar assured that the Agriculture Department has issued instructions to ensure that farmers are not burdened with seed-related concerns. The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Farmer Assurance has completed a district tour, and discussions regarding farmer support have been held in the Legislative Assembly. A decision on the matter is expected in the Cabinet meeting scheduled for January 30, with hopes that farmers will receive the necessary assurances ahead of planting season in January.



Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy has gathered details on water availability across the state, including supply for drinking and agricultural use. The government is planning a 90-day water supply system, with an on-and-off schedule. Farmers are encouraged to take advantage of this, ensuring timely sowing and proper crop cultivation.

Additionally, loan waivers of up to Rs. 2 lakh have been implemented, benefiting both farmers and their family members. Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar confirmed that loan waivers will also apply to amounts exceeding Rs. 2 lakh, provided payments are made by March 2024. These initiatives are part of the government's ongoing efforts to support farmers and improve agricultural productivity.



# Dr. Buragadda Srinadh Calls for Success of Hindava Shankaravam

**TPN , Hyderabad:** Dr. Buragadda Srinadh emphasized the importance of the Hindava Shankaravam event in raising awareness among Hindus about the critical need to protect their rights. He criticized the state government for treating Hindu religious institutions as commercial organizations, burdening them with income tax, municipal taxes, and electricity costs. Dr. Srinadh also condemned the diversion of temple revenues for electoral schemes and the mismanagement within temple committees appointed by the government.



Endowment Department has been criticized for hiring individuals from non-Hindu communities to manage temples, which has led to inadequate upkeep despite the significant

assets these temples possess. He also pointed out the political affiliations influencing temple committees, turning temples into platforms for political agendas.

Dr. Srinadh highlighted recent incidents of laddu adulteration in Tirumala as an example of corruption within the Endowment Departments, pointing to a lack of transparency and accountability.

In preparation for the Hindava Shankaravam event in Vijayawada on January 5th, VHP state leaders Sri Kottapalli Trinaga Raju and Nagiseti Sesha Rao held a successful meeting and distributed invitation pamphlets. The meeting was attended by VHP National Secretary Sri Satyamji and State Secretary Prof. Lakshmi Narayana.

According to Dr. Srinadh, the

# Haryana Governor Meets Sri Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swami Ji



**TPN , Chandigarh:** Haryana Governor Shri Bandaru Dattatraya met His Holiness Sri Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swami Ji on December 24, 2024, at the Haryana Raj Bhavan during a courtesy visit.

Governor Dattatraya honored Sri Swami Ji with a shawl and presented him with a statue of Lord Krishna in his cosmic form. During the visit, Sri Swami Ji blessed Governor Dattatraya, Lady Governor Smt. Bandaru Vasantha, and other family members, distributing offerings as a mark of goodwill. The meeting was a gesture of respect and spiritual connection between the two dignitaries.

# Congress Protests Against Amit Shah's Remarks on Ambedkar



**TPN , Hyderabad :** TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud has launched a scathing attack on Union Minister Amit Shah, accusing him of disrespecting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution. Goud stated that Amit Shah's remarks have deeply hurt the

sentiments of citizens who revere Ambedkar and uphold the Constitution.

To voice their outrage, Congress leaders organized a massive rally from the Ambedkar statue at Tank Bund to the Hyderabad Collectorate. The protest was

aimed at condemning Amit Shah's comments in Parliament and demanding his immediate dismissal from office.

During the rally, Mahesh Kumar Goud alleged that Amit Shah's remarks were part of a larger BJP agenda to undermine the Constitution and replace it with Manusmriti. He also criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi for supporting Amit Shah's stance, stating that the people of India are aware of this strategy. "We have submitted a memorandum to the President through the Collector, demanding Amit Shah's removal from office," Goud said.

AICC leader Koppula Raju further accused the BJP and RSS of harboring hatred towards Ambedkar. "The rights and freedoms enjoyed by the peo-

ple today are due to Ambedkar's vision. Amit Shah's comments are an insult to his legacy, and we strongly condemn them," Raju remarked.

The protest saw participation from prominent Congress leaders, including ministers, MLAs, MLCs, and MPs. Goud emphasized that the Congress would not tolerate any attempts to insult Ambedkar or the Constitution and vowed to continue their fight to uphold the values enshrined in it.

The Congress has demanded a public apology from Amit Shah and has vowed to intensify protests if their demands are not met. The rally highlighted growing tensions over the perceived disrespect towards Ambedkar and his ideals.

# Dead Body Found in Garbage Bag Creates Panic in Hyderabad

**TPN , Hyderabad** witnessed a shocking incident today in Mailardev Pally, Rangareddy district, where a dead body was discovered inside a garbage bag, causing widespread commotion. The gruesome find was made by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) workers while carrying out routine cleaning.

The workers immediately alerted the police by calling 100. In response, the Mailardev Pally police swiftly arrived at the scene and began their investigation. Preliminary reports suggest that the victim was killed elsewhere, after which the body was wrapped in a garbage bag and dumped near Durganagar.

The police have registered a case and are working diligently to identify the deceased and gather information about the perpetrators. Details regarding the motive and circumstances of the crime remain unclear at this stage.

This incident has sent shockwaves through the local community, highlighting concerns about safety and security. Authorities have assured the public that a thorough investigation will be conducted to bring the culprits to justice. Further updates are awaited as the police continue their inquiry into this disturbing crime.

# Cyberabad Police Achievements: CP Avinash Mahanti



**TPN , Hyderabad :** Cyberabad Commissioner Avinash Mahanti presented a detailed report on the accomplishments and challenges faced by the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate. The report outlined significant achievements in solving cases across various categories, including cybercrime, property disputes, drug-related offenses, and road safety violations.

The Commissioner revealed that 37,600 cases have been

registered this year, with land disputes being the most prevalent in the region. Among the registered cases: **Cybercrime Cases:** 11,914 cases were recorded, constituting 32% of all cases. The police successfully refunded ₹70 crore to victims through their efforts.

**Property Cases:** 4,681 cases were addressed.

**Economic Offenses:** 2,140 cases were reported, with ₹5.29 crore attached in Economic Offenses Wing (EOW) investigations.

**Trespassing Cases:** 1,429 cases were registered.

**NDPS Act Cases:** Drugs worth ₹24.92 crore were seized in 421 cases, leading to the arrest of 954 individuals.

**She Team Achievements:** 541 cases were registered to address women's safety.

The Commissioner also highlighted road safety challenges, reporting 3,024 road accidents, including 805 fatal ones that led to 842 deaths.

Cyberabad Police set a record in issuing challans, collecting fines amounting to ₹81.71 lakh. From January, the public can file complaints at their local police stations for cases under ₹1 lakh in value, with larger cases being referred to cybercrime police stations.

The Commissioner noted that the first FIR under the BNS case was filed in Rajendranagar, with a total of 14,250 cases recorded. Cyberabad Police continues to enhance its capabilities to tackle rising cybercrime and ensure the safety and security of the region.

# TGPSC Aspirant Dies by Suicide in Hyd

**TPN , Hyderabad:** A Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC) aspirant, G Surekha, tragically died by suicide in Hyderabad's Ashok Nagar on Monday, December 22. Surekha, a native of Kamareddy district, had recently appeared for the Group 2 and 3 recruitment exams. According to reports, she had an argument with her fiancé on the evening of the incident. Following the dispute, she allegedly took the extreme step and was found hanging in her room.

The Chikkadpally police were alerted and arrived at the scene, later shifting her body to Gandhi Hospital for further investigation. Police presence has been heightened at the hospital.

This incident echoes a similar case earlier this year, where a TGPSC Group 4 aspirant, Shirisha, also died by suicide in February 2024. Shirisha, a resident of Mahbubnagar district, was upset over her exam results and took her life by hanging herself in her hostel near Ashok Nagar, while preparing for the TGPSC exam. The repeated cases highlight the mental strain faced by aspirants in the competitive exam environment.

# Bouncer Antony Arrested in Sandhya Theater Stampede Case



**TPN , Hyderabad:** In a significant development, Chikkadapalli police have arrested Bouncer Antony, the main accused in the stampede incident at Sandhya Theater on December 4. The tragic stampede resulted in the death of Revathi, a resident of Dilsukh Nagar.

Earlier, actor Allu Arjun was briefly arrested in connection with the incident but was later granted bail by the High Court. As part of the ongoing investigation, the Chikkadapalli police interrogated Allu Arjun for approximately two hours and 40 minutes in the presence of his lawyer, Ashok Reddy. The actor's statement has been recorded.

The investigation has now shifted focus to Antony, who is said to have organized bouncers for the event where the stampede occurred. Police have identified Antony as the primary culprit and plan to reconstruct the scene at Sandhya Theater to gain further insights into the events leading to the tragedy.

Antony, a known organizer of bouncers for events, is believed to have played a critical role in the mismanagement that led to the stampede. Authorities are committed to uncovering the details and ensuring accountability for the incident that claimed a life and left many shaken.



# Ponnam Inspects Husnabad Bus Stand and KGBV School



**TPN , Husnabad :** Minister Ponnam Prabhakar conducted an inspection of the Husnabad bus station and the KGBV school in Chiguru Mangodi mandal on December 24, 2024.

During his visit to the bus station, Minister Prabhakar reviewed the progress of the ongoing renovation and repair work. Expressing dissatisfaction with the delay, he instructed RTC officials to expedite the completion of beautification work and improve the entrance and exit routes. The painting work for the complexes outside the bus station was also discussed. Addi-

tionally, he spoke with shop owners affected by the road widening project and assured them that measures would be taken to prevent any losses. He set a deadline for the bus stand work to be completed by December 31 and ready for inauguration.

Minister Prabhakar also visited the KGBV school, where he addressed the ongoing strike by half of the teachers. He urged the teachers to end the strike, stressing the importance of completing the syllabus before the exams. Minister Prabhakar communicated with state leaders of the KGBV teachers and assured them that the gov-

ernment would address their concerns. He instructed school officials to ensure that all classes continued and that students were provided with additional practice.

The minister inspected the quality of food served at the school after the increase in diet charges. He reviewed the kitchen facilities, ensuring that the ingredients used were of good quality, and ordered the clearing of bushy areas around the school grounds. He also recommended planting useful plants such as guava and curry leaves in the school's surroundings.

## Working Journalists' Accreditation Cards Extended for Another 3 Months



**TPN , Husnabad :** The Special Commissioner of the State Information and Public Relations Department, Harish, has issued orders extending the accreditation (identity card) period for working journalists in the state for an additional three months. The existing accreditation cards were set to expire on December 31. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I&PR officials have confirmed that the accreditation validity for journalists will now be extended from January 1 to March 31. This extension ensures that journalists will continue to have their credentials recognized for a further period, providing them with

the necessary access and privileges to carry out their duties.

The decision has been communicated to the concerned district collectors and the RTC (Road Transport Corporation) organization, which will implement the changes at the local level. Journalists will be informed of the new arrangements to ensure a smooth continuation of their work.

This move has been welcomed by the journalistic community, as it provides relief and ensures that journalists can continue their reporting duties without facing any interruptions or issues related to accreditation.

## Deputy CM Bhatti Demands Resignation of Amit Shah



**TPN , Khammam :** Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, speaking at a protest rally organized by the Khammam District Congress Committee, demanded the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah over his recent comments about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The rally was held in response to Shah's remarks in Parliament, which Bhatti called an insult to Ambedkar and the Indian Constitution.

Bhatti stated that the central government, which has violated its oath to uphold the Constitution, should be dismissed by the President. He emphasized that the Indian Constitution, created by Babasaheb Ambedkar, guarantees rights for all citizens, including voting rights and the equal distribution of resources. He condemned Shah's remarks as an attack on the values of democracy and the Constitution, which protect all citizens, including Dalits, tribals, and the poor.

The Deputy CM criticized the BJP for attempting to weaken the Constitution and reiterated that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had been speaking out against these issues for years. Bhatti called on the public to join in protesting the central government's actions and to demand accountability for the disrespect shown to Ambedkar's legacy.

## Rythu Bharosa Assistance to be Limited to Land Used for Crop Cultivation

**TPN , Hyderabad:** The Telangana government is considering new guidelines for its Rythu Bharosa assistance program, which will limit eligibility to land holdings where crops are actively grown. If the proposed enhanced crop investment assistance of Rs 7,500 per acre per season is implemented, the government may require around Rs 6,000 crore for the Rabi (Yasangi) season.

The new guidelines are expected to exclude approximately 75,000 to 80,000 acres of land that remain fallow during Rabi. This is in contrast to the Kharif season, which covers around 1.15 to 1.30 crore acres depending on water availability. The estimated budget for providing Rs 7,500 per acre to 80 lakh acres during Rabi would be about Rs 6,000 crore.

Areas lacking assured irrigation support are less likely to cultivate Rabi crops, with around 30% of Kharif paddy cultivation land remaining fallow during Rabi. Farmers opting for crops like chickpea and green gram could lose eligibility for the assistance if they leave land barren. The inclusion of horticultural crops in the scheme is still under review. A Cabinet subcommittee meeting at the end of the month will finalize the decision.

## KCR Extends Christmas Wishes to People of Telangana

**TPN , Hyderabad:** On the occasion of Christmas, BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao extended his heartfelt wishes to the people of Telangana. He emphasized the importance of Jesus Christ's teachings, highlighting him as an icon of sacrifice and non-violence who sought forgiveness even for those who crucified him unjustly.

In a statement, Rao noted that Christ's message of patience and forgiveness is a timeless pathway to peace and is essential for global harmony. He praised Christ's life as a guide to overcoming hatred and selfishness, promoting compassion and understanding.

Rao also reaffirmed the BRS government's commitment to religious harmony, citing efforts to promote Ganga-Jamuna tehzeeb in Telangana. He reminded the public of his government's initiative to celebrate Christmas officially, underscoring its focus on inclusivity and equality for all faiths.



## Minister Konda Surekha Wishes Telangana a Merry Christmas



**TPN , Hyderabad :** On the occasion of Christmas, Hon'ble Forests, Environment, and Endowments Minister Smt. Konda Surekha extended her heartfelt greetings to the Christian community and all the people of Telangana. In her message, she emphasized the timeless values of love, forgiveness, truth, compassion, brotherhood, and selflessness embodied by the life of Jesus Christ. Minister Konda Surekha wished that this Christmas brings boundless happiness, love, peace, and prosperity to all. She also encouraged everyone to renew their commitment to fostering a more peaceful and compassionate world.

## BJP Urges CM to Regularize Services of Samagra Shiksha Employees

**TPN , Hyderabad:** BJP Legislative Party leader A Maheshwar Reddy on Tuesday urged Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to fulfill his pre-election promise and regularize the services of all Samagra Shiksha employees working across schools under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.



In a letter to the Chief Minister, Reddy reminded him of his commitment to regularize the jobs of these employees, but despite one year passing, the promise remains unfulfilled. Around 19,000 workers, including cluster resource persons, part-time instructors, and data entry operators, are still waiting for the government to honor its pledge.

Reddy pointed out that, despite performing duties equivalent to

regular government teachers, these employees continue to work on a contract basis with low salaries. He called on the government to regularize their services and ensure they receive fair compensation, along with life and health insurance coverage of Rs. 10 lakh. He warned that the BJP would launch an agitation if the issue remains unresolved.

## Medak Church Decked Up for Christmas; CM to Attend Celebrations

**TPN , Medak:** The historic Medak Cathedral Church, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, is all set for grand Christmas celebrations. The church is beautifully illuminated, attracting devotees from various parts of India. Traders have set up stalls around the church grounds, offering food items and toys for children. Devotees are also enjoying rides on giant wheels, and local hotels and lodges are fully booked, adding to the festive spirit. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will visit the church on Wednesday to attend

the Christmas prayers. Following the prayers, he will visit the Sri Vana Durga Bhavani Temple in Eduapayala to offer his prayers to the presiding deity.

Meanwhile, churches across the erstwhile Medak district are also preparing for Christmas celebrations. Former Minister T Harish Rao and other leaders have extended Christmas greetings to citizens, and several leaders and officials are expected to participate in the festivities across different churches on Wednesday.







## The West's Dangerous Naiveté: Al-Jolani's Rebranding and the Risk of History Repeating Itself

The recent rehabilitation of Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, leader of the militant group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), by Western powers echoes the early days of Osama bin Laden's rise, a time when the West overlooked his radical intentions. In 1993, a feature by the late Robert Fisk in *'The Independent'* depicted bin Laden as a philanthropist focused on Sudanese infrastructure projects. At the time, few could foresee his transformation into the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. Today, al-Jolani is undergoing a similar rebranding—no longer the Al-Qaeda-linked jihadist warlord, but a “pragmatic” leader of Idlib, Syria, lauded for his governance and moderate stance. The United States, once offering a \$10 million bounty for al-Jolani, now calls him a “dialogue partner,” and this stark shift raises serious concerns about Western foreign policy.

Like bin Laden before him, al-Jolani is being presented as a misunderstood figure, with reports highlighting his abandonment of traditional jihadist attire and his embrace of a “Western-style” wardrobe. Western media increasingly describe him as a “rebel politician,” and HTS is reframed as a force for stability in the region. This narrative is strikingly similar to the “good Taliban vs. bad Taliban” rhetoric that once dominated Western discourse. However, glossing over al-Jolani's deeply entrenched Sala-

fi-jihadist ideology and his brutal governance of Idlib—where human rights abuses, forced conscriptions, and harsh Sharia laws persist—is not only naive but dangerous. It ignores the very same risks that accompanied the West's previous missteps in dealing with jihadist figures.

The West's strategy, viewing HTS as a necessary counterweight to the Assad regime, risks legitimizing a group with violent, extremist roots. In doing so, it may inadvertently pave the way for al-Jolani to reassert control over Syria through an ideology that remains largely unchallenged. While some point to the transformation of figures like Yasser Arafat, who shifted from militant leader to statesman, the key difference here is al-Jolani's persistent adherence to extremist religious views. Unless he publicly renounces this ideology, his rehabilitation could have disastrous consequences, mirroring the tragic mistake made with bin Laden.

Al-Jolani's rebranding might look like a pragmatic shift, but the West must tread carefully. History teaches that today's “rebel politician” could easily become tomorrow's global threat if the ideological roots of extremism are left unaddressed. The West must learn from the past and avoid repeating the same mistakes that allowed figures like bin Laden to flourish unchecked.

## Quantum Computing: Revolutionizing Coastal Defence Against Climate Change



As coastal areas face growing threats from climate change, including rising sea levels, stronger storms, and coastal erosion, innovative solutions are necessary to ensure their resilience. Quantum computing is emerging as a powerful tool to address these challenges by processing complex data, optimizing defences, and simulating environmental dynamics. Its potential in coastal resilience offers new strategies to protect vulnerable coastal regions.

Coastal areas provide vital benefits, such as shoreline protection, carbon storage, fisheries habitats, and tourism opportunities. However, these areas are increasingly vulnerable to climate impacts. Coastal erosion alone results in shoreline shrinkage at an average rate of 0.5 to 2 metres per year, and rising sea levels could displace millions by 2100. Buildings

near the coast are also at risk of wave action, further compounding the need for robust coastal defences.

Current methods for modelling coastal resilience face significant limitations. Traditional computing struggles to handle vast datasets and complex variables like oceanic conditions, weather patterns, and socioeconomic factors. This makes it difficult to forecast extreme weather events, optimize infrastructure design, and allocate resources effectively.

Quantum computing, however, has the capacity to process these enormous datasets at unprecedented speeds, offering a transformative solution for coastal defence. By enhancing the accuracy and speed of climate models, quantum computing enables better predictions of extreme weather events like hurri-

cans and storm surges, allowing for more effective coastal protection strategies.

Quantum computing can also assist in optimizing the design of resilient coastal infrastructure, such as seawalls and breakwaters, by simulating various scenarios and potential impacts. Furthermore, it can help efficiently allocate resources for coastal restoration projects and provide accurate predictions of sea level rise.

While the potential benefits are immense, quantum computing is still in its infancy, with challenges such as limited hardware, data integration, and high costs. Nevertheless, as quantum technologies advance, they will play a crucial role in safeguarding coastal regions, supporting sustainable development, and enhancing disaster preparedness.

## India's Growing Isolation: Balancing Strength with Diplomacy

Projecting an image of ‘strength’ has become a defining feature of the Narendra Modi government's decision-making process. However, this approach seems to blur the line between standing firm and standing alone, especially in India's interactions with global bodies such as the WTO, IMF, and bilateral negotiations with partner countries. While a country can achieve its goals with nuance and diplomacy, India has often chosen to pursue an assertive “we'll do what we want” attitude. This strategy, while bold, risks alienating crucial partners and invites unnecessary tension.

India must decide what kind of global player it wants to be—uncompromising and hard-nosed, or cooperative and collaborative. Unfortunately, India's assertive tactics have frequently upset its partners, not necessarily because of its actions but because of the way they were executed.

### Communication Issues with Global Partners

India's trade policies have caused frustration among major global partners such as the US, UK, EU, and Japan. These countries have repeatedly questioned India's failure to notify the WTO about its export bans on rice, wheat, and onions. At a WTO Committee on Agriculture meeting, these nations politely but pointedly asked, “Could India provide the reason behind why the required notification has not been made before insti-

tuting the export prohibition?” This is not an issue of India's rights but of failing to follow established procedures and inform its partners in a timely manner.

### Frictions with Switzerland and the IMF

The diplomatic rift over Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status between India and Switzerland is another example of India's growing international tensions.



Following a 2023 Supreme Court judgment, Switzerland revoked its MFN status for India, citing the lack of explicit notification from the Indian government regarding tax benefits. This unnotified decision has caused unnecessary friction, even though it is unlikely to affect ongoing investments, especially with the Free Trade Agreement signed between India and Switzerland in 2024.

India's foreign exchange policies have also raised eyebrows. The IMF reclassified India's foreign exchange regime in 2023, citing India's growing intervention in the rupee's movement. While the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) denied the allegations, the lack of clear communication from the government has only fueled skepticism.

### Unnecessary Frictions at Home and Abroad

Closer to home, India's heavy-handed approach in the Adani Group's dealings with Bangladesh has strained relations with its neighbor. Bangladesh's decision to reduce power supply dues owed to the Adani Group has led to a diplomatic rift, further complicated by India's inability to act more diplomatically in this matter.

India's reluctance to amend its fuel pricing policy has also caused frustration at home and abroad. The government's refusal to revise its fuel prices despite stagnation for years has raised questions about its approach to economic transparency and responsiveness.

The Modi government's consistent lack of attention to optics and diplomatic niceties is becoming more apparent. Whether it's the government's refusal to waive fees for disaster relief or disregarding communication platforms like the Planning Commission, India's current stance is one of unilateral decision-making with little regard for global or domestic partnerships. While India may still be an ally to many countries, it increasingly seems uninterested in fostering long-term friendships or cooperative relationships.

## Blow to Transparency: Tweaking of Poll Rule Raises Concerns

When the Supreme Court declared the electoral bonds scheme unconstitutional in February this year, it reaffirmed the crucial principle of transparency in the electoral process. The Court emphasized the voter's fundamental right to information, including knowing the identities of individuals and companies donating to political parties.

This ruling served as a stern reminder to the Union Government, which had staunchly supported the controversial electoral bonds scheme, that there should be no compromise on transparency, as it is essential for maintaining the integrity of the electoral system. However, the recent amendments to electoral rules seem to ignore this crucial principle.

The Law Ministry, acting on a recommendation from the Election Commission of India (ECI), has altered Rule 93(2)(a) of the Conduct of Election Rules, effectively preventing public access to critical electoral materials such as CCTV and webcasting footage, as well as video recordings of candidates. The justification provided by the government is that such material, if made public, could be misused, potentially compromising voter safety. This argument, however, fails to

hold up, particularly in the context of today's digital age, where social media platforms are flooded with footage of voters and election-related events. In many instances, electors themselves voluntarily share photos and videos on various platforms.

It is also important to note that the



CCTV cameras installed at polling stations are not there to capture voters' choices on EVMs but are meant to monitor polling officials and ensure the overall smooth functioning of the election process. Therefore, concerns over the misuse of footage appear to be exaggerated.

The timing of this rule amendment raises additional concerns. It comes immediately after the Punjab and Haryana High Court ordered the sharing of documents, including CCTV footage, from the Haryana Assembly elections in the ‘Mehmood Pracha vs ECI’ case.



# PM Modi Holds Meeting With Economists To Discuss Budget 2025-26

TPN CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI  
DECEMBER.25

Prime Minister Narendra Modi convened a meeting with leading economists and sectoral experts on Tuesday to gather their insights and suggestions for the upcoming Union Budget for 2025-26. The meeting is part of the government's efforts to ensure broad-based input for the formulation of a comprehensive and forward-looking budget.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Budget in the Lok Sabha on February 1, 2025. This budget will be crucial in setting the economic direction for



the coming fiscal year and addressing key challenges faced by the country.

The meeting was attended by several prominent figures, including Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery, Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam, and Chief Economic Advisor Anantha Nageswaran. A number of esteemed economists, including Surjit Bhalla and D.K. Joshi, were also present to offer their expert views on economic strategies and policy recommendations for the Budget.

Prime Minister Modi's engagement with experts reflects the government's commitment to a consultative approach in policy-making, seeking advice from a diverse range of voices in shaping the future economic land-

scape of the country. The inputs from economists are expected to help the government focus on critical areas such as fiscal policy, infrastructure development, social welfare, and economic growth.

The upcoming Budget will likely reflect the government's priorities in fostering economic growth while addressing issues like inflation, unemployment, and socio-economic inequalities. With significant attention on strengthening India's infrastructure and boosting domestic manufacturing, the budget discussions are set to play an essential role in shaping the country's economic path forward in the next fiscal year.

## President Murmu To Confer PM Rashtriya Bal Puraskar To 17 Children On Dec 26

TPN CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI  
DECEMBER.25

President Droupadi Murmu will confer the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) to 17 outstanding children from 14 states and Union Territories on December 26. The awards ceremony, which will take place on Veer Bal Diwas, aims to celebrate and honor the exceptional achievements of young people across India in a variety of fields.

The PMRBP recognizes young achievers in seven key categories: art and culture, bravery, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports, and the environment. This year, a total of 17 children, including 7 boys and 10 girls, will be honored for their remarkable contributions.

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development announced in a statement that the awards ceremony will be accompanied by nationwide

activities aimed at celebrating the achievements and potential of India's youth. The ceremony will highlight the importance of nurturing young talent and encouraging young people to contribute positively to society.

As part of the award, each recipient will be presented with a medal, certificate, and citation booklet. The recognition underscores the significant role played by children in advancing social change, driving innovation, and promoting excellence across diverse sectors.

The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar serves as a symbol of the government's commitment to empowering children and fostering their development in various fields. By highlighting the success stories of these young individuals, the awards seek to inspire others to pursue their passions and contribute meaningfully to the progress of the nation.



## India Made Rs 2.52 For Every Rupee Spent On Space: ISRO Chief

TPN CORRESPONDENT MAHAKUMBH NEW DELHI  
DECEMBER.25

India has set an ambitious goal of landing an astronaut on the moon by 2040, according to Dr. Somanath, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). This announcement follows a year of groundbreaking achievements in the country's space sector, with the Indian government approving a historic Rs 31,000 crore funding for ISRO, along with a comprehensive 15-year roadmap.

Dr. Somanath highlighted that the Indian space program has entered a new phase with a long-term vision set for the next 25 years. "For the first time in history, we have a vision for the next 25 years announced," he told NDTV in an exclusive interview.

A key component of this roadmap is the establishment of India's first space station, the Bhartiya Antariksha Station, by 2035. A precursor mission, a space station module, will be launched in 2028 to set the groundwork for the full operational station by 2035. In addition, ISRO is preparing for the first human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan, and the Chandrayaan-4 lunar sample return mission, furthering India's ambitions for deep space exploration.

The ultimate milestone in this vision is a planned moon landing in 2040. "When we celebrate the 100th year of our independence, an Indian flag will be flying on the moon with our person going, putting it back, and returning safely," Dr. Somanath said.

India's future in space is also marked by the development of a reusable, eco-friendly rocket designed to support human spaceflight and lunar missions. This rocket is expected to meet the growing payload demands as India expands its space capabilities.

The country's space program has sparked significant innovation, with over 250 startups contributing to the sector. Agnikul Cosmos, for example, made headlines with the launch of a liquid-propelled sub-orbital rocket. For every rupee spent on space, India reportedly generates a return of Rs 2.52, emphasizing the economic benefits of its expanding space program.

## Kerala CM Condemns Disruption of Christmas Celebrations, Urges Unity

TPN CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DEC 25

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday strongly condemned the alleged disruption of Christmas celebrations at a school by local activists of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). He called on the people of Kerala to unite against communal forces and warned of the growing influence of individuals who, according to him, have become an "insult" to the state's culture and values.

Vijayan highlighted Kerala's unique tradition of inclusiveness and acceptance of diverse beliefs, stating that people in the state take pride in celebrating each other's happiness and treating others' traditions as their own. "We see every celebration as

an opportunity to share the sweetness of love," the Chief Minister remarked in his Christmas Eve message.

He emphasized that Kerala has long been known for its harmonious tradition of different religious communities coming together to celebrate one another's festivals. However, Vijayan warned that some "malicious communal forces" were trying to weaken this tradition and turn religious practices into sources of hatred. He expressed concern over recent incidents where such forces, particularly those associated with the Sangh Parivar, have disrupted Christmas celebrations, calling these acts a threat to the state's secular fabric. Vijayan further stated that these troubling developments underscore the need for resistance against forces trying to

undermine Kerala's inclusive and peaceful culture. He urged the public to protect the state's essence and uphold its long-standing traditions of mutual respect and understanding.

The Chief Minister concluded by extending his wishes for Christmas, hoping that the birth of Jesus Christ would bring messages of love and humanity to everyone.

The recent disruptions of Christmas celebrations, including incidents in Palakkad where VHP activists targeted school events and where unidentified miscreants destroyed a symbolic crib, have sparked widespread protests across the state. In response, the Kerala government has set up a special police team to investigate the incidents and take appropriate action.

## 'Cong repeatedly disrespected Ambedkar', alleges UP CM Yogi Adityanath

TPN CORRESPONDENT UTTAR  
PRADESH DECEMBER.25

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday strongly condemned the Congress for allegedly insulting Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and demanded an apology from the party. Speaking at a press conference in Lucknow, CM Yogi accused Congress of showing "unconstitutional and unethical" disrespect towards Baba Saheb.

He stressed that Dr. Ambedkar played a pivotal role in India's independence and the framing of the Constitution, and that every Indian holds him in



high regard. "The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has always worked towards building the country of Baba Saheb's dreams and giving him the respect he deserves," Yogi said.

The Chief Minister also criticized Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, alleging that bills aimed at the welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women were torn up by him. He added, "When bills for the welfare of the underprivileged are torn in Parliament, is this behavior constitutional? Insulting Baba Saheb is a recurring act by Congress, and they must apologize to the nation."

Yogi also pointed out the physical attacks on BJP MPs in Parliament, questioning the constitutional legitimacy of Congress's actions. He further accused Congress of a long history of disrespecting Dalits and marginalized groups, claiming that the people of India had consistently rejected the party and would continue to do so.

The BJP leader's remarks come amidst ongoing political tensions and have intensified the criticism of Congress's approach to Dalit welfare. Yogi's comments are seen as part of his efforts to rally support for the BJP ahead of future elections.





## Sri Lanka 2024: Dissanayake's Presidency Opens New Chapter In India-Lanka Relations

COLOMBO: When India invited left-wing leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake for an official visit in February 2024, few could have predicted the dramatic shift in Sri Lanka's political landscape that would follow. By the end of the year, Dissanayake, popularly known as AKD, had made a surprising rise to the presidency, altering the dynamics between Sri Lanka and its neighbor, India.

Dissanayake, 56, won the presidential election in September 2024, a remarkable achievement that saw his party-led coalition, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), secure over 60 percent of the vote. This victory was a stunning turnaround from the party's performance in 2019, when it held only a modest 3 percent of the vote. His victory marked a significant political shift in Sri Lanka, signaling growing support for the National People's Power (NPP), a coalition led by the JVP.

In the weeks following his presidential win, Dissanayake's coalition dominated Sri Lanka's parliamentary elections, securing 159 out of the 225 seats—a groundbreaking achievement that gave the NPP a two-thirds majority, the first of its kind under the country's proportional representation system. This unexpected success has reshaped the political landscape and solidified Dis-



sanayake's position as a dominant figure in Sri Lankan politics.

India's invitation to Dissanayake for an official visit would have seemed unimaginable a few decades ago, given the JVP's violent history during the late 1980s. The party was involved in a bloody insurgency from 1987 to 1990, leading to a tense and tumultuous relationship with the Sri Lankan government. However, the evolving political

scenario and Dissanayake's new leadership have brought renewed attention to the relationship between the two countries.

As the first official visit of Dissanayake's presidency approaches, it underscores the changing political dynamics in Sri Lanka and the strategic importance of strengthening ties with India amidst a rapidly evolving South Asian geopolitical environment.

## Pope Francis Launches Jubilee 2025 with Christmas Eve Ceremony

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis will mark Christmas Eve with a special ceremony to inaugurate Jubilee 2025, a year-long Catholic celebration set to bring over 30 million pilgrims to Rome. Despite recent health concerns, including a cold, the 88-year-old pontiff is expected to open the "Holy Door" of St. Peter's Basilica at 7:00 pm (1800 GMT) in a ceremony attended by 30,000 people and broadcast worldwide.



The Holy Door, usually kept closed, will be opened for pilgrims throughout the year, symbolizing a path to "plenary indulgence," a form of forgiveness for sins, a long-standing Catholic tradition. Following the door's opening, Pope Francis will preside over the Christmas Eve mass in St. Peter's, and on Christmas Day, he will deliver his traditional Urbi et Orbi blessing to the city and the world.

This year's Jubilee celebrations come as

To ensure safety during the Jubilee celebrations, Rome has deployed 700 security officers, with additional measures put in place after a car-ramping attack at a Christmas market in Germany. In preparation for the influx of pilgrims, much of Rome has undergone a facelift, with key monuments like the Trevi Fountain cleaned and roads redesigned to alleviate congestion.

The Jubilee 2025 will be marked by religious and cultural events, from masses to exhibitions, and aims to reflect on penance and spiritual renewal. This year's event also features a modern twist, with online registration, multilingual apps, and even a mascot named Luce, inspired by Japanese anime. The Vatican's outreach includes a broader audience, such as LGBTQ groups, in line with the pope's inclusive message. The Jubilee will run throughout 2025, with Holy Doors opening at major basilicas and Catholic churches worldwide.

Pope Francis has already made headlines with his calls for peace, particularly regarding the ongoing violence in the Middle East. Over the weekend, his condemnation of Israeli airstrikes in Gaza sparked a strong response from Israel, following his comments on the "cruelty" of the attacks that resulted in the deaths of children.

## Imran Khan's Release on the Agenda as Govt and PTI Hold Talks

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the Pakistan government and the opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held their first round of talks on Monday, agreeing to continue discussions to resolve key contentious issues, including the release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is currently imprisoned.

The much-anticipated meeting was facilitated by National Assembly (NA) Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, who had earlier announced his commitment to ease the ongoing political tension in the country. The government delegation included Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, along with Prime Minister's political aide Rana Sanaullah. Representing PTI were former speaker Asad Qaiser, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, and Senator Raja Nasir Abbas.

The discussions marked a crucial step towards addressing the long-standing political standoff between the ruling government and the opposition party. The issue of Imran Khan's imprisonment has been a point of contention, with PTI calling for his release and accusing the government of political vic-



timization. The talks aim to address these grievances while seeking to defuse escalating tensions in the country's political landscape.

Both sides have expressed a willingness to continue negotiations and work towards finding a peaceful resolution. The meeting's outcome is seen as a positive sign, indicating a potential de-

escalation of the political crisis that has gripped Pakistan in recent months.

The continuation of dialogue between the government and PTI is viewed as a critical step in fostering stability in Pakistan's political environment, with hopes that both sides can find common ground on the issue of Imran Khan's release and other pressing matters.

## Netanyahu Vows to Fight 'Forces of Evil' in Message to Christians Amid Gaza War



FRANCE: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a strong message to Christians worldwide, acknowledging their steadfast support for Israel amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza. In a video message released on Tuesday, Netanyahu praised the Christian community for their "resilient, consistent, and forceful" backing as Israel fights against what he termed the "forces of evil."

The Prime Minister reiterated Israel's commitment to peace with those who seek it, while emphasizing that Israel would take whatever action necessary to defend itself, particularly as the "one and only Jewish state." He expressed gratitude for global Christian support, stating, "With your support, and with God's help, I assure you, we shall prevail."

This comes as Christians in Israel and the Palestinian territories prepare for a somber Christmas season for the second consecutive year, with the ongoing conflict in Gaza casting a long shadow over the holiday. The war, which began on October 7, 2023, after a deadly Hamas attack on Israel, has led to widespread devastation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli military campaign has caused significant loss of life.

As of now, at least 45,317 people have been killed in Gaza, most of them civilians, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, with figures corroborated by the United Nations. The toll has deeply affected the Christian communities in both Israel and the Palestinian territories, which are preparing for a Christmas marked by grief and hardship.

In Israel, approximately 185,000 Christians live, making up about 1.9% of the population. Of this number, Arab Christians constitute nearly 76%. In the Palestinian territories, around 47,000 Christians reside, including those in Gaza, further highlighting the war's widespread impact on the region's Christian population.



## Bangladesh Launches \$5 Billion Graft Probe Against Sheikh Hasina and Family

DHAKA: Bangladesh's anti-corruption commission (ACC) has initiated a high-profile investigation into former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her family over allegations of embezzling \$5 billion linked to the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project. The probe comes after a rule issued by the High Court, questioning the ACC's delay in investigating the alleged transfer of funds to a Malaysian bank. The rule asked why the ACC's inaction on the matter should not be declared illegal.

The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, a significant infrastructure project located 160 kilometers west of Dhaka, is Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant. It is being constructed with the involvement of Indian companies, under the guidance of Russia's state-run corporation Rosatom. The plant, once completed, is expected to contribute substantially to Bangladesh's energy needs.

The allegations center on claims that Sheikh Hasina, along with her family members, including her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and niece Tulip Siddiq (the UK's Treasury Minister), were involved in the transfer of \$5 billion from the Rooppur project to a bank in Malaysia. The accusations have prompted significant scrutiny and led to questioning of the Hasina family's role in the project's financial management.

Sheikh Hasina's administration has denied any wrongdoing, but the investigation has raised concerns over corruption within the country's highest political echelons. The involvement of prominent family members in the investigation has further intensified the political tensions in Bangladesh. Tulip Siddiq, who is an influential member of the UK government, has also faced questioning over her possible connection to the alleged financial misconduct.

The case highlights growing concerns over transparency and governance in major infrastructure projects in Bangladesh. As the investigation progresses, it is expected to have significant political ramifications for Sheikh Hasina and her party, raising further questions about the accountability of political leaders in the country.



## Markets End Lower as Volatility and Weak Rupee Weigh on Sentiment

Domestic stock markets closed Tuesday's trading session with moderate losses after a volatile day. Opening on a flat note amid mixed signals from Asian markets, the indices initially rebounded with strong gains but soon fell victim to profit-booking as the rupee hit a lifetime low against the dollar. The BSE Sensex dropped 67 points to close at 78,472, while the NSE Nifty declined by 25 points to settle at 23,727. The Bank Nifty also ended weaker, losing 84 points to close at 51,233. Markets remained closed on Wednesday in observance of Christmas.



The trading session saw a wide range of movement. The Sensex, which had closed at 78,540 in the previous session, opened higher at 78,707 and fluctuated between an intraday high of 78,877 and a low of 78,397. Similarly, the Nifty hit a high of 23,867 and a low of 23,685 during the day. Despite a promising start, broader market sentiment turned cautious as the rupee's decline against the dollar weighed on investors' confidence.



highs, while 51 hit 52-week lows, reflecting the mixed sentiment prevailing among investors.

Currency markets also played a significant role in shaping the day's trading action. The rupee weakened by 9 paise to close at 85.20 against the US dollar, marking its lowest-ever level and further dampening market sentiment.

In corporate developments, Motilal Oswal projected strong growth potential in pharmaceutical companies like Lupin, Mankind Pharma, Piramal Pharma, Ipca Labs, and Max Healthcare. Meanwhile, Dollar Industries announced plans to raise funds, and Nuama selected Prestige and Brigade Enterprises as top picks in the real estate sector. Tata Investment shares surged by 12% following an announcement by Tata Capital of a Rs. 15,000 crore project. In the defense sector, Nuama identified BHEL and Data Patterns as promising investments for the coming year.

The session highlighted a cautious investor approach amid global uncertainties and domestic pressures, with volatility likely to persist in the coming weeks.

The Nifty50 basket reflected a mixed performance, with 22 stocks advancing and 28 declining. Among the top gainers were Tata Motors, Adani Enterprises, Eicher Motors, Nestle India, and BPCL. In contrast, stocks like Power Grid, JSW Steel, SBI Life, Titan, and Infosys led the losers' chart. Sectorally, auto, FMCG, and oil and gas indices registered gains, while banking, IT, media, metals, PSU banks, and consumer durables faced selling pressure.

The market breadth on the NSE was evenly balanced, with 1,446 companies advancing and 1,348 declining out of the 2,897 traded. Additionally, 39 companies touched 52-week

## Retail Inflation Eases for Farmers and Rural Workers in November



Retail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers saw a notable decline in November 2024, with rates falling to 5.35% and 5.47%, respectively, compared to 5.96% and 6% in October. According to a statement from the Labour Ministry, the All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) showed a modest increase of 5 points each in November, reaching 1,320 and 1,331, respectively.

The year-on-year inflation rates, based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL, were also recorded lower in November 2024, standing at 5.35% and 5.47% respectively, compared to 7.37% and 7.13% in the same month of the previous year. This decrease in inflation is seen as a positive development for rural households, which are particularly sensitive

to changes in food and essential goods prices.

The decline in inflation could be attributed to various factors, including a stabilization in food prices and improved supply chains. However, inflation remains a significant concern for rural workers, as the cost of living continues to rise across various sectors.

The decrease in inflation for farm workers and rural labourers comes as a relief to many, but ongoing vigilance is required to ensure that inflationary pressures do not negatively impact the economic stability of these groups. In the coming months, inflationary trends will be closely monitored to assess whether the downward movement continues or if further adjustments are needed.

## India Ranks Fourth Globally in Savings, According to SBI Report



India has consistently embraced a culture of savings, and this tradition remains strong, even amidst evolving financial landscapes. A recent report by the State Bank of India (SBI) reveals that India's savings rate stands at 30.2%, positioning the country as the fourth-largest saver globally. This is above the global average savings rate of 28.2%, with only China (46.6%), Indonesia (38.1%), and Russia (31.7%) surpassing India in savings.

The SBI's report, part of its Ecowrap series, highlights a significant shift in savings behavior within the country, with a marked transition toward formal financial inclusion. Over 80% of adults in India now use formal financial accounts, a remarkable increase from just 50% in 2011. This shift is reflective of a broader trend toward greater access to financial services, contributing to a larger segment of the population participating in the formal econo-

my.

The increase in formal financial account usage is also indicative of improving financial literacy and trust in banking systems, which has been bolstered by government initiatives aimed at financial inclusion. As a result, more Indians are saving through formal channels such as banks, which not only offers greater security for savings but also opens the door to other financial services like loans and insurance.

India's strong savings rate highlights the resilience of its population in adapting to changing economic conditions. While global financial trends evolve, India's commitment to savings and financial security remains a cornerstone of its economic stability. As financial inclusion continues to grow, India is likely to maintain its position as a major global saver in the years to come.

## Tata Group Stocks Surge Amid IPO Buzz for Tata Capital

Shares of several Tata Group companies, including Tata Investment Corporation, Tata Technologies, and Tata Motors, saw significant gains on December 24, 2024, following reports that the group is preparing for an initial public offering (IPO) of its financial services arm, Tata Capital.

Tata Investment Corporation emerged as the biggest gainer, surging by up to 12%, while Tata Technologies saw a 4% increase. Other Tata stocks, including Tata Motors (up 2%), Tata Chemicals (up 3%), and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) (up 1%), also posted gains during the session.

According to a report from Moneycontrol, Tata Group is reportedly in talks with advisors to launch the Tata Capital IPO in 2025. The group is working on meeting the regulatory requirements for the IPO, which is expected to be a large-scale deal valued at over ₹15,000 crore. Tata Group



has enlisted law firm Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas and investment bank Kotak Mahindra Capital as advisors for the proposed IPO.

Tata Chemicals, which holds a 3% stake in Tata Sons, the holding company of Tata Group, also saw a rise. Tata Sons owns a dominant 92.83% stake in Tata Capital, with the remainder held by other Tata companies and trusts. Analysts

believe that Tata Chemicals could benefit significantly from a potential public offering, given the substantial value of its holdings in Tata Sons.

Tata Motors, which holds a 4.7% stake in Tata Capital, also gained from the surge. The stake was acquired following the merger of Tata Motors Finance Ltd (TMFL) with Tata Capital earlier this year. In addition, Tata Motors owns around 3% of Tata Sons, positioning it to benefit from any value unlock at the holding company level.

The surge in Tata Group stocks follows news of Tata Capital being classified as an upper-layer non-banking financial company (NBFC) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which mandates an IPO within three years. As of March 2024, Tata Capital's assets under management (AUM) had reached ₹158,479 crore, a significant increase from the previous year.

## India's Solar Manufacturing Set for Growth with Export Boost and Lower Import Reliance

India's solar module manufacturing industry is on the verge of a significant transformation, driven by increasing domestic production and robust demand, according to a report by CRISIL. The sector is expected to see a notable improvement in its export-import balance over the next five years, with growing opportunities for exports and a substantial reduction in import reliance.

The report highlights that India's domestic demand for solar modules is projected to average 50-55 gigawatts (GW) annually from Fiscal 2024 to 2030, serving as a key driver for the industry's growth. As domestic production ramps up, the country is expected to face an oversupply starting from Fiscal 2025, creating room for increased exports. India exported approximately 7 GW of solar modules in Fiscal 2024, accounting for 50% of its production. With



domestic production surpassing local demand, overcapacity will pave the way for significant export growth, although the share of exports in total production is expected to decline to 25-32% by Fiscal 2030 due to rising domestic consumption.

On the import side, India's dependence

on solar module imports, which stood at 59% in Fiscal 2024, is expected to fall dramatically to 5-10% by Fiscal 2030, thanks to policy measures like the reimposition of the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) from Fiscal 2025 and the increasing domestic manufacturing capacity. However, the industry will continue to rely on imports for critical upstream components such as polysilicon, wafers, and cells due to limited integrated manufacturing capacity.

While domestic manufacturing capacity is set to grow, Indian solar module manufacturers will still depend on imported cells, albeit at a reduced level. Despite this, the sector is positioned for a larger role in global markets, contributing to India's clean energy transition while gradually reducing reliance on imports.





## WhatsApp Introduces Default Party Popper Emoji Reaction for the Holiday Season



As the holiday season approaches, WhatsApp, the popular messaging platform used by billions around the world, is rolling out a new feature designed to enhance user experience. Meta, the parent company of WhatsApp, recently announced an update that will add a default message reaction for both Android and iOS devices.

The new feature allows users to quickly react to messages using the party popper emoji, a fun and festive symbol commonly associated with celebrations. This addition aims to streamline the process of sending reactions, particularly for users looking to express excitement or joy during the holiday season. Previously, users had to sift through the entire emoji tray to find and select the party popper emoji. With this new update, the emoji will be readily available as a default option, making it much easier and quicker to send reactions.

This change is part of WhatsApp's ongoing effort to improve user in-

teraction and convenience. The party popper emoji is a fitting choice for this time of year, given its association with holidays, celebrations, and special moments. Now, WhatsApp users can instantly react to messages in a festive way without having to scroll through numerous emojis.

The new feature is expected to be particularly useful during the holiday season when users are sharing messages, images, and greetings with friends and family. Whether wishing someone a happy new year or celebrating a special moment, this easy access to the party popper emoji will add a touch of cheer to WhatsApp conversations.

As WhatsApp continues to innovate and improve its features, this update is sure to make chatting during the holidays even more fun and convenient. With the addition of the default party popper emoji reaction, WhatsApp users can quickly spread festive vibes without missing a beat.

## KAIST Develops Wearable Robot to Help Paraplegics Walk



In a groundbreaking development, South Korean researchers have created a lightweight wearable robot designed to assist paraplegic users in regaining mobility. This innovative exoskeleton can autonomously walk up to the user, lock itself onto them, and enable them to walk, navigate obstacles, and even climb stairs.

The Exoskeleton Laboratory team at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) spearheaded this remarkable invention. Their goal is to design a robotic system that integrates seamlessly into the daily lives of individuals with disabilities, offering them a new sense of independence. The robot's ability to attach itself to the user automatically makes it highly user-friendly, eliminating the need for complex manual adjustments or external assistance.

This wearable exoskeleton represents a significant advancement in mobility aid technology. Unlike traditional devices that require constant support or manual adjustments, the robot functions autonomously, allowing users to walk and move freely in various

environments. The exoskeleton's design also addresses common challenges faced by paraplegic individuals, such as navigating stairs or uneven terrain. By enhancing the user's ability to interact with their surroundings, the robot offers a life-changing solution to those with mobility impairments.

The KAIST team's vision is to create technology that not only enhances the physical capabilities of individuals with disabilities but also improves their overall quality of life. As the device becomes more refined, it could potentially revolutionize the way paraplegic individuals experience daily activities, granting them greater freedom and autonomy.

This new development in wearable robotics is a promising step toward improving accessibility for people with mobility challenges. As research and development in this field continue, the team at KAIST hopes to bring these transformative technologies to a wider audience, providing greater opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live more independent lives.

## Do Sharks Have Bones? Expert Explains Their Cartilage Skeleton

Sharks, the apex predators of the ocean, are known for their impressive agility and speed, but their unique anatomy often raises questions. One of the most common queries is whether sharks have bones in their bodies. The answer is no—sharks do not have bones. Instead, their skeleton is primarily made of cartilage, a strong yet flexible connective tissue.

Unlike many bony fish that possess swim bladders to maintain buoyancy, sharks rely on their cartilaginous skeleton to help them stay afloat. Cartilage is less dense than bone, making sharks lighter and more flexible, which is essential for their hunting and swimming abilities. This lack of bones is a key factor in the shark's ability to move swiftly through the water.

Sharks belong to the phylum Chordata, just like humans, which places them in the same taxonomic hierarchy. However, when it comes to their classification, sharks are classified as fish (Pisces), while humans are mammals. Despite being vertebrates, sharks have cartilage instead of bones, a feature that distinguishes them from bony fish and other vertebrates.



Most species of sharks have between 200 and 400 cartilage-based structures in their bodies. The primary reason for this unique adaptation is that cartilage provides the shark with the right balance of strength and flexibility. "We think early sharks developed a cartilaginous skeleton because it better suited their lifestyle. Being light and more flexible than bone, cartilage means sharks can typically swim faster than bony fish," explained Emma Bernard, Fossil Fish Curator at the Natural His-

tory Museum in London.

This remarkable adaptation allows sharks to be efficient hunters and survivors in the ocean. Their cartilage skeleton plays a significant role in their speed and agility, making them one of the most successful predators in marine ecosystems. While sharks may lack bones, their cartilaginous structure is a critical component of their evolutionary success.

## Internet Reacts GST on Caramelised Popcorn: Next She Will Tax Air and Sunlight

The recent decision by the GST Council to impose an 18% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on caramelised popcorn has sparked a flurry of reactions across social media. The announcement, made during the 55th GST Council meeting on December 21, has led to numerous jokes and memes circulating online, with many users expressing disbelief at the new tax rate.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman provided clarification on the decision, explaining that caramelised popcorn, which contains added sugar, should not be classified the same as regular salted or plain popcorn. In certain states, caramelised popcorn is marketed as "namkeen," and this distinction influences the tax treatment. According to Sitharaman, the different composition—caramelised popcorn containing sugar—warrants the higher 18% GST rate, compared to the 12% GST rate applied to regular pre-packaged and labelled popcorn.

For other pre-packaged, branded ready-to-eat snacks, such

as plain or salted popcorn, the GST rate remains at 12%. However, popcorn that is unpackaged, unlabelled, and contains only salt or spices is subject to a lower 5% GST rate.

While the government's explanation for the varying GST rates has been provided, it has done little to quell the online reaction. Many have taken to social media to express their amusement and frustration, with some joking that the government will soon tax other natural elements, such as air and sunlight. The decision

to impose an 18% GST on something as seemingly trivial as caramelised popcorn has drawn both ridicule and concern from netizens, questioning the fairness and practicality of such tax policies.

Despite the controversy, the GST Council has confirmed that the rates for popcorn and other snacks will remain unchanged, and it remains to be seen whether public outcry will have any effect on future decisions regarding snack taxation.

## The Security Risks of Smartwatches: A Double-Edged Sword

Smartwatches offer numerous benefits, from tracking fitness metrics to monitoring heart rate and sleep patterns. However, as these devices become more integrated into daily life, they also present significant security risks that could expose sensitive personal information.

### Data Breaches

Smartwatches store a wealth of personal data, including location, health statistics, and sometimes even messages or notifications. If a smartwatch is hacked, attackers could gain access to this data, putting your privacy at risk.

### Hacking and Unauthorized Access

Most smartwatches connect to smartphones via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi, which can create potential vulnerabilities. Weak security protocols can be exploited by hackers to access or manipulate the data being transferred between the smartwatch and its paired device, leading to unauthorized control over the information.

### Malware and Exploits

Malicious software (malware) can be installed on a smartwatch, allowing cybercriminals to gain control of the device. Once compromised, the hacker could use the smartwatch to track the user's movements or even launch



attacks on other connected devices, expanding the scope of the breach.

### Bluetooth Vulnerabilities

Bluetooth connections, although convenient, can be vulnerable to specific types of attacks, such as "bluejacking," where unsolicited messages are sent to the device, or "bluebugging," which allows hackers to take control of the device. If the Bluetooth connection isn't secure, attackers can exploit it to gain unauthorized access to your smartwatch.

### Physical Theft

If a smartwatch is lost or stolen, there is the risk that someone could bypass security features like passwords or PINs. This could give them access to personal data stored on the device or, in some cases, allow remote control of the device.

Despite being equipped with security features, smartwatches are still susceptible to a range of cyber threats. Users should remain vigilant and take steps to protect their devices, like enabling encryption, using strong passwords, and monitoring for any unusual activity.





## India Announces 15-Member Squad for ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup



India has named a 15-member squad for the ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup, set to take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from January 18 to February 2, 2025. The Women's Selection Committee of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed the squad, with Niki Prasad appointed as captain and Sanika Chalke as vice-captain.

India, the defending champions, will compete in Group A alongside hosts Malaysia, West Indies, and Sri Lanka. The tournament will feature 16 teams, divided into four groups, with India aiming to retain their title.

The squad includes two wicket-keepers, Kamalini G and Bhavika Ahire, providing flexibility in team selection. In addition to the main squad, three standby players—

Nandhana S, Ira J, and Anadi T—have also been named.

The Indian team's preparation is focused on maintaining their strong performance from the previous edition of the tournament, where they emerged as champions. The Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup will provide a platform for these young cricketers to showcase their talent on the global stage.

With the tournament just around the corner, all eyes will be on how India performs as they aim to defend their title and continue their dominance in women's youth cricket. The team's leadership under Niki Prasad and the promising talent within the squad add to the excitement as the countdown to the tournament begins.

## Ben Stokes Ruled Out of Cricket for Three Months Due to Torn Hamstring

England captain Ben Stokes has been sidelined from cricket for at least three months after suffering a torn left hamstring. The 33-year-old all-rounder will undergo surgery on the injury next month, according to a statement from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Stokes sustained the injury during the third Test against New Zealand in Hamilton, which ended in a defeat for England last week. The injury marks another setback in a series of hamstring issues for the star cricketer.

As a result of this injury, Stokes was already excluded from the England squad for the upcoming Champions Trophy, set to be held in February and March 2025 in Pakistan. His absence from the tournament, a key event in the international cricket calendar, is a



significant blow to the English team. This is not the first time that hamstring problems have affected Stokes' career. In the past, he was forced to miss the home summer series against Sri Lanka and the first Test in Paki-

stan in October due to similar injuries. Despite being one of England's most valuable players, Stokes has struggled with recurring hamstring issues, which have frequently sidelined him during important series. With Stokes out of action, England will need to reassess their strategies for the Champions Trophy and upcoming international commitments. His absence will also leave a void in both leadership and all-round performance, as Stokes is known for his contributions with both bat and ball.

The focus now shifts to his recovery and successful surgery, with hopes for his return to full fitness in the coming months. Stokes' rehabilitation will be closely monitored by the ECB, as they look to bring their captain back into action once he has recovered from this latest setback.

## India to Face Pakistan in Dubai on Feb 23 as Champions Trophy Schedule Unveiled

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has officially announced the schedule for the upcoming Champions Trophy, with India set to play all their group stage matches in Dubai. The highly anticipated clash between India and Pakistan is slated for February 23, marking a marquee event in the tournament.



As expected, India and Pakistan have been placed in the same group, Group A, alongside New Zealand and Bangladesh. This promises a thrilling start to the competition, with high-stakes matches set to captivate cricket fans worldwide.

Group B features South Africa, Australia,

India, Afghanistan, and England, ensuring a competitive line-up across both groups.

The tournament is set to begin on February 19 in Karachi, where hosts Pakistan will face New Zealand in the opening match. The final will take

place on March 9, concluding what is expected to be an exciting month of cricket.

The announcement also confirms that, should India qualify, they will play their semi-final and final matches in Dubai. This decision to host all league games, including the final stages, in Dubai reflects the growing significance of the venue for international cricket events.

With fierce rivalries, including the India-Pakistan clash, and teams filled with talent, the 2025 Champions Trophy is shaping up to be a thrilling competition for cricket fans across the globe.

## Harleen Deol's Maiden Century Powers India to 358/5 Against West Indies in 2nd WODI

Harleen Deol's brilliant maiden century helped India post an imposing total of 358/5 against the West Indies in the second Women's ODI on Tuesday. India, who lead the three-match series 1-0, are on track to seal a 2-0 lead after matching their highest-ever ODI total, which also stands as the highest total any team has scored against the West Indies.

Deol's 115 off 103 balls, including 16 boundaries, was the backbone of India's innings. She was well supported by Pratika Rawal, who contributed 76 off 86 balls, and Smriti Mandhana, who added 53 runs off 47 balls. Jemimah Rodrigues also played a crucial role, scoring 52 runs off 36 balls.

Deol's knock was particularly notable for her evolution as an all-around player. While she is not typically known for power hitting, she displayed an impressive range, finding gaps and placing the ball in unconventional areas. Her century came off 98 balls, marked by a perfectly timed boundary off pacer Sharmila Connell.

India's strong start was built on the foundation of an opening partnership between Mandhana and Rawal, who added 110 runs off just 16.3 overs, their second consecutive 100-run partnership in ODIs. However, some miscommunication led to Mandhana's unfortunate run-out. Rawal, who was well on her way to a hundred, was dismissed for 76 when she mistimed a delivery from Zaida James.



Captain Harmanpreet Kaur's brief stay ended when she was bowled out while attempting a slog sweep. Yet, Rodrigues and Deol shared a productive 116-run partnership for the fourth wicket in just over 12 overs, further consolidating India's position. Rodrigues reached her fifty off just 34 balls, including four boundaries in one over off Connell, and continued to innovate.

Deol's eventual dismissal did little to dampen India's progress, as they reached 358/5, putting the West Indies in a tough spot to chase in the remaining overs.

## World Championship of Legends T20 League Season 2 Schedule Announced



The second season of the World Championship of Legends (WCL) T20 League will be held in August 2025, with an expanded schedule, marquee players, and additional venues. The tournament is set to run from July 18 to August 2, 2025, promising thrilling cricket action featuring legendary players from six countries: India, Pakistan, England, Australia, South Africa, and the West Indies.

The tournament will kick off on July 18, with the England Champions taking on the Pakistan Champions at Edgbaston Stadium in Birmingham. The highly anticipated India-Pakistan clash is scheduled for July 20, also at Edgbaston, igniting one of the fiercest rivalries in international cricket.

The league will feature a round-robin format followed by knockout stages. The two semi-finals will be held on July 31, with the grand final scheduled for August 2. Fans can expect high-octane action throughout the tourna-

ment, with the full list of venues to be revealed soon.

WCL CEO Harshit Tomar expressed excitement for the upcoming season, stating, "WCL Season 1 delivered an incredible fan experience, and we are committed to making Season 2 even better. Our focus remains on creating unforgettable moments for viewers across the globe."

Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn, a co-owner of the league, also shared his enthusiasm, saying, "I am happy to see larger associations and the league getting bigger and better every year. We truly believe Season 2 will also claim the highest viewership across the globe. Stay tuned for more exciting announcements."

With star-studded teams and top-tier international cricketers, WCL Season 2 is shaping up to be a must-watch event for cricket fans worldwide.





## Chinni from Daaku Maharaaj: A Caretaker's Love in a Heartwarming New Single

Nandamuri Balakrishna is set to take the silver screen by storm this Sankranti with his highly anticipated film \*Daaku Maharaaj\*. Directed by KS Ravindra and produced by Naga Vamshi under the banner of Sithara Entertainment, the film is generating tremendous buzz ahead of its release on January 12, 2025. The director and producer recently spoke to the media, sharing their confidence in the film's success and the powerful story that it promises to deliver.

In an exciting update, the makers of \*Daaku Maharaaj\* unveiled a new single from the film, titled "Chinni." Composed by the talented

Thaman, the song features soothing vocals by Vishal Mishra, with heartfelt lyrics penned by Anantha Sriram. The track is expected to captivate audiences with its emotional depth and beautiful melody. The song's visuals are equally touching, featuring Balakrishna in a tender and emotional scene where he is seen bonding with a child. The warmth and affection he shares with the child become the central theme of the song, as Balakrishna's character takes on the role of the child's caretaker during a crucial point in the narrative.

The music video, shot in the picturesque locations of Ooty, adds to the song's emotional

appeal, with the serene backdrop amplifying the depth of the song's theme. Chandni Chowdary and Urvashi Rautela also make their presence felt in the video, adding an extra layer of charm and magic to the visuals.

As the film gears up for its Sankranti release, \*Daaku Maharaaj\* is expected to make a strong impact at the box office. With Balakrishna's powerful presence, an engaging storyline, and a beautiful soundtrack, the film has all the ingredients for success. Fans are eagerly awaiting its release and the emotional journey it promises to offer.



## Pushpa 2 Breaks Records and Now in 3D: An Exciting Update for Fans

Pushpa 2 continues to shatter box office records, with Allu Arjun, affectionately known as Bunny, ruling over multiple film industries. The movie has already surpassed an astounding 1700 crore mark, solidifying its position as one of the biggest blockbusters of recent times. As Pushpa 2 continues to dominate, it has also broken records across various regions. The Bollywood industry was left stunned as Shahrukh Khan's Pathaan set a record with a 600 crore collection, but now \*Pushpa 2\* is making waves in its own right.

In a thrilling update, the makers of \*Pushpa 2\* have announced that the film is now available in 3D in Hindi, across the country. This new 3D version of the movie is expected to take the already immense popularity of \*Pushpa 2\* to new heights, offering fans a more immersive cinematic experience. The move to release the 3D version in Hindi comes as no surprise, given the movie's immense success in the north, where it is already enjoying huge collections.

However, fans in the Telugu-speaking states are still awaiting confirmation regarding the 3D release in their language. The makers have yet to announce if the Telugu version of \*Pushpa 2\* will be available in 3D. Should this happen, the film's box office collections could see an even more significant boost, as 3D releases typically draw in larger audiences and further increase revenue.



With the 3D version now available, there is renewed excitement surrounding the film, and it is expected to continue dominating the box office in both domestic and international markets. \*Pushpa 2\* is not just a hit, but a phenomenon, and with this new 3D release, it looks set to make an even bigger impact in the coming weeks. Fans are eagerly awaiting the chance to witness Bunny's larger-than-life performance in the enhanced 3D version.

## Unstoppable with NBK: Venkatesh and Balayya Groove t In Upcoming Episode



The much-awaited upcoming episode of Aha's popular celebrity talk show \*Unstoppable with NBK\* Season 4 is set to be a grand spectacle, as it will feature the legendary actor Venkatesh. Hosted by the charismatic Nandamuri Balakrishna, the show continues to captivate audiences with its blend of fun, candid conversations, and exciting guest appearances.

A newly released promo for the episode offers a glimpse of Venkatesh alongside his brother, renowned producer Suresh Babu, as they share captivating insights into their personal lives and professional journeys. The episode also features the team from \*Sankranthiki Vasthunnam\* - including director Anil Ravipudi and actresses Meenakshi Chaudhary and Aishwarya Rajesh - who join the conversation to share their experiences and add to the show's entertainment quotient.

The standout moment from the promo, however, is the rare and

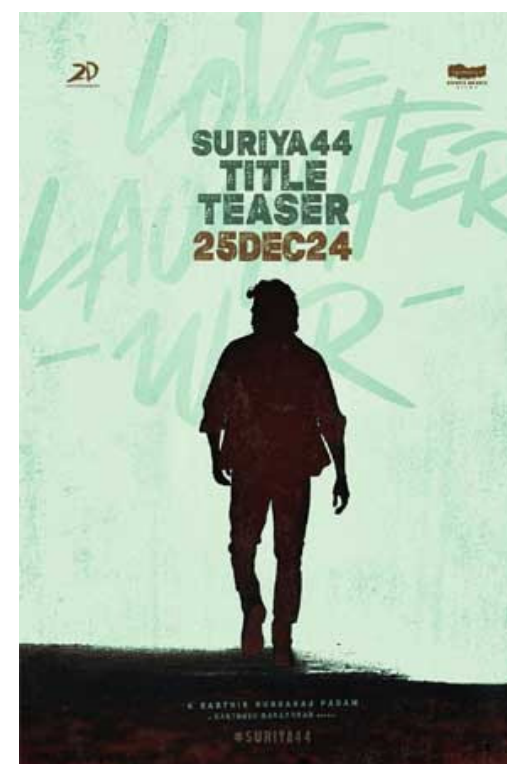
electrifying sight of two legendary stars - Nandamuri Balakrishna and Victory Venkatesh - sharing the stage. Their camaraderie and chemistry light up the screen as they deliver iconic dialogues from their past films. The cherry on top is their delightful performance of the classic song \*Pelli Kala Vachesinde Bala\* from the blockbuster \*Preminchukundam Raa\*. Fans will be thrilled to see this unforgettable moment, as the two stars groove to the song, evoking nostalgia and excitement.

To hear Venkatesh's fascinating stories and personal anecdotes, and to witness the high-energy performance, don't miss the upcoming episode. Mark your calendars for December 27, 2024, at 7 PM, for an unmissable episode of \*Unstoppable with NBK\*. With Balakrishna and Venkatesh together on screen, it promises to be an episode full of fun, laughter, and memorable moments. Stay tuned for what is sure to be a blockbuster show!

## Karthik To Give Solid Treat To Suriya Fans For Christmas with Suriya44 Title Teaser

Director Karthik Subbaraj, known for his unique storytelling style and fresh approach to filmmaking, is all set to give Suriya fans an unforgettable Christmas gift. After delivering a series of critically acclaimed films, Subbaraj's upcoming project, \*Suriya44\*, has created immense anticipation among movie buffs. The film is particularly significant for Suriya, who has faced a challenging phase in his career, making this movie crucial for his comeback.

In an exciting update, the makers have announced that the title teaser of \*Suriya44\* will be released on Christmas Day, providing a solid festive treat for fans. The teaser promises to offer a glimpse into the world of this film, which is touted to be a love story infused with action-packed elements. Early promotional content has already sparked curiosity, and now all eyes are on this upcoming teaser, which is expected to reveal more about the film's tone and style.



The movie features Suriya in the lead role, with Pooja Hegde playing the fe-

male lead. Additionally, Shriya Saran will be seen in a special song, adding further excitement to the project. Music for \*Suriya44\* is composed by Santosh Narayanan, who is known for delivering soulful and impactful tracks. The film is being produced under Suriya's 2D Entertainment banner, further raising expectations among fans and industry professionals alike.

While the title teaser is expected to drop on December 25, there's speculation that it might also reveal the official release date. \*Suriya44\* is currently scheduled for a release on April 10, 2025, and fans are eagerly awaiting confirmation of this timeline.

With the promise of a strong title teaser on Christmas, Karthik Subbaraj and Suriya are set to capture the hearts of moviegoers. As the countdown begins, fans are looking forward to a thrilling cinematic experience that blends romance with high-octane action.

## Kiccha Sudeep's Max Trailer Unveils a Gripping Political Drama

Kannada superstar Kiccha Sudeep is all set to enthrall the audience with his upcoming film \*Max\* (Max The Movie), following his massive success with \*Vikrant Rona\*. Directed by Vijay Karthikeyan in his debut, the film has already created waves with its title teaser, which has gone viral across social media platforms. With a grand global release scheduled for December 27, the makers have now unveiled the much-awaited trailer, further intensifying the excitement surrounding the movie.

The \*Max\* trailer is nothing short of stunning. It opens with intense dialogue that sets the tone for a high-stakes political drama: "This night is crucial for our political career." The narrative quickly delves into the personal struggles of the characters, as a mother desperately pleads for the safety of her daughter, stating, "Sir, my



daughter is missing. She is my only daughter." These emotional moments are juxtaposed with the film's larger social themes, as characters discuss their commitment to making changes, such as implementing the Swachh Bharat program, and their belief in purging corruption from politics.

In a previously released glimpse, the film offered a powerful statement: "You can escape from a fire, an earthquake, or a typhoon. But if you let this go, even the child will die, despite having the boon of immortality." This mysterious and intense dialogue hints at the film's core theme - a battle against corruption, and the lengths to which the characters are willing to go to protect their loved ones.

With \*Max\* poised for release in just a few days, the trailer promises an exciting mix of intense drama, powerful performances, and a gripping storyline. Kiccha Sudeep's powerful presence, combined with the debut direction of Vijay Karthikeyan, ensures that \*Max\* will be one of the most talked-about films of the year. Fans are eagerly anticipating its release, ready for a thrilling cinematic experience.