




## Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
 H 27° C L 14° C	 H 30° C L 19° C	 H 26° C L 21° C

# 1 HOUR FREEDOM FOR VAMSI

- **Vamsi's missing phone sparks major controversy in AP**
- **YCP accused of playing mind games over missing phone**
- **Senior police officer suspected in phone disappearance**
- **YCP allegedly shielding key officer in the case**
- **Jagan intervenes, raising new doubts on the issue**
- **Key comments suggest officer being targeted strategically**
- **Diversion tactics used to shift suspicion from main suspect**

TPN | VVS MADHUBABU  
Andhra Pradesh, Feb 20

The disappearance of former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi's mobile phone has become the most debated issue in Andhra Pradesh's political and police circles. Allegations are swirling that the missing phone contains crucial evidence that could impact the ongoing investigation. Reports suggest that if the phone is recovered, it might complicate Vamsi's legal battle.

With the case gaining traction, YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has unexpectedly stepped in, leading to further speculation. The police department is said to be investigating the role of a senior officer in the phone's disappearance, but some allege that Jagan's intervention is an attempt to shield the officer by deflecting attention elsewhere. The theory is that if the officer faces criticism publicly, it could make it seem like he is not involved in any wrongdoing.

The Vijayawada police filed an FIR against Vamsi at 8:30 PM on February 12th and immediately sent teams to arrest him. One team traveled to Hyderabad to detain Vamsi, while another went to Visakhapatnam to retrieve Satyavardhan, who was allegedly kidnapped.

By the night of February 12th, Vijayawada police, with the help of Telangana police, surrounded Vamsi's residence in Rayadurgam, Hyderabad. However, a significant controversy arose when Vamsi spoke on his



phone for nearly an hour while police were present.

## This raises several questions:

- **Why was Vamsi allowed to use his phone for so long?**
- **Who did he call during that time?**
- **Why wasn't the phone confiscated immediately?**
- **Did any police personnel deliberately allow him to erase crucial data?**

Reports suggest that before the phone went missing, Vamsi made multiple calls—to YSRCP leaders, media personnel, and close followers. Additionally, he is believed to have had a long conversation with a senior po-

lice officer in his bedroom for nearly an hour. Shortly after this conversation, the phone disappeared.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's comments during his jail visit to Vamsi on February 18th have further deepened the mystery. He reportedly said, "A CI is retiring in 16 months... Even after retirement, he will be standing there in uniform." Political observers are questioning whether Jagan was referring to the CI or a higher-ranking officer.

The incident has put the government in a tight spot. Will the ruling coalition launch a thorough investigation into the missing phone, or will it be treated as a routine case? All eyes are now on how the administration handles this high-profile controversy.

## CM Naidu Urges Central Govt to Support Chilli Farmers

- **CM meets Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan**
- **CM Naidu Attends Delhi CM's Swearing-in Ceremony**



TPN Correspondent  
Amaravati, Feb 20

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has urged the Central Government to intervene in the ongoing chilli price crisis in Andhra Pradesh. During his visit to Delhi, he submitted a letter to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, requesting immediate procurement of chillies under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) to stabilize prices.

Naidu highlighted the drastic fall in chilli prices, where the special variety has dropped from ₹20,000 to ₹13,000 per quintal, and the common variety has fallen to ₹11,000 per quintal. He attributed the decline to reduced exports and increased production, leading to

severe financial strain on farmers. In his appeal, Naidu emphasized that the Centre should bear the entire procurement cost under MIS, considering the state's economic constraints. He also referred to a meeting held in Delhi on February 14, where AP officials had already submitted proposals regarding the crisis.

The AP government is actively engaging with the Centre to ensure immediate relief for farmers. Naidu is also scheduled to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah at 3 PM today, along with other key ministers, to discuss state-related projects and financial assistance. Farmers are now looking forward to the Centre's response to the CM's proposal, hoping for swift action to address their growing concerns.

## YS Jagan Says Chandrababu's House Wasn't Far From Guntur Mirchi Yard

TPN Correspondent  
Guntur, Feb 20

Former Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy strongly criticized the government for failing to address the crisis faced by chilli farmers. Speaking in Guntur, he pointed out that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's residence is near the Guntur chilli yard, yet he has done nothing to ease the struggles of farmers.

Jagan stated that during his tenure, chilli prices ranged from ₹21,000 to ₹27,000 per quintal, but under the current government, prices have plummeted to ₹10,000-₹11,000 per quintal. He also noted that investment costs have increased from ₹1.5 lakh to ₹2 lakh per acre, while yields have dropped from 20 quintals to 15 quintals per acre due to pest infestations.

He accused the government of failing to provide a minimum support price for chilli farmers, pushing them into financial distress. Jagan also alleged that crucial farmer welfare programs like RBKs,



e-crop monitoring, and integrated agricultural labs are no longer functioning properly. He recalled that during his rule, the government spent ₹7,000 crore to support farmers and ensure fair pricing. During his visit to the Guntur chilli yard, a scuffle broke out, causing panic among the farmers. After the situation calmed, farmers reported that 14 chilli sale tickets had gone missing. Narayana and Venkata Subbaiah, farmers from Palnadu district, who had come to the yard two days earlier, found that their tickets had disappeared. Upon investigation, it was revealed that the missing tickets were transported in an Isuzu truck linked to Lella Appireddy's follower, Panuganti Chaitanya.



## BOTH ARE ACCUSED

TPN | KISHORE KATTA  
Guntur, Feb 20

The sharp decline in chilli prices across Andhra Pradesh has put farmers in distress, struggling to recover their investment costs. In the last season, chilli fetched over ₹21,000 per quintal, but this year, prices have dropped to ₹13,000, with some farmers being offered as low as ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 per quintal for the first harvest. With the new season beginning, more than one lakh bags of chilli are arriving at the Guntur chilli yard daily. However, carry-over stocks of over 30 lakh bags remain in cold storage from last year, leading to an oversupply and further price reduction. Market experts cite reduced international exports and declining domestic demand as key reasons for the sharp price fall.

Farmers from Kurnool, Prakasam, Guntur, Krishna, Nalgonda, and Khammam dis-

tricts are worried about financial losses, as their produce is not fetching a fair price. Many blame government inaction for failing to stabilize chilli prices and regulate the market effectively.

During the YSRCP government in 2023, a similar price crash was ignored, leading to reduced cultivation in 2024.

However, the high prices last year encouraged mass chilli cultivation in 2025, resulting in excess supply and another steep price drop. Critics argue that both the past and present governments have failed to guide farmers, regulate stock management, and control market fluctuations.

With the market flooded with old and new chilli stocks, farmers are demanding immediate government intervention to ensure fair prices and financial security. Whether the government will take necessary steps to protect chilli farmers remains to be seen.

- **Chilli prices drop from ₹21,000 to ₹13,000 per quintal**
- **First harvest selling for just ₹10,000 to ₹12,000**
- **Over 30 lakh bags of stock in cold storage**
- **Reduced exports and low demand worsen price drop**
- **Government failure blamed for price fluctuations**
- **Farmers demand immediate intervention for price stability**



# CM Naidu Heads to Delhi to Secure Support for Chilli Farmers - Atchannaaidu

- Government yet to announce MSP to prevent losses for chilli farmers.
- Global chilli demand rising as China's crop declines.
- CM Naidu to seek enhanced central support for chilli farmers in Delhi.

TPN Correspondent  
Amaravati, Feb 20

State Agriculture, Cooperation, and Marketing Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaaidu clarified that the government has not yet announced a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for chilli, aiming to prevent potential losses for farmers amid rising global demand. Addressing the media at the State Secretariat, he explained that countries like Sri Lanka, China, and Malaysia had reduced their chilli imports due to increased domestic cultivation, leading to a price slump. However, a poor chilli harvest in China has shifted demand back to Indian produce, resulting in a price surge.



“At this crucial time, if the government declares an MSP, it could negatively impact farmers, which is why no announcement

has been made yet,” Atchannaaidu stated. He also pointed out that chilli cultivation in Andhra Pradesh has decreased by nearly 2 lakh acres, with many farmers opting for alternative crops such as cotton, maize, and sorghum. The minister revealed that Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is heading to Delhi to urge the Central Government to extend maximum support to Andhra Pradesh's chilli farmers. “The Chief Minister has already written four letters to the Centre regarding this matter and will now meet with Union Ministers to push for a significant increase in central support,” he said, expressing optimism about a favorable outcome.



## Kadapa Mayor Faces Inquiry Over Contract Allocations

Kadapa Municipal Commissioner issues notice

TPN Correspondent  
Kadapa, Feb 20

Kadapa Mayor Suresh Babu is under scrutiny following allegations of irregularities in contract work allocations to Vardhini Constructions, a firm linked to his family. The Vigilance Department initiated an inquiry, leading the Kadapa Municipal Commissioner to serve a notice to the Mayor.

The investigation revealed that the Mayor's son, Kotha Maddhi Amaresh, and his wife, Kotha Maddhi Jayashree, are partners in Vardhini Constructions, raising concerns over potential misuse of authority. The Andhra Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act mandates that no public representative can engage in corporation contracts either directly or through family members.

According to Section 22(1) of the Municipal Corporation Act 1955, entering into corporation contracts in such a manner is a violation of governance norms. The Commissioner clarified in the notice that elected representatives found guilty of such infractions could face disqualification.

Further action is expected based on the Vigilance Department's final report, and this controversy has sparked widespread discussion in political and civic circles.

# AP Invites ₹25,000 Crore Investment in Tourism Sector

- PPP model with subsidies for investors
- Development of 13 tourism segments planned
- Anchor hubs to enhance tourism infrastructure
- 15% job creation through tourism initiatives
- CM Chandrababu and Dy CM Pawan Kalyan committed to growth

TPN Correspondent  
New Delhi, Feb 20

Andhra Pradesh is making a major push in tourism development with a vision of attracting ₹25,000 crore investment over the next five years. State Tourism, Culture & Cinematography Minister Kandula Durgesh, speaking at the South Asia Leading Travel and Tourism Exhibition-2025 (SATTE) in Delhi, assured investors of strong government support, incentives, and infrastructure development under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Durgesh emphasized that the state has



granted industry status to tourism, making it eligible for all industrial subsidies. The newly launched Tourism Policy 2024-29 aims to develop Andhra Pradesh into a premier national and international tourist destination. The government is focusing on diverse tourism segments, including temple, adventure, eco, wellness, heritage, religious, agri, medical, cruise, beach, coastal, seaplane, rural, and film tourism. Efforts are also being made to integrate tourism with environmental sustainability and job creation for youth. The hub-and-spoke model will establish anchor hubs for tourism, ensuring high-quality infrastructure and better visitor experiences.

Tourist safety is a top priority, with measures in place to provide secure and seamless travel experiences.

Minister Durgesh highlighted that Andhra Pradesh has visionary leadership under CM N. Chandrababu Naidu and Dy CM Pawan Kalyan, both committed to economic growth, employment generation, and environmental sustainability.

With vast natural beauty and untapped tourism potential, Durgesh urged national and international investors to capitalize on the state's opportunities. He invited travelers, tour operators, and enthusiasts to explore AP's rich tourism landscape.



## Court Adjourns Hearing on Vallabhaneni Vamsi's Custody

TPN Correspondent  
Vijayawada, Feb 20

The SC/ST court in Vijayawada has adjourned the hearing on the police custody petition for former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi to Thursday. Vamsi, who was arrested in connection with a kidnapping case linked to the attack on the Gannavaram TDP office, remains in judicial remand at Vijayawada District Jail.

The case revolves around allegations that Vamsi kidnapped a Dalit youth, Satyavardhan, an employee of the TDP office. The police have requested 10 days' custody of Vamsi and two others, stating that further interrogation is necessary to gather additional details regarding the incident.

During the court proceedings, both parties presented their arguments, after which the court postponed the hearing. Meanwhile, a petition has been filed seeking food and other necessary facilities for Vamsi in jail. In response, the court ordered officials to obtain a written request from Vamsi regarding the facilities he requires.

With the next hearing scheduled for Thursday, the court's decision will determine whether Vamsi will be handed over to the police for further questioning.

# Minister Nadendla Manohar Calls for Paperless Administration in Civil Supplies

- Civil Supplies Department to adopt paperless administration
- Officials urged to ensure transparency in services
- Government purchases 32 lakh metric tons of grain
- Deepam-2 scheme benefits 93 lakh gas users
- Strict monitoring of ration supply and MDU vehicles

TPN Correspondent  
Vijayawada, Feb 20

In Vijayawada, on Wednesday Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar emphasized the need for paperless administration and improved service delivery in the Civil Supplies Department. Addressing a district officials' workshop at Civil Supply Bhavan, Vijayawada, he called for identifying inefficiencies and ensuring better services for citizens.

Manohar urged District Supply Officers (DSOs) and District Managers (DMs) to work with accountability and team spirit to make Andhra Pradesh the top state in civil supplies by the upcoming Kharif season. He stressed that a transparent and technology-driven



en system is essential for smooth operations.

The government has already procured 32 lakh metric tons of grain

from 5.21 lakh farmers, disbursing ₹7,522 crore, with ₹7,508 crore deposited into farmers' accounts within 24 hours. Around 30,000

lorries and 37,000 porters participated in grain transportation.

For the first time, farmers could sell their grain by simply sending a WhatsApp message to 7337359375.

Minister Manohar assured that the coalition government is rebuilding farmers' trust after five years of mismanagement.

Under the Deepam-2 scheme, 93 lakh people booked LPG cylinders, and ₹714.57 crore was transferred to beneficiaries. The minister directed officials to prevent gas delivery boys from overcharging and raise awareness that no extra fees should be collected.

Strict monitoring will be enforced on ration supply and MDU vehicle movements to curb irregularities. The government also plans to introduce special packaging of rice for mid-day meals and welfare hostels from the next academic year. Officials were instructed to implement an online system for better accountability, ensuring a clean, technology-driven, and corruption-free Civil Supplies Department.

## Former TTD Board Member Demands Action Against Naresh Kumar

TPN Correspondent  
Tirupati, Feb 20

Former TTD Board Member Sri K Shiva Kumar has demanded the immediate removal of current Board Member S Naresh Kumar, who allegedly abused a TTD employee within the temple premises. He has also urged authorities to register a case against Naresh Kumar for his misconduct.

Addressing the issue, Shiva Kumar stated that the behavior of Board Members should reflect the sanctity of TTD and that any mistreatment of employees is unacceptable. He assured his full support to TTD staff and stressed that such incidents should never be repeated.

This controversy has sparked discussions among devotees and officials, with many questioning the conduct of board members in the temple premises. Shiva Kumar reiterated that disciplinary action is necessary to ensure employees work in a safe and respectful environment. As the demand for accountability grows, all eyes are on the TTD administration and law enforcement authorities to see what action will be taken against Naresh Kumar.





## Minister Atchannaidu Slams Jagan for Neglecting Agriculture



**TPN Correspondent Amaravati, Feb 20**  
State Agriculture, Co-operation, and Marketing Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu launched a sharp attack on former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing him of politicizing the issues faced by farmers while having neglected the agriculture sector during his tenure. "It is ironic that someone who completely abandoned agricultural programs is now questioning our commitment," Atchannaidu remarked. He pointed out that under YSRCP rule, key initiatives like soil testing and mechanization subsidies were discontinued, and not a single rupee was allocated for drip irrigation. Defending the policies of the current government, Atchannaidu highlighted that in January 2020, when chilli prices stood

at ₹12,000 per quintal, the Jagan-led administration had set an MSP of just ₹7,000, leading to losses for farmers. "Back then, there was no Market Intervention Fund to support farmers. In contrast, our government had allocated ₹138 crore in 2017, and we plan to propose an even larger intervention fund in the upcoming budget," he assured. The minister reaffirmed Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's commitment to securing central assistance for chilli farmers, stating that Naidu is heading to Delhi to push for increased support prices and financial aid. The press conference was attended by State Agriculture Department Director Delhi Rao, Marketing Department Director, and Rythu Bazaar CEO Vijaya Sunitha.

## Kasu Mahesh Reddy Counters MLA Yarapathineni Srinivasa Rao's Claims



**TPN Correspondent Gurajala, Feb 20**  
Former MLA Kasu Mahesh Reddy has strongly countered Gurajala MLA Yarapathineni Srinivasa Rao's recent remarks, reminding him of the challenges they both posed to each other before the elections. Speaking at a local gathering, Mahesh Reddy stated that if he had honored his commitments, Yarapathineni should also stay true to his word.

He criticized Yarapathineni for allegedly making numerous false promises to the people of Gurajala before the elections and questioned whether he had fulfilled any of them. "The people who believed you are now asking for answers. You must stand by your words," Mahesh Reddy asserted. He further remarked that Yarapathineni's victory was largely due to the prevailing political winds rather than personal merit. He challenged him to first acknowledge the unfulfilled promises made to the electorate before making further claims. Expressing confidence in YSRCP's future, Mahesh Reddy stated that the results of the upcoming general elections would prove the people's continued support for Jaganmohan Reddy. He urged the people of Andhra Pradesh to carefully observe the developments and hold leaders accountable for their commitments.

## People Have Already Stripped Jagan of His Clothes by Reducing His Party from 151 to 11 Seats – MLA GV Anjaneyulu



**TPN Correspondent Vinukonda, Feb 20**  
Government Chief Whip and Vinukonda MLA GV Anjaneyulu strongly condemned YSRCP leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's remarks

against police officers and government employees, stating that the people have already "stripped him of his clothes" by reducing his party's strength from 151 seats to 11.

Speaking at a gathering, Anjaneyulu criticized Jagan for disrespecting law enforcement and accused him of daydreaming about returning to power despite being rejected by voters. He questioned whether criminal elements, murderers, and kidnappers would still operate if Jagan truly respected the law. He warned that if Jagan continues on this path, the people will reject him again in the upcoming local body elections. Anjaneyulu alleged that under the YSRCP regime, police officers and IAS/IPS officials faced harassment, creating a lawless state. He emphasized that Jagan's verbal abuse of the police is unacceptable and suggested that those who believed in Jagan, such as Vishal Gunni, PSR Anjaneyulu, and Kran-

thi Rana Tata, should reflect on their actions. The MLA further highlighted past cases involving actress Jethwani and MP Raghuramakrishnam Raju, asserting that officers who mishandled cases had to face consequences, including jail time. He warned that those who engaged in unlawful activities under the previous regime will eventually pay the price. He commended the police under Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, noting that they have successfully curbed rowdiness, hooliganism, illegal gutka trade, and ganja smuggling in the state. He emphasized that instead of attacking law enforcement, leaders should appreciate their contributions.

## Somireddy's Counter to Jagan: "Did He Visit to Help Farmers or Steal Chillies?"

**TPN Correspondent Mangalagiri, Feb 20**  
Former minister and TDP politburo member Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy launched a scathing attack on former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, questioning the real purpose of his visit to the Guntur chilli yard. Speaking to reporters in Amaravati, Somireddy sarcastically remarked that Jagan's remarks on beauty among his party leaders were unusual, stating, "When did YS Jagan notice the beauty of Vallabhaneni Vamsi, Kodali Nani, and Devineni Avinash?" He alleged that it was YSRCP members themselves who kept comparing YS Avinash Reddy's looks to Jagan's. Turning to Jagan's visit to the chilli yard, Somireddy questioned whether the former CM truly came to help farmers or to "steal chillies." He alleged that YSRCP leader Lella Appireddy, who accompanied Jagan, was involved in lifting 14 bags of chillies. "Instead of supporting the farmers,

Jagan created a drama with the Paytm batch," he remarked. Somireddy also ridiculed Jagan's claims about a student's financial struggles, despite the child studying at Delhi Public School and having a family with a three-story house and a gold jewellery shop. He sarcastically compared this to the movie Sankranthi, questioning whether YSRCP was training child artists through its "Paytm batch." The TDP leader accused Jagan's administration of shutting down the agriculture department and failing farmers during its tenure. He demanded answers from Jagan regarding his inaction when black lotus disease affected the dried chilli crop. "If farmers were in trouble, did you take rowdies with you and steal 14 bags of chillies?" he questioned. Somireddy challenged former agriculture ministers Kakani Govardhan Reddy and Kurasala Kannababu to an open debate on the impact of Jagan's governance on



chilli farmers. "We are ready for a discussion on what was done to farmers between 2014-19 and 2019-24," he declared. Meanwhile, Jagan's visit to the chilli yard has stirred controversy, especially with the Model Code of Conduct in effect due to ongoing MLC elections in various districts. Despite the Election Commission not granting permission, Jagan proceeded with his visit, at-

tacking the NDA-led government for failing to provide a minimum support price for dried chilli. Somireddy, however, dismissed Jagan's allegations, asserting that it was under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership that farmers received actual support. "Jagan should stop the dramas now," he stated, warning that the people will not fall for his theatrics again.

## Ambati Rambabu Defends Jagan's Mirchi Yard Visit Calls YSRCP a Farmer-Friendly Govt



**TPN Correspondent Amaravati, Feb 20**  
Former minister and YSRCP senior leader Ambati Rambabu defended YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's visit to the Guntur chilli yard, asserting that the MLC election code does not apply to his visit. Speaking to the media, he claimed that YSRCP has always been a farmer-friendly government, committed to helping those facing agricultural losses. Ambati accused the TDP-led government of failing farmers, pointing out that crop prices have fallen since Chandrababu Naidu took office. "As soon as Chandrababu took oath, paddy prices dropped to ₹1200-1300 per quintal.

Farmers are struggling, yet this government is misleading them," he said. Slamming the TDP for objecting to Jagan's visit, Ambati questioned, "Why is it wrong for Jagan to meet with farmers? TDP leaders seem to get angry when Jagan interacts with the people." He alleged that TDP conspired to prevent the visit, fearing the former CM's influence among farmers. Clarifying the election code issue, Ambati stated that YSRCP is not contesting the ongoing MLC elections and that Jagan was not there to seek votes. "The election code applies to campaign processions and public meetings requiring permission, but not to visits like these. Jagan Mohan Reddy did not go to ask for votes; he went to understand the farmers' problems," he asserted. Taking a dig at TDP, Ambati pointed out that there were no objections when TDP leaders met with Vallabhaneni Vamsi recently. "If meeting an MLA doesn't violate the code, why should visiting farmers be an issue?" he asked. Ambati reiterated YSRCP's commitment to the welfare of farmers and criticized the NDA government for failing to provide a fair price for chilli farmers. He vowed that the party would continue to stand with the farming community and expose the failures of the ruling government.

## YS Sharmila Slams YSRCP for Avoiding Assembly, Calls Super Six a 'Super Flop'



**TPN Correspondent Andhra Pradesh, Feb 20**  
Andhra Pradesh Congress Chief YS Sharmila lashed out at both the ruling coalition and the opposition YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), accusing them of failing the people. Speaking to the media, she stated that Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's Super Six promises had turned into a Super Flop, with the government offering 90 excuses over the last nine months instead of implementing the promised schemes. She also took a dig at YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, alleging that he had time to visit criminals in jail but lacked the courage to step into the assembly to fight for people's issues.

"Jagan is more interested in storytelling at press conferences than confronting the ruling party in the assembly," she remarked. Sharmila further questioned the YSRCP's absence in the assembly, stating that a party that won only 11 seats had no right to claim it represents the people if its MLAs refuse to participate in legislative debates. "If YCP MLAs don't have the courage to enter the assembly this time as well, they should resign immediately," she demanded. She called on the opposition to actively expose the failures of the Chandrababu-led coalition government in the assembly instead of remaining silent.



## Central Govt Approves NDRF Funds for Andhra Pradesh and Four Other States

TPN Correspondent  
New Delhi, Feb 20

The Union government has sanctioned an additional Rs 1554.99 crore under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for five states that have been severely affected by floods, flash floods, landslides, and cyclonic storms in 2024. These funds are aimed at aiding the recovery efforts and alleviating the suffering of people in the affected regions.

A high-level committee led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah approved the additional central assistance for the states, including Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Telangana, and Tripura. The funds have been allocated as follows:

- Andhra Pradesh: Rs 608.08 crore
- Nagaland: Rs 170.99 crore
- Odisha: Rs 255.24 crore
- Telangana: Rs 231.75 crore



- Tripura: Rs 288.93 crore

Amit Shah, in a post on social media platform X, reiterated the Modi government's commitment to standing firmly in support of disaster-affected people, stating, "The Modi government stands like a rock in support of the disaster-affected people. On Wednesday, the MHA approved an additional central assistance of Rs 1554.99 crore to Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Tel-

angana, and Tripura under the NDR fund." This approval is over and above the already allocated Rs 18,322.80 crore released by the Centre to 27 states under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

The NDRF funds will be adjusted with 50% of the opening balance available in the SDRF for the year. The funds released by the Centre are essential to support the recovery and rehabilitation processes, especially for states that have faced significant damage from natural disasters.

In total, during the financial year 2024-25, the Centre has released substantial financial assistance across different funds: Rs 18,322.80 crore from SDRF to 27 states, Rs 4,808.30 crore from NDRF to 18 states, and additional funds from both the State and National Disaster Mitigation Funds (SDMF and NDMF).

## TTD Services to Be Simplified - Nara Lokesh

Efforts to reduce queue times for Srivari darshan

TTD online services expanded globally for easier access

Temple services and ticket booking to be further simplified

TPN Correspondent  
Tirupati, Feb 20

With more than 60,000 devotees visiting Tirumala daily, darshan wait times have been a major concern. Addressing these challenges, AP Minister Nara Lokesh announced plans to streamline TTD services to minimize waiting times and enhance devotees' experience.

Speaking at the International Temples Convention and Expo in Tirupati, Lokesh emphasized the government's commitment to ensuring seamless darshan. He stated that online booking and temple services will be further simplified, making it easier for devotees worldwide to access TTD facilities. Lokesh highlighted that TTD's online services have already expanded globally, and the government is working on bringing devotees even closer to temples through improved accessibility and digital initiatives.



His remarks come amid growing concerns over long wait times in queue complexes, with devotees urging authorities to implement better crowd management measures.

## BIS Conducts 6<sup>th</sup> Science Teachers Training on Learning Science via Standards

BIS Vijayawada organizes training for 40 science teachers in Paderu

Focus on integrating standards into science education through Standards Clubs

Officials emphasize the importance of quality and standardization in education



TPN Correspondent  
Vijayawada, Feb 20

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Vijayawada, successfully conducted the 6th Training Programme for Science Teachers on Learning Science via Standards (LSVS) on February 19, 2025, at Coffee House, ITDA, Paderu. The event was attended by 40 science teachers from the Alluri Sita Ramaraju District who guide Standards Clubs in schools.

Shri P. Brahmaji Rao, District Educational Officer, highlighted the role of lesson plans in helping students understand quality and standards, preparing them to handle real-life challenges confidently.

Shri D. Vivek Vardhan Reddy, Scientist C & Deputy Director, BIS Vijayawada, inaugurated the program and stated, "This approach will help students excel in science and contribute meaningfully to society." He also provided an overview of BIS activities, including testing, certification, training, and advocacy.

L. Rajani, Deputy Director, Tribal Welfare, Alluri Sita Ramaraju District, praised BIS for promoting quality consciousness among schoolchildren through Standards Clubs. She commended the LSVS training program for equipping teachers with tools to inspire students in quality education and standardization.

The participants were also trained on using the BIS website and BIS Care App, which serve as platforms for sharing information about quality and standards. The program featured in-depth presentations on scientific principles and their practical applications in everyday products. Teachers expressed their appreciation for the valuable insights gained from the training.

## Ministers Campaign for Graduate MLC Candidate in Bapatla

Ministers Gottipati Ravi Kumar and Kolusu Parthasarathy campaign in Vemuru and Bapatla

Appeal to elect Alapati with a record majority in Graduate MLC elections

Criticize previous government for farmers' hardships, highlight welfare schemes under CM Chandrababu

TPN Correspondent  
Bapatla, Feb 20

Power Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar and Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy visited Bapatla district as part of their campaign for Graduate MLC candidate Alapati in Vemuru and Bapatla constituencies. Addressing the public, they appealed to educated voters to support Alapati, recalling how he had won three MLC seats earlier even while in opposition.

Minister Ravi Kumar highlighted that in the past seven months, the government led by CM Chandrababu Naidu has implemented several welfare schemes, including:

- Timely grain procurement from farmers and payments within 24 hours
- Clearing ₹1,674 crore pending dues left by the previous government to farmers



- Reintroducing pensions, free gas, and Anna canteens
  - Speeding up Polavaram and Amaravati capital construction
- Taking a dig at former CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, Ravi Kumar alleged that Jagan betrayed the farmers who contributed 33,000 acres for the capital and left



Andhra Pradesh without a proper capital. He warned voters that if Jagan is given another chance, even God cannot save the state.

The ministers urged voters to support alliance candidates, ensuring victory in the Graduate MLC elections for a progressive Andhra Pradesh.

## VMC Gears Up for Summer: Commissioner Reviews Water Supply & Infrastructure Plan



TPN Correspondent  
Vijayawada, Feb 20

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Dhyanchandra H M has emphasized that residents should not face

any inconvenience due to service disruptions during the summer season. On Wednesday, he held a review meeting with engineering staff at the corporation's main office to assess preparedness and discuss solutions.

The Commissioner instructed officials to ensure a steady drinking water supply, particularly in hilly areas, and to arrange water tankers to address shortages. Citing last year's water scarcity issues, he urged officials to plan in advance and take preventive measures for uninterrupted supply. Additionally, he directed teams to activate

all borewells and conduct field inspections to identify and fix water leakages promptly. Assistant engineers were assigned to engage with residents, assess their concerns, and implement solutions efficiently.

The meeting also covered plans for on-going infrastructure projects and park maintenance. The Commissioner stressed the need for a structured summer action plan, which will be further reviewed in the next meeting.

Senior officials, including Superintending Engineers P. Satyanarayana and P. Satyakumari, along with executive engineers, deputy executive engineers, and assistant engineers, participated in the meeting.

## NRI Vallabhaneni Giri Donates ₹50,000 for CCTV Installation in Tiruvur PS

TPN Correspondent  
Tiruvur, Feb 20

NRI Vallabhaneni Giri from Vissanapet Lashmipuram has generously donated ₹50,000 to the Tiruvur Police Department for the installation of CCTV cameras to enhance security in the town.

On Wednesday, Giri handed over the contribution to Ci, who appreciated the noble gesture aimed at improving public safety and crime prevention.

SI K.V.G.V. Satyanarayana of Tiruvur Police Station thanked Giri for his commitment to community welfare, emphasizing that CCTV surveillance plays a crucial role in crime monitoring and law enforcement.



The Tiruvur police have assured that the funds will be utilized effectively to install surveillance cameras at key locations, enhancing security measures for residents.

## Rowdy Sheeter Under Investigation: Nuzvidu Sub-Collector Probes Complaints

Multiple complaints filed against female rowdy sheeter Davuluri Prabhavathi

Nuzvidu Sub-Collector Smaran Raj conducts inquiry on Collector's orders

Over 13 criminal cases registered; summons issued to Prabhavathi & family

TPN Correspondent  
Nuzvidu, Feb 20

Authorities in the joint Krishna district have launched a special investigation into Davuluri Prabhavathi, a notorious rowdy sheeter accused of threatening and harassing villagers in Marribandham and Sita Ramapuram villages of Nuzvidu mandal. Following multiple complaints to the Eluru District Collector, an inquiry was ordered, led by Nuzvidu Sub-Collector B Smaran Raj.

Prabhavathi, a former bank manager,

was previously dismissed from service due to irregularities but allegedly continued her unlawful activities. With over 13 cases registered against her in various police stations, Nuzvidu police had already opened a rowdy sheet in the past. Reports indicate that she has been involved in cheating, threats, and attacks, causing severe distress among villagers.

Following the inquiry, official records confirmed the authenticity of villagers' complaints. Based on this,

the Nuzvidu First Class Magistrate and Sub-Collector issued summons to Prabhavathi and her family members, binding them under legal provisions. Prabhavathi has sought two days to respond, and the authorities have granted a deadline. Government officials stated that further investigation will be conducted at the Nuzvidu Sub-Collector's office, and appropriate legal action will follow. The case has now become a major topic of discussion within law enforcement circles in the joint Krishna district.



## Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhar Offers Prayers at Srikalahasti Temple



TPN Correspondent  
Srikalahasti, Feb 20

Union Minister for Rural Development and Communication Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar visited the famous Srikalahasti Swara Swamy temple along with his family members on Wednesday. Upon arrival, he was welcomed with Poornakumbham by Srikalahasti MLA Bojjala Venkata Sudheer Reddy and temple Executive Officer T. Bapireddy. The minister and his family had a special darshan of Srikalahasti Swara Swamy and Sri Gnana Prasunamba. As part of the temple tradi-

tion, Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar's family was felicitated at Sri Medha Gurudakshinamurthy Sannidhanam with a shesha vastra, and a portrait of Srikalahasti Swara Swamy along with Sri Gnana Prasunamba was presented to them. The temple priests and Vedic scholars performed special Vedic rituals and offered blessings to the minister and his family. BJP State Secretary and Assembly Party Convener Kola Anand, along with Amarnath Melagalam Subramaniam and other dignitaries, participated in the event.

## No Need to Panic About GBS Syndrome: Collector

TPN Correspondent  
Vizianagaram, Feb 20

Vizianagaram District Collector Dr. BR Ambedkar assured the public that Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) is a rare but treatable nerve-related disease. He emphasized that it is not new and occurs in some individuals after viral or bacterial infections.



The Collector held a review meeting with officials on Wednesday, directing them to strengthen preventive measures. He stated that a special department has been established at the Government General Hospital (GGH) with medicines and necessary treatment.

He urged the public to maintain hygiene, consume clean food and water, and seek medical help if symptoms appear. Officials were instructed to chlorinate drinking water, prevent contamination, and enhance sanitation programs.

GGH Superintendent Dr. S. Appalanaidu and District Medical & Health Officer Dr. S. Jeevanarani explained that GBS is an autoimmune disorder where the immune system attacks nerves, leading to weakness, mobility issues, and breathing difficulties. They noted that 80% recover naturally, 15% need treatment, and 5% face severe complications.

- Seek immediate medical attention if symptoms appear
- Maintain hygiene, wash hands regularly
- Drink boiled or purified water
- Rapid Response Team (RRT) formed for surveillance
- Daily reports from hospitals being monitored
- No confirmed GBS cases in the district
- Adequate medical facilities, medicines available

Officials including ZP In-charge CEO R. Venkataraman, DPO T. Venkateswara Rao, RWS SE Kavita, Municipal Commissioner P. Nallanaiah, and DCHS Dr. Rajyalakshmi attended the meeting.

## GV Sundar's Victory Imminent in MLC Elections: Harsha Kumar

TPN Correspondent  
Mandapeta, Feb 20

Former MP GV Harsha Kumar has asserted that opposition to the ruling alliance in the MLC elections is inevitable, and his son GV Sundaram's victory is certain. Addressing a media conference at Sri Kamakshi Kalyana Mandapam in Mandapeta on Wednesday, he strongly criticized TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, accusing him of deceiving the public with false promises before 2014 and failing to deliver on any commitments made during his tenure. Harsha Kumar claimed that Chandrababu Naidu was rejected by the people in past elections for failing to fulfill promises and has now repeated the same mistakes with his Super Six guarantees in 2024. He ques-

tioned the status of the free bus scheme, the ₹15,000 aid for every school-going child, and the ₹1,500 monthly allowance for women over 18, calling them hollow assurances. He also alleged that the unemployed youth have received no benefits under the coalition government, leading to growing public dissatisfaction. He further accused Chandrababu Naidu of



putting immense pressure on MLAs and ministers to secure victory for the ruling party candidate. He claimed that leaders and activists from the Jana Sena Party are unhappy with the government's direction and are shifting their support to independent candidate GV Sundaram.

Harsha Kumar appealed to voters to support GV Sundaram, stating that he has a clear vision and a manifesto aimed at empowering the youth. Several prominent local leaders, including Yadla Rajesh, Ganta Bhaskar, Vinukoti Surya Prakash, Sade Charan, Nalla Devaraj, Virulla Satyanarayana, and others, participated in the event, extending their backing for Sundaram in the Graduate MLC elections.

## Collector Shan Mohan reviews Mahashivratri arrangements



TPN Correspondent  
Kakinada Dist, Feb 20

Kakinada District Collector Shan Mohan conducted a review meeting at Sagili Kshetra on Wednesday to assess the ar-

rangements for Mahashivratri celebrations at Padagaya Kshetra in Pithapuram. Officials from multiple departments participated in the discussion to ensure a smooth and well-organized festival.

Speaking after the review, the Collector stated that around one lakh devotees are expected to visit the temple on February 26. To facilitate a hassle-free experience, necessary arrangements are being put in place. He emphasized that priority should be given to common devotees, ensuring they receive a proper darshan without unnecessary delays.

The Collector directed officials to maintain punctuality in all arrangements and urged the temple authorities to avoid inconveniencing devotees for VIP darshan. He called for cooperation from all departments to ensure the festival runs smoothly.

The meeting was attended by Kakinada DSP Manish Devaraj Patil, RTO S Mallibabu, Endowment Department DC DLV Ramesh Babu, Tahsildar P Gopalakrishna, Circle Inspector G Srinivas, urban SIs, Field Operations Officer Katnam Jagannath Srinivas, and other officials.

## German Team Inspects Natural Farming in Eluru



TPN Correspondent  
Eluru, Feb 20

A German delegation touring Andhra Pradesh praised the natural farming practices being implemented in Eluru district for their sustainability and large-scale adoption. On the third day of their statewide visit, the delegation inspected natural farming fields in Venkatapuram, Eluru mandal.

The team examined bio-inputs such as neem infusion and lemon juice solution used in paddy cultivation and inspected A-grade paddy models and compact blocks in the farm of T. Jyothi. Team member Lucas described the techniques as high-tech natural farming

and expressed admiration for their large-scale implementation.

Lucas stated, "In Germany and Europe, organic farms are usually small, with only a few farmers adopting such methods. It is commendable that Andhra Pradesh farmers are practicing organic farming on a large scale. This visit has reinforced our commitment to promoting agro-ecological farming in Germany."

Later, the delegation will visit the ATM (Any Time Money) farming model at the farm of S.K. Naveensha in Adamilli, Kamavarapukota Mandal, as part of their continued study on natural farming innovations in the region.

## Case Must Be Filed Against Jagan for Insulting Police - Kotamreddy



TPN Correspondent  
Nellore, Feb 20

Nuda Chairman Kotamreddy Srinivasulu Reddy has demanded that a case be filed against Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy for his derogatory remarks against the police. Speaking to the media at the district party office, Kotamreddy stated that Jagan is bound to go to jail soon and accused him of being a brand ambassador for anarchy and destruction. He alleged that Jagan had misused the police force while in power, filing false cases against political opponents but was now making irresponsible remarks against the same police. Kotamreddy questioned whether Jagan had not tortured MP Raghurama Krishnamraju in custody, yet now he was speaking against the police. He asserted that Jagan lacked respect for democracy and that his com-

ments on the police should be taken seriously.

Kotamreddy also criticized Jagan's recent visit to Vamsi, calling it a meeting of two jail-bound leaders. He claimed that Jagan had betrayed his own family and was now daydreaming about returning to power, which was impossible. Kotamreddy further criticized Jagan's associates, stating that those who had disrespected women in the Assembly should be ashamed. He reminded the public of Vamsi's past comments against Chandrababu Naidu and his wife and called out Kodali Nani for his behavior.

City councilors Mamidala Madhu, Pitti Satya Kuvvarapu Balaji, Sheikh Zaheer, Moyuddin, Thambi Sujana, Shahid, Pirigala Naveen, Vinukula Sudhakar, and other TDP leaders were present at the event.

## Sagging Road Reconstructed Using Lime Stabilization

TPN Correspondent  
P. Gannavaram, Feb 20

The road from Ambajipet Center to P. Gannavaram three-road junction is undergoing reconstruction using modern lime stabilization technology to address sagging issues.

While the BT road from Ambajipet Center to Potavaram has already been completed, a 360-meter stretch near Potavaram had sunk, requiring a more advanced construction approach. To ensure long-

term stability, the entire road section has been excavated to a depth of one meter, and the lime stabilization method is be-



ing implemented.

As part of this process, a layer of limestone powder is laid on the excavated surface and compacted using a procleaner. Following this, black gravel will be placed in layers to reinforce the road structure and prevent future sinking.

According to R&B DEE G. Rajendra, this method will strengthen the foundation, ensuring greater durability and stability of the road for years to come.

## Private Hospitals Must Adhere to Health Department Rules: DM&HO

TPN Correspondent  
Salur, Feb 20

District Medical and Health Officer Dr. S. Bhaskara Rao has directed private hospitals to strictly follow the rules set by the Medical and Health Department. As part of this, he conducted surprise inspections on private hospitals and scanning centers in Salur on Wednesday.

Dr. Bhaskara Rao inspected Philadelphia Leprosy Hospital, Jyoti Hospital and Scanning Centers, and Lakshmi Diagnostic Center in Mamidipalli. He reviewed their registration

and renewal certificates, verified hospital records, and instructed that patient details be properly documented. Lab records and medical test details were also examined, with hospitals directed to clearly display health check-up information for patients.

The biomedical waste management system was inspected, and hospitals were instructed to strictly follow disposal guidelines. The scanning centers were checked for compliance with the PCPNDT Act, including proper record-keeping of pregnant women's scans in Form F and the display of required posters.

Dr. Bhaskara Rao emphasized that an anesthesia doctor must be available for surgical procedures, and fire safety measures should be in place with staff trained in equipment handling. He also directed hospitals to display health awareness posters.

The DM&HO warned that strict action will be taken against hospitals found violating the health department's guidelines.

Health Office officials Demo V. Sanyasirao, Y. Yogeeshwara Reddy, CC Srinivasa Rao, and others accompanied him during the inspections.





# Green Buildings: Redefining Urban Sustainability and Cutting Carbon Footprints



**Dr. Peteti Seshabala**  
(Environmental Expert)

Did you know that buildings account for nearly 40% of global energy use and a third of greenhouse gas emissions? While they symbolize modernity and progress, our towering malls, corporate offices, and high-rise complexes come with a hidden cost: massive energy consumption and environmental degradation. India, as one of the fastest-urbanizing nations, stands at a critical juncture. How we choose to design and build will determine whether our cities thrive sustainably or crumble under their ecological footprint. The solution? Green buildings. These structures are not just eco-friendly—they are transformative, reducing carbon footprints while redefining how we coexist with nature.

## Green Buildings: A Sustainable Alternative

Green buildings are more than just environmentally conscious structures. They create healthier, cost-effective, and energy-efficient spaces without compromising aesthetics or comfort. Here's how they achieve this:

### 1. Energy Efficiency: Cutting Carbon, Saving Costs

**Smart Design:** Green buildings maximize natural ventilation and daylight, minimizing the need for air conditioning and artificial lighting.

**Efficient Systems:** With advanced HVAC systems, LED lighting, and automated energy controls, these buildings cut energy consumption by up to 30%, significantly reducing carbon emissions.

### 2. Harnessing Nature: Powering Buildings Sustainably

**Solar Power:** Rooftop solar panels generate clean energy, reducing electricity demand. For instance, a green office building in Bangalore offsets 40% of its energy needs through rooftop solar alone.

**Geothermal and Wind Energy:** Innovative systems tap into renewable sources to power operations sustainably, cutting reliance on fossil fuels.

### 3. Eco-Friendly Materials: Building Responsibly

**Low-Carbon Alternatives:** Mate-

rials like recycled steel, bamboo, and fly ash bricks drastically reduce emissions compared to conventional options. **Durability and Affordability:** These materials are not only sustainable but also cost-effective in the long run, making them ideal for large-scale adoption.

### 4. Natural Carbon Sequestration: Turning Buildings into Carbon Sinks

**Green Roofs and Vertical Gardens:** These features absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, cool the air, and mitigate urban heat, creating healthier environments for city dwellers.

**Landscaping:** Thoughtful tree planting enhances air quality and establishes cooler microclimates around buildings.

### 5. Waste and Water Management: Closing the Loop

**Rainwater Harvesting:** Green buildings capture and store rainwater, reducing dependency on municipal supplies.

**Greywater Recycling:** Treated wastewater is reused for irrigation and cleaning, slashing water waste by up to 50%.

### Corporate Sustainability and ESG: The Added Value

Green buildings are not just an environmental necessity; they are also a strategic advantage in the age of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance).

**LEED Certification:** Globally recognized, LEED certification enhances a building's marketability while improving energy efficiency and lowering operational costs.

**GRI Ratings:** The Global Reporting Initiative framework provides transparency in sustainability efforts, building investor trust.

**Demand in ESG Roles:** As corporations prioritize sustainability, the demand for experts in ESG compliance, green building design, and sustainable urban planning has surged.

**Business Benefits:** Companies with green buildings report lower utility costs, improved employee productivity, and stronger reputations among eco-conscious consumers. By integrating sustainability into business models, organizations

not only fulfill environmental obligations but also strengthen their long-term profitability.

### India's Role in the Green Building Movement

India is already showcasing its potential in sustainable construction. Iconic projects such as the ITC Green Center in Gurgaon, Infosys campuses, and the CII-Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre are leading the charge, demonstrating that sustainability and innovation go hand in hand.

However, the scale of adoption is still limited. To realize the true potential of green architecture, India must:

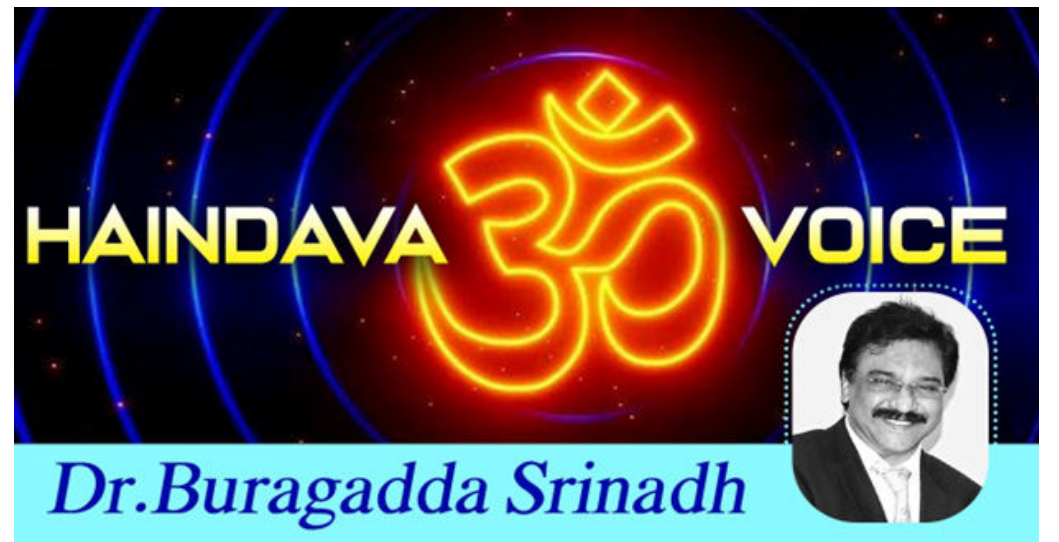
- **Incentivize Green Practices:** Governments can encourage adoption through tax benefits, subsidies, and low-interest loans for green construction projects.
- **Strengthen Building Codes:** Enforce the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) to ensure all new constructions meet green standards.
- **Raise Awareness:** Educate builders, architects, and homeowners about the environmental and economic advantages of green buildings.

### A Call to Action

Every building constructed today is an opportunity to combat climate change. By choosing green architecture, we can create urban spaces that are energy-efficient, resource-conscious, and environmentally friendly.

Imagine a city where buildings produce more energy than they consume, where green rooftops cool the air, and where clean water flows freely through innovative recycling systems. This vision is not a distant dream—it is a tangible future we can create together.

As India races toward modernization, green buildings offer a path to sustainable urban growth. They are not just structures; they are commitments to a healthier planet. The time to act is now. By prioritizing sustainable practices, we ensure a legacy of progress that benefits both people and the planet.



## Reviving Heritage: Embrace Religious Tourism in the Himalayas

The Himalayas, often referred to as both a divine gift and a natural marvel, stand as a profound source of spirituality and inspiration. This majestic mountain range, known for its towering peaks, lush valleys, and serene rivers, is not only a geographical wonder but also a spiritual sanctuary. Home to numerous sacred sites, each steeped in history and reverence, the Himalayas serve as a treasure trove of cultural heritage. It is indeed a privilege for India to have such a magnificent landscape, offering solace and divine inspiration to countless pilgrims and travelers alike.

Despite its unparalleled beauty and spiritual significance, the potential of religious tourism in the Himalayas has been largely overlooked, especially since India's independence. Successive governments, particularly during Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure, downplayed the importance of temple and religious tourism, prioritizing pseudo-secular ideologies over the rich spiritual heritage of the country. The immense potential of sacred sites for promoting economic growth through religious tourism has been largely ignored, depriving the hill regions of vital development and recognition.

Now, it is time to reclaim our cultural heritage and actively promote religious tourism. This would not only honor India's traditions but also generate economic benefits for the region. By fostering temple tourism, the local communities in the hill regions can benefit through job creation, improved livelihoods, and infrastructure development. The Uttarakhand government has a unique opportunity to take the lead in this initiative, starting with the upcoming Saraswati Pushkaralu event, which is set to take place from May 15 to 26, 2025, in Mana village, near the revered Badrinath.

The Saraswati Pushkaralu, celebrated once every 12 years, honors the Saraswati River, revered as the goddess of knowledge, wisdom, and the arts. Devotees believe that bathing in the river's sacred waters during the festival cleanses sins and brings divine blessings. The festival holds immense spiritual significance, as it provides a chance for pilgrims to honor Goddess Saraswati, purify their souls, and seek blessings for knowledge and success. It is also a time for performing prayers, meditation, and sacred rituals, drawing pilgrims from all over India.

To ensure the success of the Saraswati Pushkaralu, the Uttarakhand government must implement a well-structured plan to accommodate the influx of pilgrims. This plan should include improving infrastructure, providing transportation and accommodation options, and ensuring smooth access to pilgrimage sites. Promoting the event through media channels, including newspapers, and establishing dedicated helplines at key travel points like New Delhi railway station and airports will further assist travelers. By taking these steps, the government can ensure a seamless and enriching experience for devotees, while simultaneously boosting religious tourism and the local economy.

With its cultural and spiritual richness, the Himalayas stand as an ideal destination for religious tourism. By embracing and promoting these sacred traditions, India can preserve its heritage, support local communities, and foster spiritual growth for generations to come.

## Graduates' MLC Elections - The Future of the Government Education System!

### A Time for Every Voter to Reflect

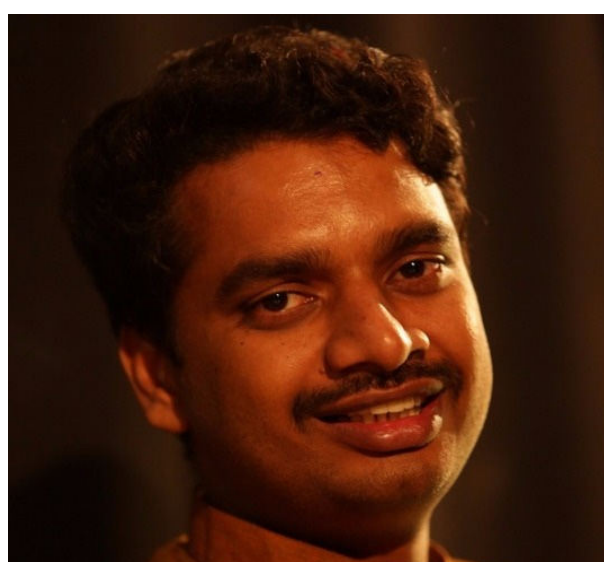
The ongoing Graduates' MLC elections are not just about voting; they are an opportunity to reshape the government's education policy. Over the past decade, governments have spent billions on the education system, yet why do ordinary people still prefer private schools? Why do the children of government officials and public representatives stay away from government schools? Do they not trust government schools themselves?

### The Reality: High Costs – Low Results

**Annual expenditure per student:** It costs around ₹90,000 to ₹1,00,000 per student in government schools.

**Why do parents lack trust?** Quality issues, lack of facilities, doubts over teachers' efficiency – all these factors are pushing people away from government schools.

**Do government officials and public representatives send their children to government schools?**



If an ordinary citizen cannot trust government schools for their children's future, why don't those running the government send their children to these schools?



## Graduates' MLC Elections In Telangana

Does this indicate a lack of confidence in the government education system?

If this continues, the government education system is bound to become ineffective.

### Before voting for candidates in these MLC elections, ask these questions:

- **What is your plan to improve the standard of government schools?**
- **What steps will you take to strengthen**

- **the government education system? Will you make an effort to provide at least private school-level facilities in every government school?**
- **What measures will you take to improve the attendance and teaching quality of government teachers?**
- **What actions will you take to increase trust in government schools?**

### What is our responsibility as graduates?

These elections should not be just about politics; they must shape the future of our children. If we elect incapable leaders again, the government education system will only deteriorate further. If a candidate does not clearly communicate these issues to the public, we should not support their candidacy. This time, graduates must think before casting their votes – let's choose a candidate who will bring change for the future of our children, not just with words, but with actions!





## "If Forced, We Can Be Aggressive Too": Army Chief On Pakistan

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Indian Army Chief General Uday Shankar has stated that India's stance toward Pakistan, particularly along the Line of Control (LoC), has become significantly more assertive since 2014. In an exclusive interview with ANI, General Shankar conveyed that India's communication with Pakistan now makes it clear that any provocation would be met with a robust response.

"We have been clear that we will be assertive in our communication and, if needed, aggressive," General Shankar said, emphasizing India's resolve in protecting its interests. The Army Chief underscored that both sides have understood India's commitment to its security and its intent to act when provoked.

A key point in General Shankar's interview was his assessment of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) following the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. He noted that the revocation had significantly reduced the number of terrorists and local recruits in the region, while eliminating the confusion among the people about their identity.

"The recruitment has reduced. Local terrorist numbers have gone down," he explained. He further explained how the abrogation helped resolve the identity crisis, with children now clearly identifying as part of India, symbolized by their choice to draw the Indian flag in school.

General Shankar also highlighted the security forces' collaborative efforts, including the theme of "terrorism to tourism," which he sees as having brought success. With over five lakh pilgrims participating in the Amarnath Yatra, a figure previously unheard of, the Army Chief noted that efforts to foster development in the region are yielding positive results.



## In First "Green Budget", Rajasthan Announces 1.25 Lakh Government Jobs

TPN Correspondent | Jaipur

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister, Diya Kumari, has unveiled the state's first "green budget," placing a strong emphasis on climate change adaptation, environmental sustainability, and large-scale infrastructure development. The budget aims to steer Rajasthan toward becoming a \$350 billion economy by 2030.

In her 138-minute budget speech, Diya Kumari announced several key measures, starting with an ambitious plan to generate employment opportunities. The state plans to recruit 1.25 lakh government jobs in the coming year, with an additional 1.5 lakh jobs expected in the private sector. To further promote youth employment, Rajasthan will implement the Rajasthan Employment Policy 2025.

The budget also sets an estimated revenue receipt of Rs 2,94,536.49 crore for 2025-26, with revenue expenditure projected at Rs 3,25,545 crore, resulting in a revenue deficit of Rs 31,009.41 crore and a fiscal deficit of Rs 84,643 crore, equaling 4.25% of the state's Gross Domestic Product (GSDP).

Infrastructure development is another major focus. The Finance Minister announced the creation of a New Aero City near Kota Airport and the improvement of 29 airstrips across the state. Rs 250 crore has been allocated to improve Jaipur's traffic system, and Rs 12,000 crore has been earmarked for expanding metro services. An ambitious plan for developing 9 GreenField Expressways will receive Rs 60,000 crore in funding.

Rajasthan is also prioritizing renewable energy. Households installing solar plants will receive 150 free electricity units per month, and Rs 250 crore has been allocated for the Green Aravalli Development Project. To enhance energy production, the state will add 6,400 MW in 2025-26 and introduce new agricultural and domestic connections.

Water availability is a key concern, with new water connections planned for 20 lakh households. The budget also includes provisions for the industrial sector, including the establishment of the Rajasthan Mineral Exploration Company and the Center of Excellence for Mines and Minerals.

# Oil-rich Qatar announces \$10 billion investment in India

- \$10 billion investment in India across key sectors
- QIA to open an office in India for smooth execution
- Leaders discuss Free Trade Agreement and condemn terrorism.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Qatar has committed to a significant \$10 billion investment in India, as announced in a joint statement following a high-level meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on February 18, 2025, in New Delhi.

The investment, which amounts to approximately Rs 85,000 crore, marks a major step in strengthening the bilateral ties between the two nations. The two leaders also discussed potential collaborations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and Qatar, signaling a further deepening of economic and trade relations.

The statement highlighted that the investment would be directed towards key sectors including infrastructure, technology, manufacturing, food security, logistics, and hospitality. To ensure smooth execution of these investments, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) will



open an office in India.

This collaboration is seen as a reflection of the growing economic partnership between the two countries, with Qatar seeking to enhance its

presence in India's rapidly expanding market. Both leaders also condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, underscoring their commitment to regional peace and stability.



## Swara Bhasker Faces Backlash Over 'Fictionalised Torture of Hindus' Tweet on Chhava Film

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Actor Swara Bhasker's recent post comparing the outrage over the fictionalized torture of Hindus in the film Chhava to the response to the Mahakumbh stampede has stirred controversy and invited strong criticism. In her post on X, Bhasker questioned why society seemed more enraged over a dramatized depiction of the torture of Maratha king Sambhaji in the historical film Chhava than the tragic deaths during the stampede at the Mahakumbh Mela in January. The stampede claimed at least 30 lives.

The movie Chhava, directed by Laxman Utekar and produced by Dinesh Vijan, is a historical action film about Sambhaji, Shivaji Maharaj's son. It portrays the brutal torture of Sambhaji by Mughal forces, based on historical accounts of his refusal to surrender forts or convert to Islam. Vicky Kaushal plays the role of Sambhaji, and the film is currently running successfully in theaters.

In her post, Bhasker wrote, A society that is more enraged at the

heavily embellished partly fictionalized filmy torture of Hindus from 500 years ago than they are at the horrendous death by stampede & mismanagement + then alleged JCB bulldozer handling of corpses - is a brain & soul-dead society.

Many social media users, however, found Bhasker's comparison offensive. Journalist Swati Chaturvedi responded, emphasizing that there was nothing fictional about the torture of Sambhaji, a historical event that has been widely documented. Lawyer Jai Anant Dehradai condemned Bhasker's post, accusing her of trivializing Sambhaji's sacrifice and deliberately insulting the sentiments of millions of Indians. Other users, including Rishi Bagree, also criticized Bhasker's post, defending the film's portrayal of historical events and stating that it didn't even capture the full extent of the torture that Sambhaji endured. Bhasker's remarks came at a time when "Chhava" had already been involved in controversy due to a scene featuring a folk dance that was later removed following objections.

## Tamil Nadu Ready For Language War": Udhayanidhi Stalin Amid Row Over Hindi



TPN Correspondent | Chennai

The ongoing battle between Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK and the BJP escalated on Tuesday, fueled by the center's proposed three-language policy and accusations of Hindi imposition. Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin sparked fresh tensions by stating, "States that accept Hindi lose their mother tongue," and declaring that Tamil Nadu was prepared for a "language war" over the issue.

Mr. Stalin's remarks were a direct challenge to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's stance, which had linked the state's eligibility for around Rs 2,400 crore in funding for the Samagra Siksha mission to its adoption of the National Education Policy (NEP), which includes the controversial three-language formula. This policy advocates the teaching of Hindi, along with regional languages and English, in schools across India.

Stalin also reiterated a criticism from Chief Minister MK Stalin, who had earlier accused Pradhan of "blackmail," pointing out that Tamil Nadu is merely seeking its due—both in terms of education funding from the central government and the fair share of tax devolution.

## As Kashmir's Achabal Spring Runs Dry, CM Omar Abdullah Raises Alarm on Water Scarcity

TPN Correspondent | J&K

An emotional video of an elderly woman mourning the drying up of Achabal Spring in Kashmir's Anantnag district has struck a chord with many across social media. In the video, the woman is seen addressing the once vibrant spring, asking, "Oh divine spring, where have you disappeared, my dear?"

Achabal Spring, located in the famous Mughal Garden, was built in the 17th century by Emperor Jahangir's wife, Noor Jahan. For centuries, the spring has been a significant source of water and a symbol of the region's rich heritage. Locals say the spring has never run dry before, making its current condition all the more heartbreaking for those who have lived with its continuous flow.

In the video, the elderly woman cries out to the spring in despair, "Oh divine spring, why have you stopped giving us water? What have we done to you? Come back to life... Oh Allah, let the water gush forth once more." Her heartfelt plea, coupled with her emotional appeal, has resonated with countless people who are saddened by the loss of this natural treasure.



# Trump Signs Executive Order To Expanding Access To IVF Treatments

- Trump expands IVF access with executive order.
- Move faces conservative backlash over embryo Use
- Aims to lower costs and improve availability



TPN Correspondent | Washington

President Donald Trump took a significant step toward increasing access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) by signing an executive order aimed at reducing the cost and improving availability of the treatment. The order directs his advisors to provide recommendations within 90 days on how to protect and expand access to IVF, while also focusing on lowering out-of-pocket and insurance costs for families seeking fertility assistance.

"My Administration recognizes the importance of family formation, and as a nation, our public policy must make it easier for loving and longing mothers and fathers to have children," the order reads. "Americans need reliable access to IVF and more affordable treatment options," it continued.

Trump expressed confidence in the support of families, saying, "I think the women and families, husbands, are very appreciative of it," during a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. This move is seen as a surprising development from a president whose administration has been aligned with conservative policies on issues like abortion. While Trump made headlines for his role in the Supreme Court's 2022 decision that overturned federal abortion protections, which earned him strong support from the anti-abortion movement, his support for IVF has stirred controversy within conservative circles.

Though IVF is praised by some as a vital tool for family-building, others in the religious right oppose the procedure, as it often involves creating multiple

embryos, some of which may not be used. In the past, many Republicans, including a majority in the Senate, voted against guaranteeing IVF access.

The Supreme Court's 2022 abortion ruling raised concerns among reproductive rights advocates that IVF could be next on the chopping block, particularly after a court in Alabama ruled that frozen embryos could be considered people, leading some clinics to pause treatments temporarily.

With this executive order, Trump seems to be trying to balance his appeal to conservatives with an eye toward addressing broader voter concerns about fertility treatments. However, the move may provoke opposition from those within his own party who view IVF as inconsistent with pro-life principles.

# Poll Gives Zelensky 57% Approval Rating Despite Trump's 4% Claims



TPN Correspondent | Kyiv

A recent poll conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology revealed that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky enjoys an approval rating of 57%, contradicting claims made by former US President Donald Trump, who suggested Zelensky's approval rating was as low as 4%. Trump's comments, made on Tuesday, came amidst his call for presidential elections in Ukraine, a process that is currently banned under the country's martial law.

Trump's assertion that Zelensky's popularity had plummeted to just 4% was widely criticized, as the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology's poll, which surveyed 1,000 people, found that 57% of respondents expressed trust in the Ukrainian leader. Only 37% of those surveyed disapproved, with the remaining respondents being undecided. The poll also indicated a 5% increase in trust for Zelensky compared to December, despite the ongoing military challenges Ukraine faces due to the war with Russia.

Zelensky's approval ratings had skyrocketed to 90% in March 2022, shortly after Russia's invasion, as Ukrainians rallied behind their president during the early stages of the conflict. Despite setbacks, the poll's authors noted that Zelensky continues to retain a relatively high level of trust from the Ukrainian public.

Trump's remarks align with Russian President Vladimir Putin's assertions that Zelensky is not the legitimate president of Ukraine. However, the Ukrainian constitution, while restricting presidents to a five-year term, allows for an extension until a successor is elected, which has led to debates over Zelensky's term during the ongoing war. Zelensky himself has argued that holding elections is currently impractical due to the war, the large number of Ukrainians either fighting or living abroad, and the significant security risks involved.

The authors of the poll noted that most Ukrainians believe elections should be held only after the war concludes. Despite the contrast in approval figures, it remains unclear how Trump arrived at the 4% rating, with Russian political analysts speculating that it reflects Trump's disregard for factual accuracy.

# Mumbai, Kolkata Vulnerable? NASA Says Chances Of 'City-Killer' Asteroid Hitting Earth



TPN Correspondent | Tel Aviv

NASA has increased the likelihood of asteroid 2024 YR4 colliding with Earth to 3.1 percent, tracking its trajectory as the asteroid continues its orbit. While the risk remains low, the potential impact corridor of 2024 YR4 spans several regions, including the eastern Pacific Ocean, northern South America, the Atlantic Ocean, Africa, the Arabian Sea, and South Asia. This trajectory puts some of the world's most popu-

lated cities at risk, including Mumbai, Kolkata, Dhaka, Bogotá, Abidjan, Lagos, and Khartoum, which together house over 110 million people.

Astronomers have labeled 2024 YR4 as a "city-killer" asteroid, meaning that while its impact would not threaten the planet as a whole, it could cause devastating damage to a city. NASA's predictions were updated from an earlier 2.3% chance of collision, with a revised risk probability for a potential

impact on December 22, 2032.

NASA has been monitoring the asteroid using ground-based telescopes from the International Asteroid Warning Network, and while it is visible through April, it will become too faint to observe until around June 2028. The asteroid's size is estimated to be between 130 and 300 feet wide, and its composition appears typical, without rare metals. If it does not hit Earth, experts predict it could explode mid-air with the force of approximately eight megatons of TNT, over 500 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb.

NASA's report noted that while the risk of impact is still extremely low, the asteroid's path will be better understood as more data becomes available. It is also possible that 2024 YR4 could be ruled out as a threat, as many objects in the past have been after further analysis. The asteroid was first identified on December 27, 2024, by the NASA-funded Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System in Chile and quickly made it to NASA's Sentry risk list on December 31, 2024.

# Hamas Proposes Large-Scale Hostage Release for Permanent Ceasefire with Israel

TPN Correspondent | Israel

Hamas has presented a significant proposal in the ongoing ceasefire talks with Israel, offering to release all remaining captives in the Gaza Strip in one large-scale exchange. This proposal is contingent on securing a lasting ceasefire and the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. Hazem Qassem, a spokesman for Hamas, emphasized the group's commitment to this plan, stating, "We are ready for a second phase in which the prisoners will be exchanged in one go, within the criterion of reaching an agreement that leads to a permanent ceasefire and a complete withdrawal from the Strip."

This offer represents a crucial development in the negotiations, as Hamas seeks not only the release of captives but also the end of Israel's military presence in Gaza. The group, however, rejected Israel's demand for its disar-



mament and removal from Gaza, dismissing such requests as part of a "ridiculous psychological war." Qassem further stressed that the withdrawal or disarmament of Hamas from Gaza is unacceptable.

In a move to demonstrate its commitment to the negotiation process, Hamas has agreed to increase the number of captives to be freed during the next exchange on Saturday, from three to six. The Hostages and Missing

Families Forum welcomed the decision, expressing profound joy at the return of Eliya Cohen, Tal Shoham, Omer Shem Tov, Omer Wenkert, Hisham Al-Sayed, and Avera Mengistu. Hamas made this adjustment in response to requests from mediators and to show their seriousness in upholding the terms of the agreement.

The proposal comes as U.S. President Donald Trump voiced opposition to a phased release of hostages, advocating for all captives to be freed simultaneously, a sentiment echoed by the families of the remaining hostages. Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to worsen, with the death toll surpassing 61,000, as reported by Gaza's Ministry of Health.

# Elon Musk uncovers 'biggest fraud in (US) history': Is there any truth to it?

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk has once again stirred controversy, claiming that his Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) has uncovered massive fraud within the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA). According to Musk, millions of payments are being made to individuals over 150 years old, which he dubbed "the biggest fraud in history."

Musk made these claims during a February 11 press conference in the Oval Office, where he stated that a " cursory examination of Social Security" revealed "crazy things." He specifically pointed to records showing individuals who appeared to be 150 years old. "Now, do you know anyone who's 150? I don't, OK. They should be in the Guinness Book of World Records. I think they're probably dead, or they should be very famous," Musk remarked.

His comments quickly went viral on social media, especially on his platform X, but have since been widely questioned by experts. A closer examination of the situation suggests that Musk's interpretation may be based on a misunderstanding of the SSA's aging technology systems.

The core issue lies with the outdated COBOL programming language used by the SSA, which has been in operation for decades. Experts in computer programming explain that COBOL lacks a built-in date type, which can cause errors in the recording of birthdates. Specifically, when SSA records are missing or incomplete, they are often assigned a default reference date of May 20, 1875. This leads to an anomaly where individuals with missing or incorrect birthdates appear to be over 150 years old.





# Flat Close as Recovery Offsets Early Losses; Banking, Finance, and Realty Support Market Stability"



The domestic stock market ended flat today. They recovered for the second consecutive day. The indices, which started with gains in the morning, soon went into heavy losses. They recovered again with better signals from global markets and heavyweights standing firm. Banking, finance, media, metal and realty shares stood firm and ended flat. Nifty may move at 23,000 and Sensex at 75,600 for a few more days.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 75,967 in the previous session, started at 75,787 on Wednesday. It touched an intraday low of 75,581. It reached an intraday high of 76,338. It finally

closed at 75,939, with a loss of 28 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,847, touched a low of 22,814 and a high of 23,049. It closed at 22,932, down 12 points. The Nifty Bank rose 482 points to settle at 49,570.

In the Nifty50, 25 companies gained while 25 lost. BEL, Hindalco, Eicher Motors, Axis Bank, LT were the top gainers. Dr. Reddy's, TCS, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, Adani Enterprises lost the most. Bank, finance, media, metal, realty, consumer durables, O&G shares rose. IT, pharma, healthcare shares lost.

Market breadth in NSE today is in

favor of buyers. 2879 stocks traded with gains of 2025. 800 lost. 19 shares hit 52-week highs. 361 shares hit 52-week lows.

Rupee settles at 96.95 against dollar. UPL, Kotak Mahindra shares hit 52-week highs today. StarHealth hits all-time high of Rs. 389. Intense Technologies Intelligence gets patent for data processing efficiency. Gujarat Ambuja Exports completes 25% stake acquisition in Mize Sitchem. Thomas Cook India signs MoU with Korea Tourism Organization. Arham Technologies gets order from Atal Nagar Vikas Pradhikaran. Sadhav Shipping Limited has received an order from Pradeep Port Authority.

### Hindalco Industries

Hindalco remains a key player in India's metals sector, particularly in aluminum production. Despite global volatility and fluctuating commodity prices, the company's diversified product portfolio and operational efficiencies help maintain steady cash flows. Investors are watching input cost trends and global demand, keeping a cautious but moderately positive outlook for the long term.



### ICICI Bank



ICICI Bank continues to be a leader in the private banking sector. It benefits from strong digital initiatives, an expanding retail loan portfolio, and improved asset quality. The bank's consistent profit growth and robust risk management have made it a staple blue-chip in the financial sector, with an optimistic medium-term outlook as credit demand recovers.

### Zomato

Zomato, the leading food delivery platform, has shown robust revenue growth driven by increased market penetration and diversified offerings. However, high operating expenses and intense competition have kept profitability in check. The company's push into quick commerce and technology-driven efficiency improvements are expected to help it overcome short-term challenges, although investor sentiment remains mixed.



### Wipro

Wipro has demonstrated resilience amid global IT spending uncertainties. With a diversified client base and strong execution in digital transformation and cloud services, Wipro continues to record steady revenue growth and improving margins. The company is well-positioned to benefit from the ongoing demand for digital solutions, despite potential short-term headwinds from macroeconomic factors.



### BSE Ltd.

BSE Ltd., the operator of the Bombay Stock Exchange, is a critical bellwether for India's equity market. The company has leveraged technology to boost trading volumes and investor participation, and its strong balance sheet underpins future growth. As market liquidity improves and more investors turn to digital platforms, BSE is poised for stable long-term performance despite short-term market volatility.



## Salaries in India to Increase by 9.2% in 2025 Amid Global Uncertainty



Salaries in India are projected to rise by 9.2% in 2025, showing a slight decline from last year's 9.3%, amid global economic uncertainty and slower growth, according to a report by global professional services firm Aon plc.

Aon's Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2024-25, which analyzed data from over 1,400 companies across 45 industries, suggests that while global challenges continue, India's economic outlook remains relatively stable. The survey reveals that salary increments in the country are expected to stabilize in 2025.

The report indicates that salary increases have been on a downward trend since 2022, when companies offered an average 10.6% increase, driven by the aftermath of the Great Resigna-

tion. As the economy adjusted, increments moderated in 2023 and are expected to continue at a similar pace in 2025.

In addition, the survey highlights a significant decrease in attrition rates within India's workforce. The attrition rate dropped to 17.7% in 2024, down from 18.7% in 2023 and 21.4% in 2022. This suggests that the talent pool in India is stabilizing, as fewer employees are leaving their jobs, and companies are able to retain workers more effectively than in the past.

The findings also emphasize the larger trend of stability within India Inc., as companies are increasingly able to manage turnover and offer more predictable salary increments, signaling a shift toward more sustainable employment practices in a volatile global economy.



## SBI Research Predicts India's GDP Growth at 6.3% for FY25

SBI Research has revised India's GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 6.3%, slightly below the National Statistical Office's (NSO) projection of 6.4%. According to SBI's analysis, the country saw growth rates of 6.7% and 5.4% in the first and second quarters of FY25, respectively, with Q3 expected to show a growth range of 6.2% to 6.3%.

The research highlights positive momentum in the economy, with the majority of states showing improved capital expenditure (capex) in Q3. This development indicates a broader effort by regional governments to boost infrastructure investments and contribute to the overall economic performance.

SBI's findings also point to encouraging signs in manufacturing, with the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for the sector showing

favorable growth. The bank's own SBI Index, which tracks various economic indicators, also indicates positive trends in both domestic and global contexts.

The growth estimates suggest that while India's economy is on track for moderate expansion, the slightly lower prediction by SBI compared to the official NSO forecast reflects challenges such as external economic pressures and domestic structural adjustments. Nevertheless, the report underscores a generally optimistic outlook, supported by both government spending and industrial growth.

India's economic performance in Q4 will be crucial in determining whether the GDP growth will meet or fall short of the NSO's expectations for FY25.

## Rupee Depreciates 8 Paise to 86.96 Against US Dollar Amid Persistent Outflows



The Indian rupee fell by 8 paise to 86.96 against the US dollar in early trade on Tuesday, primarily due to sustained foreign fund outflows and a weak performance in domestic equities. This marks the ongoing negative trend for the currency, reflecting broader challenges in the domestic market.

Forex traders attribute the rupee's depreciation to persistent selling by foreign investors in the Indian stock market. This has been compounded by a gradual reduction in the support from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Despite the central bank's interventions, the rupee faces pressure as

foreign investors continue to pull out funds.

The rupee opened at 86.94 against the dollar in the interbank foreign exchange market and soon slipped further to 86.96, showing an 8-paise decline from its previous close. Analysts say that while the RBI's actions and the absence of anticipated US tariffs have somewhat eased trade-related concerns, the domestic macroeconomic environment remains fragile.

India's economic outlook faces several hurdles, with exports continuing to decline for the third consecutive month. In January, Indian exports

fell by 2.38% year-on-year, reaching \$36.43 billion, a sign of weakening demand in global markets. Additionally, the trade deficit for the month widened significantly to \$22.99 billion, signaling ongoing challenges in balancing the nation's trade account.

The persistent pressure on the rupee and the macroeconomic issues reflect the complex economic environment in India, which faces rising concerns of capital outflows, trade imbalances, and subdued global demand. Analysts suggest that until there is a shift in these fundamental factors, the rupee is likely to remain under pressure in the near term.





## WhatsApp Faces Stricter Rules Under EU's Digital Services Act After Surge in User Base



WhatsApp could soon face tighter regulations under the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA) following an increase in its user base. The popular messaging platform, owned by Meta, recently reported a surge in usage, which may lead to the company being subjected to stricter oversight.

Meta's latest filing, dated February 14, reveals that WhatsApp Channels averaged approximately 46.8 million monthly active users in the second half of 2024. WhatsApp Channels function as feeds within the platform, most of which are operated by news outlets, public figures, and organizations to engage with their

audiences.

The surge in WhatsApp Channels' user base puts the platform under closer scrutiny, as the DSA applies more stringent rules to platforms with large user bases. Under the new regulations, companies like Meta are required to take additional measures to ensure user safety, prevent illegal content, and improve transparency, among other provisions. WhatsApp's growing influence, particularly through its Channels feature, signals a potential shift in the platform's role within the digital ecosystem. With increasing use, especially among media and public figures, WhatsApp could soon face higher levels of regulation to maintain its compliance with EU standards. The Digital Services Act, which came into effect in 2022, aims to make the internet safer and more transparent by imposing rigorous responsibilities on major online platforms. WhatsApp, alongside other large digital platforms, will need to navigate these new rules carefully to avoid penalties and ensure it operates in line with EU regulations.

## Uber Ditches Commissions for Auto-Rickshaw Drivers Introduces Subscription Model

Uber has announced a major change for auto-rickshaw drivers in India, eliminating its commission fees and replacing them with a subscription model. In a blog post on Tuesday, February 18, the ride-hailing giant revealed that drivers will now keep 100% of the fares earned through the platform.

Previously, Uber charged a commission on each fare, which resulted in drivers receiving only a portion of the total fare. However, with this new model, drivers will no longer face deductions from Uber. Instead, the company will charge a subscription fee for using the platform, allowing drivers to retain the full fare amount paid by passengers.

The shift to a subscription-based structure is designed to offer more earnings stability for auto-rickshaw drivers, particularly during times of fluctuating demand. Uber's move comes as part of its broader efforts to improve relationships with drivers and enhance the overall driver experience.

Uber's decision to move away from com-



missions is seen as a positive step by many auto-rickshaw drivers who often struggled with the impact of commission deductions on their earnings. Now, they will benefit from a predictable cost structure that allows them to keep the entire fare for their services. The change is expected to have a signifi-

cant impact on Uber's presence in India's auto-rickshaw market, where it competes with local ride-hailing services. By giving drivers greater financial control, Uber hopes to foster better relations with its driver community while ensuring the platform's long-term growth in the Indian market.

## Your Feet Reveal Hidden Health Issues: Expert Insights on Foot Health



Your feet are more than just a means of transportation; they can serve as an important indicator of your overall health. Just as your eyes are considered the mirror of your soul, your feet can reflect underlying health issues that may require immediate at-

tention. Dietitian Nidhi Gupta recently took to Instagram to highlight common health issues that can first be noticed through changes in the feet. Dr. Anup Khatri, senior consultant in orthopedics at Glenagles Hospital, Parel, Mumbai, concurs, emphasizing the

importance of recognizing the first signs of health problems through foot abnormalities. "It is crucial to evaluate the underlying cause of the issue and seek timely treatment," Dr. Khatri said. He further advises that proper attention to diet, coupled with following

prescribed treatment plans, is essential for maintaining healthy feet.

Common foot-related health issues that could signal more serious problems include swelling, discoloration, or pain in the feet, which may point to conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, or circulatory problems. For instance, diabetic patients often experience changes in foot appearance due to nerve damage or poor blood circulation. Additionally, persistent foot pain could indicate issues like flat feet, plantar fasciitis, or even heart and kidney problems. Experts agree that paying attention to the feet and noticing any changes is key to early diagnosis and treatment. It's essential to seek professional advice if unusual symptoms persist. Regular check-ups and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can go a long way in preventing long-term complications related to foot health. In conclusion, while we may often overlook our feet, they provide valuable insights into our health. Paying attention to them can help detect health problems before they escalate.

## Retired IFS Officer Shares Striking Image of Tiger Guarding Anti-Poaching Camp



Big cats have always been a source of fascination for wildlife enthusiasts and social media users alike, thanks to their impressive strength, agility, and majestic presence. From their swift hunting tactics to their regal dominance in the wild, these apex predators never fail to capture the imagination of viewers. Recently, a retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer took to social media to share a captivating image of one such tiger, showcasing its natural prowess and unexpected role in the forest ecosystem.

On Tuesday, IFS officer Susanta Nanda shared a striking photo on X (formerly Twitter), featuring a tiger seated calmly at the entrance of an anti-poaching camp in the deep forest. The image shows the tiger in a relaxed yet vigilant stance, seemingly guarding the premises and keeping a watchful eye on its surroundings.

In his post, Nanda humorously referred to the tiger as the "original guard" of the forest, adding a lighthearted touch to the impres-

sive scene. The tiger's presence at the anti-poaching camp is both symbolic and practical—highlighting the role these animals play in maintaining the balance of their ecosystem and in safeguarding their own territories.

This captivating image of the tiger not only drew attention to the beauty and importance of wildlife conservation but also provided a unique glimpse into the often unnoticed interactions between big cats and the work being done to protect them. Nanda's humorous caption added a personal touch to the post, allowing social media users to appreciate the tiger's natural guard-duties while also reflecting on the broader conservation efforts underway in India's forests.

In a world where big cats often become symbols of power and mystery, this image is a reminder of their crucial role in preserving the wild, as well as the ongoing efforts to protect these magnificent creatures from poaching and habitat loss.

## \*\*Cat and Sheep Win "Couple of the Year" Contest At Ukraine Zoo



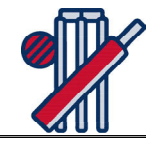
In a heartwarming twist, a cat and a sheep have won the coveted "Couple of the Year" title at the Odessa Zoo in Ukraine, beating out other contenders such as lemurs, tigers, and porcupines. The unexpected pairing of Masazhik, the cat, and Bagel, the lamb, was announced as the winners after a thrilling competition. The finalists were revealed earlier this week on YouTube, but the final victory was shared with the world through a Facebook post by the zoo.

The unique bond between the two animals stood out, with the zoo emphasizing the extraordinary companionship between the two different species. "The contest 'Couple of the Year - 2025' is over. The winners of this year are a pair of lambs, Bagel, and a cat, Masazhik," the zoo posted on

Facebook. "Such a combination of friendly relationships between completely different animals is possible only in the Odessa Zoo." The winners were honored during a special ceremony on Valentine's Day, further highlighting the love and affection that transcends species in the animal kingdom. The zoo's staff invited visitors to celebrate this delightful and unusual partnership, showcasing the beauty of unexpected friendships in nature.

Masazhik the cat and Bagel the lamb have certainly captured the hearts of zoo visitors and animal lovers around the world with their endearing relationship, proving that sometimes the most unlikely duos can form the strongest bonds.





## Pakistan's Poor Start to Champions Trophy: New Zealand Won by 60 Runs



Pakistan's return to hosting an ICC event after almost three decades began with a disappointing 60-run defeat to New Zealand at the National Stadium in Karachi. The Kiwis, powered by centuries from Will Young (107) and Tom Latham (118\*), posted a challenging total of 320/5. A late flourish from Glenn Phillips (61) further bolstered their score. In reply, Pakistan's chase faltered early, and despite a resilient 64 from Babar Azam and 69 from

Khusdil Shah, they were bowled out for 260. The Kiwi bowlers, led by Will O'Rourke (3/47) and Mitchell Santner (3/66), dominated, leaving Pakistan's top order struggling. The defeat marks New Zealand's fourth consecutive win over Pakistan in the Champions Trophy.

The opening ceremony of the tournament was a spectacular affair, marking Pakistan's first ICC global event since 1996.

## Bangladeshi Pacer Nahid Rana Eager for India Clash in ICC Champions Trophy



As Bangladesh prepares to face India in their opening match of the ICC Champions Trophy, 22-year-old pacer Nahid Rana is eager to make his mark. Known for his pace, capable of exceeding 150 km/h, Rana is gearing up for his first

ICC tournament with high hopes. Having played six Tests and only three ODIs, Rana is excited to compete against the world's best cricketers. "The opportunity to play against the best is the highest form of inspiration,"

Rana said in an interview with the ICC. Growing up in Rajshahi, known more for its mangoes than sport, Rana took up cricket later in his teens. Despite limited international exposure, he impressed in his Test debut, tak-

ing three wickets in his first innings and five in the match. As he continues to hone his skills, Rana is focused on improving both his bowling and athleticism, understanding that fitness and recovery are key to maintaining his pace.

## India Men's Hockey Team Secures 1-0 Victory Over World Champions Germany in FIH Hockey Pro League



The India men's hockey team bounced back from their previous defeat to Germany with a hard-fought 1-0 victory in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 season at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium on Wednesday. Gurjant Singh scored the lone goal of the match early in the fourth minute, following a loose ball in Germany's circle after a failed clearance by goalkeeper Alexander Stadler. India played a disciplined defensive game, with captain Harmanpreet Singh leading the charge. Ger-

many threatened multiple times, with Thies Prinz and Gonzalo Peillat coming close to scoring, but Indian goalkeepers Krishan Bahadur Pathak and Suraj Karkera made crucial saves. India's defense held firm, thwarting multiple German penalty corner attempts in the final minutes to secure the win, and climb to seventh in the standings. This victory marked India's second win of the season after their earlier loss to Germany.

## Jeevanji Wins Gold in Women's 400m T20 at National Paralympic Athletics Championship



The National Paralympic Athletics Championship, being held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai, has witnessed remarkable performances from India's top para-athletes. Organized by the Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority and the Tamil Nadu Paralympic Sports Association, the event brings together 1,476 athletes from 30 states and union territories, competing across 155 events from February 18-20. Paralympics bronze medalist and reigning world champion, Deepthi Jeevanji, triumphed in the women's 400m T20 category, clinching gold with a time of

57.85 seconds. Pooja from Haryana won silver, clocking 1:08.21, while Bhuvni Agrawal of Haryana secured the bronze at 1:09.24. Other standout performances included Soman Rana, who claimed gold in the men's F57 shot put, defeating Paris Paralympics gold medalist Hokato Sema. Haryana's Vikas won gold in the men's long jump T45/T46/T47, while Nishad Kumar from Himachal Pradesh bagged multiple golds in the high jump and long jump events. The ongoing championship highlights the incredible resilience and excellence of India's para-athletes.

## Hyderabad FC and Mumbai City FC Play Out Goalless Draw in ISL 2024-25

Hyderabad FC and Mumbai City FC shared the spoils in a goalless draw at the GMC Balayogi Athletic Stadium on Wednesday in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 season. Mumbai City started strong with Lallianzuala Chhangte coming close to scoring in the ninth minute, but his left-footed shot hit the woodwork. Both teams had several chances, with Chhangte and Jorge Ortiz threatening Hyderabad's defense, but goalkeeper Arshdeep Singh made crucial saves to keep the score level.

In the 36th minute, Hyderabad's Ramhlunchhunga tested Mumbai's keeper Phurba Lachenpa, who made a timely save. The second half saw more missed opportunities, including a saved shot from Mumbai's Jon Toral and Edmilson Correia's attempt for Hyderabad, blocked by the Mumbai defense. Mumbai City absorbed pressure towards the end and counter-attacked, but Chhangte's effort in the 83rd minute missed the target, and both teams had to settle for a 0-0 draw.



## International Masters League 2025 Trophy Unveiled in Mumbai



The International Masters League (IML) revealed its much-anticipated trophy at a special event held at DY Patil University. The event, known as Captains' Day, saw cricket legends like Sachin Tendulkar, Kumar Sangakkara, Brian Lara, Eoin Morgan, Shane Watson, and Jonty Rhodes (representing Jacques Kallis) come together to unveil the trophy for the inaugural edition of the tournament. The IML promises a thrilling experience for cricket fans, featuring global cricket icons leading their respective teams. The opening match of the league will take place on

February 22, 2025, between India Masters and Sri Lanka Masters at the DY Patil Stadium. Cricket legends expressed their excitement for the upcoming tournament. Tendulkar shared his passion for the game, while Brian Lara and others highlighted their eagerness to reignite old rivalries and bring excitement to the fans in India, a nation known for its love for cricket. The tournament's start marks a major celebration of cricket's rich legacy, with global stars competing on Indian soil, setting the stage for an electrifying competition.





## Allu Arjun Receives Rare Honour on Cover of The Hollywood Reporter India



Tollywood icon Allu Arjun has been bestowed with a rare honour, as he graces the cover of the inaugural edition of The Hollywood Reporter India. The popular Hollywood movie news magazine has launched its India edition, and Allu Arjun's striking face graces the cover, making it a significant milestone in his career. The magazine's feature on Allu Arjun is titled "Star of India," highlighting his remarkable achievements in Indian cinema. The cover story also emphasizes his recent film Pushpa-2: The

Rule, directed by Sukumar. The Hollywood Reporter India has recognized the film for rewriting Hindi cinema's history, showcasing Allu Arjun's significant contribution to Indian film. Pushpa-2: The Rule, part of the blockbuster Pushpa franchise, has set a new record by grossing ₹1,871 crore worldwide, marking a new benchmark in Indian cinema. Allu Arjun's groundbreaking success in Pushpa-2 has earned him widespread acclaim, further cementing his status as a global superstar.

## Sudeep's 'Max' Creates Record with OTT Streaming



Kannada superstar Kichcha Sudeep's latest film Max has taken the OTT world by storm, setting a new record. The movie, which was released in theatres in December, began its streaming journey on Zee5 from February 15. Within just four days, Max has achieved unprecedented success on digital platforms, breaking records for the highest revenue in a short period. Directed by Vijay Kartikeya, Max tells the gripping story of a police officer named Max, who takes charge at a new police station. On his first night, the heirs of local political leaders are found dead under suspicious circumstances at the station, and a conspir-

acy unfolds where the police try to cover up the deaths. The film delves into Max's struggle as he uncovers a web of intrigue. Though the film had received average feedback upon its theatrical release, its OTT debut has been a game-changer. In a remarkable feat, Max surpassed the record previously held by the Malayalam movie Mrs. for the highest streaming earnings in its opening days. With this success, Max has firmly established itself as a digital hit and solidified Sudeep's reputation as a versatile actor with a keen choice for intriguing roles.

## Ayesha Khan: From Glamour to Mystery, the Disappearing Beauty!



Ayesha Khan, who made her entry into the film industry with a small role, quickly made her mark with her stunning glamour and beauty. She caught the attention of audiences and soon found herself busy with Bollywood projects. However, her fans are still hoping to see more of her in Telugu films, where she started her career.

In many films, the heroine is the center of attention, with audiences unable to take their eyes off her. But there was one instance when a young woman appeared on screen, so mesmerizing that she overshadowed the heroine completely. That woman was none other than Ayesha Khan.

She made her Telugu film debut with the movie Mukhachitram and later gained popularity for her role as 'Rattalu' in Om Bheem Bush. In this role, her glamorous appeal stole the show. In a film about selling fish, her mesmerizing beauty captivated the young audience, who completely forgot about the plot as they were entranced by her presence.

Even after that, Ayesha's charm and allure left a lasting impact on the audience. Discussions about her beauty and potential as a heroine in Bollywood were widespread. There were talks about her future in item songs as well, with predictions that she would rule the glamour scene for some time.

Currently, Ayesha seems to be focused on her Bollywood career. Fans are left wondering if any new Telugu projects will bring her back to the industry, eagerly waiting for her return to the Telugu screen.

## Rajinikanth's 'Jailer' to Release in Japan on February 21



After a massive success in India, director Nelson's blockbuster film Jailer, featuring Tamil Superstar Rajinikanth in the lead, is now gearing up for its release in Japan. The film will hit the screens on February 21, marking its debut in the land of the rising sun.

Social media has been buzzing with excitement as fans in Japan have been sharing that Jailer will release on a large scale, with additional screens being added across multiple locations. The anticipation for the film's release in Japan is growing, with fans expressing their eagerness to witness the action-packed drama. Jailer was a record-breaking success upon its release, grossing an astounding ₹650 crores worldwide. The film's opening day was particularly strong, with Ayngaran International, the overseas distributor, confirming that it earned ₹33 crores on its first day, setting a new career record for Rajinikanth.

In addition to Rajinikanth, Jailer also featured Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, Kannada superstar Shiva Rajkumar, Bollywood actor Jackie Shroff, Telugu actor Sunil, Ramya Krishnan, Vinayakan, Mirna Menon, Taman-

naah, Vasanth Ravi, Naga Babu, Yogi Babu, Jaffer Sadiq, and Kishore. The film boasted music by Anirudh and cinematography by Vijay Kartik Kannan.

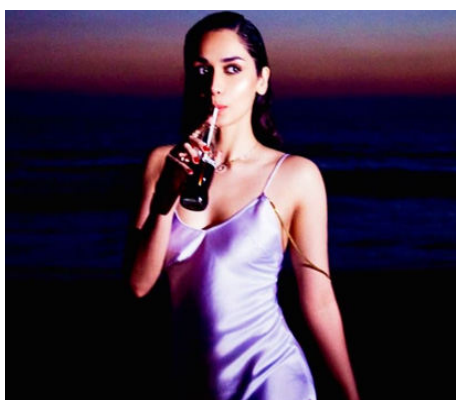
The producers, Sun Pictures, were so pleased with the film's success that they gifted Rajinikanth a BMW X7 and presented director Nelson Dilipkumar and music director Anirudh Ravichander with Porsche cars and cheques for an undisclosed amount. Given the film's extraordinary success, Sun Pictures has also announced a sequel, Jailer 2, with Nelson returning as the director and Anirudh composing the music.

A teaser for Jailer 2 has already been released, offering a glimpse of the intense action and excitement to come. The teaser starts with an announcement about an incoming cyclone, followed by a comedic conversation between Nelson and Anirudh in Goa, where they discuss the plot for the sequel. The teaser quickly escalates into explosive action, with Rajinikanth's iconic entry building the suspense. The sequel promises even more thrilling action, and fans are eagerly awaiting its release.

## From Alia Bhatt to Richa Chadha, Here Are Actresses Who Are Making Waves with Their Own Fashion Labels

Bollywood actresses are not just dominating the silver screen but are also making their mark in the world of fashion with their own unique brands. Balancing successful acting careers with entrepreneurial ventures, these stars are reshaping the fashion industry, bringing flair, creativity, and a sense of purpose. Here's a look at some leading ladies who proudly own their own fashion labels, ranging from sustainable-wear to high-end fashion.

### Island-Inspired Aesthetics



### Kritika Kamra, Cinnabar

Actress Kritika Kamra has ventured into the fashion world with Cinnabar, a brand that supports and empowers artisans from Madhya Pradesh. Launched alongside her mother, Kritika's vision for Cinnabar is to revive the traditional Chanderi handloom craftsmanship, providing local weavers with a platform to showcase their exceptional skills while promoting the region's cultural heritage.

### Empowering Local Artisans

### Richa Chadha, Ehaab

Richa Chadha, along with husband Ali Fazal, co-founded Ehaab, a home-grown fashion brand that celebrates the cultural richness of Lucknow's heritage. The brand promotes handcrafted traditions, empowering local artisans while preserving India's artistic legacy. Ehaab stands as a testament to the craftsmanship that has been handed down through generations in India.

### Passion for Sustainability

