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TRUE  
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# AP Govt Launches Suraksha App to Combat Spurious Liquor: CM Naidu Vows Zero Tolerance

TPN BUREAU | Vijayawada Oct 12: In a decisive move to curb the menace of spurious liquor and illegal belt shops across Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday launched the “AP Excise Suraksha App”, a technology-driven initiative aimed at ensuring transparency, accountability, and safety in the liquor trade. The Chief Minister announced the launch at his camp office, asserting that the new initiative would mark a significant step toward eradicating counterfeit liquor and restoring public confidence in the state’s excise system.

Explaining the features of the newly introduced app, Naidu said that every liquor bottle sold in Andhra Pradesh would now be traceable from manufacturing to retail. “Shop owners will be required to scan each bottle before selling it to consumers, while cus-



tomers can also verify the authenticity of the product through the app. This two-way verification will make it nearly impossible for counterfeit or illicit liquor to enter the market,” he stated. The application will also ensure that all authorised retail outlets are geo-tagged, effectively preventing the operation of illegal belt shops that have proliferated in recent years.

Referring to the recent Mulakalacheruvu spurious liquor case, which resulted in several casualties and public outrage, the Chief Minister revealed that 16 individuals, including the main accused Janardhan, have been arrested out of the total 23 persons involved. “We have also suspended a TDP leader allegedly linked to the case. My government will take strict action against anyone involved, regardless of political party or position,” he asserted. Naidu maintained that it was,

in fact, leaders from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) who first exposed the incident, highlighting the administration’s commitment to accountability and transparency.

The Chief Minister alleged that the network behind the spurious liquor trade has international roots, with operations traced to parts of Africa. “Certain individuals are trying to replicate that model here in

Andhra Pradesh under political cover,” he said, accusing opposition elements of attempting to tarnish the government’s reform efforts. To strengthen enforcement and prevent recurrence, the state government has

formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising top police and excise officials G.V.G. Ashok Kumar, Rahul Dev Sharma, K. Chakravarthi, Mallika Garg, and an expert from the Excise Department. The SIT has been tasked with conducting an exhaustive probe and recommending a comprehensive revamp of the existing excise system. Naidu dismissed the opposition parties’ demand for a CBI probe, calling it a politically motivated tactic designed to divert attention from their own failures. “Those who remained silent when 27 people died in the Jangareddygudem liquor tragedy during the previous regime are now demanding a CBI probe. Their hypocrisy is evident,” he remarked. The Chief Minister accused the previous government of promoting its own liquor brands and monopolizing the entire liquor trade by forc-



## Lokesh Orders 30-Year Master Plans for Congestion-Free Vizag, Pushes Mission-Mode Infrastructure Delivery

TPN BUREAU, Visakhapatnam, Oct 12: In a decisive move to shape Visakhapatnam’s future as a well-planned growth engine of Andhra Pradesh, Minister for Education and Information Technology Nara Lokesh has directed officials to prepare integrated 30-year master plans for the entire North Andhra region. Chairing a high-level review meeting at the Visakhapatnam Collectorate on Saturday, Lokesh emphasised that the city’s expansion must avoid the traffic chaos and congestion witnessed in metropolitan hubs like Bengaluru and Pune.

“Big investments are flowing into the Vizag region. Draw up specific infrastructure plans and execute them in mission mode with zero inconvenience to the public,” Lokesh told district officials, public representatives and urban planners. He insisted on seamless coordination between government bodies to fast-track development while safeguarding citizen convenience. Stressing foresight-driven urban design, Lokesh called for wide arterial roads, capacity corridors, junction

upgrades and integrated mobility systems that would support long-term demographic, industrial and logistics growth. The master plans are expected to cover Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts, anticipating population expansion alongside industrial investment. Highlighting the government’s “employment-first” agenda, Lokesh revealed that upcoming projects, including a major steel plant and a host of large-scale manufacturing and technology companies, could generate close to five lakh jobs in the region. “This is a once-in-a-generation growth opportunity. Convert it into jobs and inclusive development,” he urged.

To strengthen Visakhapatnam’s positioning as a national technology hub, he instructed officials to identify and develop sizeable land banks for upcoming IT parks. “Create shovel-ready sites where investors can plug in and start building immediately,” he directed, insisting that streamlined approvals, complete infrastructure readiness and speed in de-

livery would accelerate investment inflow. Lokesh also stressed transparency and efficiency in governance, directing all departments to ensure that projects are executed swiftly, openly and without causing public inconvenience. “Decisions must be swift, transparent and people-friendly. Progress should happen without causing inconvenience,” he added.

The extensive review covered multiple spheres including regional development, industrial inflows, corridor design and urban mobility initiatives tailored to the North Andhra region’s growth trajectory. Among those present were IT Secretary Katamneni Bhaskar, Government Chief Whip Ganababu, Visakhapatnam Mayor Pila Srinivasa Rao, MLAs, district collectors and senior officials from urban planning and infrastructure departments. With these directives, the state aims to turn Visakhapatnam into a congestion-free, industry-ready and technologically advanced urban centre, setting the stage for sustainable growth for the next three decades.

As part of the ongoing agitation, the YSRCP is organizing protest demonstrations on Monday, October 13, in front of all Excise Department of-

fices across the state. Party leaders, cadre, and supporters will gather to submit petitions demanding immediate and decisive action against those involved in the illicit liquor trade. The party alleges deep-rooted political patronage and involvement of key ruling party leaders in this illegal racket, placing the health and safety of the common people at risk.





# Sharmila Slams Centre for Weakening RTI Act, Calls for Restoration of Transparency Measures

TPN BUREAU, VIJAYAWADA OCT 12: In a sharp criticism of the Union government, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Y.S. Sharmila Reddy on Sunday accused the Centre of systematically eroding the Right to Information (RTI) Act—one of the most powerful citizen-centric laws ever enacted in India. Addressing a gathering in Vijayawada on the occasion of the RTI Act's 20th anniversary, Sharmila described the law as a “revolutionary weapon for citizens” and a milestone in ensuring transparency and accountability in public governance. Recalling the historic contribution of the Congress in bringing the law into existence in 2005, she said the RTI Act was a proud achievement of the UPA government under the leadership of then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

“It was a visionary step that empowered ordinary citizens to question the government, expose corruption, and demand transparency at every level of administration,” Sharmila stated. She noted that lakhs of people across the country had used the provisions of the Act to access government records and bring irregularities to light, strengthening democratic participation over the past two decades. However, the APCC chief alleged that the Narendra Modi-led BJP government had deliberately undermined the Act's original spirit through the 2019 amendments. “The amendments effectively stripped the Information Commissions of their autonomy, gave undue powers to the Centre to determine their service



conditions, and diluted the fixed tenure of commissioners,” Sharmila said. “This not only weakens the institutional integrity of the commissions but also discourages officials from functioning independently,” she added. Highlighting the growing administrative negligence, Sharmila pointed out that the Central Information Commission (CIC) has been operating for months without a full-time Chief Information Commissioner and is currently understaffed. Only a few of the mandated 11 commissioners have been appointed, leading to massive backlogs. “Across 29 information commissions in the country, more than four lakh RTI applications are pending,” she revealed, calling the situation unacceptable and indicative of the Centre's disregard for peo-

ple's right to know. Sharmila asserted that the RTI framework represents the foundation of participatory democracy, where transparency serves as a check on power. “When the government hides facts or delays responses, it is not just a bureaucratic lapse, it is an attack on democracy itself,” she warned. Emphasising that truth and openness are essential for public trust, she said the weakening of the RTI system threatens the ability of citizens to hold officials accountable for misuse of authority or funds. The APCC, under her leadership, has demanded a complete reversal of the 2019 amendments and restoration of the RTI Act to its original 2005 format. The party also called for reinstating the five-year tenure of commissioners, ensuring the appointment of all eleven members in the Central

Information Commission, and enforcing strong whistleblower protection mechanisms. Additionally, the APCC urged the inclusion of representatives from various sections of society, especially women, minorities, and marginalized communities in the information commissions to reflect India's diversity in its transparency institutions. Y.S. Sharmila concluded by pledging that the Congress would continue to defend the RTI Act as part of its larger mission to safeguard citizens' democratic rights. “Every Indian has the right to ask questions and the government has the duty to answer. The RTI Act is not just a law, it is the voice of the people. We will not allow that voice to be silenced,” she declared amid applause from Congress members and RTI activists gathered at the Vijayawada event.

## Farm Sector in Deep Crisis Under Coalition Rule: MVS Nagi Reddy

TPN | Vijayawada | October 12, 2025 YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) General Secretary MVS Nagi Reddy has launched a scathing attack on the NDA coalition government in Andhra Pradesh, accusing it of completely neglecting the farm sector and pushing lakhs of farmers and agricultural labourers into distress. Addressing reporters at the YSRCP Central Office in Vijayawada on Sunday, Nagi Reddy said that the coalition's policies have crippled the state's agricultural economy and deepened the crisis in rural livelihoods. According to Nagi Reddy, the total cultivated area in the state has drastically fallen under the current government's tenure. “During the five years of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's administration, an average of 32.94 lakh hectares was cultivated every kharif season. Under the coalition government, that number has dropped to just 28.19 lakh hectares, marking a steep decline of 11.73 lakh hectares,” he said. This sharp drop, he noted, has led to an estimated loss of over 3,000 crore in agricultural employment and production value, a serious blow to the state's rural economy. The YSRCP leader criticised the government's withdrawal of key farmer welfare schemes such as free crop insurance,



which he said has left cultivators vulnerable to natural calamities like droughts and floods. “Major crops such as paddy, chilli, tobacco, mango, onion, and tomato have faced massive damage this year. Yet, the government has offered no compensation, no relief, and no reassurance,” he alleged. Nagi Reddy contrasted the current situation with the proactive measures taken by the previous YSRCP administration. He recalled that despite starting with a nearly empty treasury of just 100 crore, former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had prioritised the welfare of farmers through initiatives like Rythu Bharosa, which provided 12,500 in annual investment support to every farmer. He also mentioned that the previous government ensured timely disbursement of free crop insurance, input assistance, and created price stabilization funds to protect farmers from market volatility. “In contrast,” Nagi Reddy continued, “Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu began his

term with 7,000 crore but has failed to deliver even basic support to the agricultural community. Payments are being delayed, crop procurement is stalled, and promises made to farmers have not been honoured.” He pointed out that the denial of minimum support prices (MSP) has further worsened the farmers' plight. Many, he said, have been forced to dump their produce on roads due to lack of proper market prices or timely government intervention. “This administration's inaction has led to desperation among the farming community. Tragically, 29 farmers have committed suicide since the coalition came to power. Yet, not a single bereaved family has received compensation,” he revealed. Calling the current situation a “collapse of the rural economy,” Nagi Reddy demanded the immediate restoration of crop insurance, release of compensation to affected farmers, and revival of procurement through MARKFED. “The government must act before the farming landscape in Andhra Pradesh is irreversibly damaged. This is not development it is destruction,” he warned, urging the state to prioritize agriculture once again to prevent further social and economic suffering.

## Kambala Srinivas – A Serving Leader Bringing Pride to Gokavaram



TPN, East Godavari OCT 12: Ch. Raju The Gokavaram region of East Godavari District has long been known for its spiritual atmosphere, humanitarian values, and traditions rooted in service and devotion. In recent years, one name has emerged as a bright beacon in continuing that legacy Kambala Srinivas. A spiritualist, philanthropist, and pol-

itician associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Srinivas has earned admiration both locally and across Andhra Pradesh for his selfless acts, innovative service programs, and unwavering dedication to societal well-being. What sets Kambala Srinivas apart is the way he blends devotion with social responsibility. In a political landscape often clouded by partisan agendas, Srinivas has consciously kept his public service initiatives free from political bias. His personal philosophy resonates with the belief, “Service is my Dharma – Society is my Temple”. This mantra guides every initiative he undertakes, whether it is a religious campaign, social empowerment program, or poverty alleviation effort. Impactful Programs Rooted in Spirituality One of Srinivas' most celebrated initiatives is the “Bangaru Varalakshmi Kanuka”. Launched to honor both the economic and spiritual strength of women, this program involved

creating 2,000 Varalakshmi forms containing a total of one and a half kilos of gold. These beautifully crafted icons were freely distributed among women in Gokavaram, Rampachodavaram, and Rajanagaram. For the recipients, this was far more than a valuable gift it was an acknowledgment of their dignity, their role in preserving tradition, and their place in the spiritual foundation of society. Another notable aspect of Srinivas' service is his large-scale distribution programs. Every month, he provides 3,000 kilograms of rice to 200 economically struggling families and free silk sarees to more than 10,000 women. These programs are not occasional charity events; they are sustained efforts that reflect his vision of strengthening the community's social fabric. In his words, bringing happiness to society is equal to visiting a temple both acts nourish the soul. Recognitions



that Reflect Responsibility Srinivas' work has earned him significant accolades, which he humbly views not as rewards, but as reminders of growing responsibility. In 2025, he received the “Business Achievers Award” presented by Zee Telugu News Channel from the hands of former Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu. Similarly, he was honored with the “Best Service Award” at the Raj News Telugu Business Excellence Awards, presented by Andhra Pradesh State Ministers Kollu Ravindra and Kondapalli Srinivas. For Srinivas, these awards serve as encouragement but also as a moral signal that the path of service demands continuous effort. “Awards bring joy, but they are symbols of responsibility,” he says,

expressing that every recognition fuels his determination to reach more people in need. Philosophy: Three Roles, One Path Despite wearing multiple hats spiritualist, philanthropist, and politician Srinivas does not view these as separate identities. “These are not three separate paths for me. Service is my mantra. Spirituality is my guide, public service is my practice,” he explains. In essence, his spiritual beliefs influence his philanthropy, while his political presence offers him an avenue to expand that service to more people. This integrated philosophy also shapes his outlook on empowerment, particularly for women, whom he describes as the “power of religion.” Through initiatives like Bangaru Varalakshmi Kanu-



ka and the provision of silk sarees, Srinivas places women's dignity at the center of his service mission. Service Beyond Awards and Politics Kambala Srinivas' programs are not designed to win votes or gain political influence they stem from a deeply personal conviction that society's happiness and strength are the foundation upon which dharma rests. He sees social service and religious devotion as interwoven threads, each reinforcing the other. His temple visitations and religious rituals are complemented by direct help to the poor, proving that for him, spirituality extends to alleviating the material hardships of others. Under his guidance and generosity, thousands of women have received not just gifts but symbols of respect. Hundreds of families have gained monthly food security. The ripple effects of these efforts reach far beyond immediate beneficiaries, inspiring others in the community to take part in humanitarian work. Looking Ahead When asked about his future goals, Srinivas speaks with conviction: “Every poor family in the society should live with self-respect. The youth should come forward with the spirit of service. I will continue to spread Dharma and carry out service programs as long as I can.” In a time when many service efforts last only as long as media attention remains, Srinivas' commitment to sustained, meaningful work stands out. His combination of spiritual conviction, so-



cial action, and political reach creates a unique model of leadership, one rooted in action rather than words. The Gokavaram region, and increasingly all of Andhra Pradesh, sees in him a symbol of service that has crossed the boundaries of religion, economics, and politics. A Living Example of Dharma in Action For the people of Gokavaram, Kambala Srinivas is more than a leader; he is a lifeline of compassion. By giving equal weight to religious practices and practical help, he brings a holistic approach to community welfare. His guiding belief that only a strong, harmonious society can uphold dharma continues to inspire.

Whether it is the glow of gold icons in the Bangaru Varalakshmi Kanuka, the warmth of silk sarees draped around women's shoulders, or the life-sustaining rice bags that reach poor households each month, his work brightens lives while reminding the community of its own potential for kindness. In merging devotion with action, Kambala Srinivas has not only brought pride to Gokavaram but has shown that spirituality is most powerful when it serves humanity. His journey proves that the truest measure of a person's life is not what they claim, but what they continually practice and in that, he stands as a living, breathing mirror of selfless service.

# Praja Arogya Vedika Demands Immediate Fulfillment of Promises to PHC Doctors



TPN BUREAU, Vijayawada, Oct 11 – Praja Arogya Vedika (PAV) has extended full support to the ongoing protest of Primary Health Center (PHC) doctors, urging

the state government to immediately fulfil the assurances given to them and restore the supply of medicines to PHCs across Andhra Pradesh. On Saturday, a delega-

tion from PAV’s NTR District Committee visited the protest camp of PHC doctors at Dharna Chowk, Alankar Center, Vijayawada, where hundreds of physicians from

government primary health centers have been staging an agitation since October 4th. The team expressed solidarity with their struggle, stressing that

resolving the doctors’ issues is directly tied to improving the public healthcare system. Speaking at the protest site, PAV NTR District General Secretary G. Vijay Prakash emphasized that addressing PHC doctors’ problems is tantamount to addressing patient concerns and strengthening the overall medical infrastructure. He noted that nearly 2,800 doctors serve in rural and tribal areas, often under challenging circumstances, ensuring that underserved communities receive essential healthcare services. “The government’s indifference is unacceptable. These doctors have been boycotting duties and agitating for over a week to secure promises already made to them. Yet, the administration is responding like a lem-

oncompletely indifferent,” Vijay Prakash stated bluntly. He demanded the immediate cancellation of JVO No. 99, provision of 30% reservation in clinical posts for in-service doctors, and 50% in non-clinical posts within the in-service category, along with tribal allowance for doctors serving in tribal PHCs. Other major demands from the protesting doctors include timely promotions, payment of notional increments, settlement of 104 service arrears, and complete government management of all medical and health services. Vijay Prakash warned that continued inaction would severely undermine the primary health system and jeopardize the public’s access to quality care. He rejected any notion that the doc-

tors are making excessive demands, pointing out that their agitation is rooted solely in promises the government had already agreed to earlier. “By fulfilling these just demands, the government will empower doctors to deliver far more effective healthcare services to the people,” he said. The protest also saw participation from various medical sector leaders, including Dr. Ravindra Nayak, Dr. Kishore, Dr. Vinod, Dr. Gyanesh, and Dr. Mounika. Representatives from other associations in the medical field echoed the call for immediate resolution of the PHC doctors’ grievances. A round table meeting, held at the protest camp, reiterated the urgency of addressing these issues. PAV leaders argued that it was imperative to get the primary

health system back on track, especially in rural and tribal belts where PHCs form the backbone of basic medical care. District leaders PBS Ramavatharam, Leela, and Bhanu Prasad, along with several PAV activists, stood alongside the doctors, affirming their commitment to continue supporting the movement until the government takes concrete action. Praja Arogya Vedika warned that prolonged government silence could escalate the crisis, disrupt rural healthcare delivery, and erode public trust in the medical system. They appealed to state authorities to demonstrate responsiveness and empathy by fulfilling the assurances without delay, thereby strengthening public health in Andhra Pradesh.

## The Andhra Pradesh Police will host the 2nd All India Police Weightlifting Cluster from October 13 to 17, 2025, marking a significant sporting event for police forces nationwide

TPN BUREAU, VIJAYAWADA, OCT 12: The All India Police Sports Control Board, New Delhi, will take place at two prestigious venues: the VIT Campus in Amaravati and Acharya Nagarjuna University (ANU) in Guntur. The event will feature competitions in weightlifting, powerlifting, and yoga across both men’s and women’s categories. The inaugural ceremony is set for October 13 at 8:30 a.m. at the 6th Battalion of the Andhra Pradesh State Police (APSP) in Mangalagiri.



tions, with a total of 1,010 athletes competing. Including support staff and officials, approximately 1,500 members will take part in the event, underscoring its scale and the growing emphasis on sports within police departments. The 2nd All India Police Weightlifting Cluster builds on the inaugural edition held in 2024-25, which was hosted by the Chhattisgarh Police in Bhilai. This annual event has quickly gained prestige as a national-level platform for police personnel to showcase their strength, skill, and fitness as part of their professional development. Significantly, this edition is the first police weightlifting competition to be organized in Amaravati, the newly established capital city of Andhra Pradesh. The choice of venue reflects the state’s commitment

to promoting sports and physical fitness among its law enforcement officers as well as fostering inter-state camaraderie. Over the course of five days, the competition will see intense contests in physical strength and conditioning disciplines, highlighting weightlifting and powerlifting alongside yoga, which promotes mental and physical well-being among the officers. The events will feature athletes competing in various weight categories, fostering a spirit of healthy competition and mutual respect. The Andhra Pradesh Police, known for its dynamic involvement in sports, is proud to host an event that not only elevates policing through physical excellence but also promotes unity and national integration among police forces. The cluster is expected to draw atten-

tion from police officials, sports enthusiasts, and the general public due to its comprehensive and inclusive approach. The event will conclude on October 17, after which the winning teams and outstanding performers will be honored for their achievements. The All India Police Weightlifting Cluster continues to grow as a key event on the national police sporting calendar, helping officers maintain peak physical condition while building bonds that transcend regional boundaries. With the 2nd edition now underway on the strong foundation of last year’s successful initiation, the Andhra Pradesh Police’s role as host demonstrates its aspiration to be a leader in police sports development on a national scale. This event promises to be a showcase of strength, discipline, and sportsmanship, contributing positively to the professional and personal lives of police personnel across India.

## A protest was held in VJA city under the banner of the Public Response Forum at Kalakshetram

Demanded justice for Y. Purankumar IPS. TPN BHREAU, VIJAYAWADA OCT 12: Y. Purankumar IPS, who belonged to the SC community tragically took his own life. The demonstration called for the suspension and arrest of the DGP and Rohtak SP, whom the protesters accused of being responsible for Purankumar’s death due to social harassment and caste discrimination. The protest included a prayer ceremony where fat lamps were lit, symbolizing a plea for the peaceful repose of Purankumar’s soul. The protest was organized by prominent local leaders including Kolanukonda Shivaji BC leader Praveen, Kursheeda, Nelam Mallishwarao, Sunitha, Jaladi Shiva, and others. Participants emphasized that the incident highlights the ongoing caste-based discrimination and social untouchability prevalent in the country, especially within the police force and public institutions. They voiced their demands for stringent action against those responsible for Purankumar’s death, pointing out the failure of higher officials in upholding social justice and equality.



The community expressed outrage over the role of higher officials in recruitment processes, particularly through UPSC, which they accused of condoning discrimination. They demanded that the government take immediate steps to provide equal rights and opportunities to BC, SC, ST, and minority communities. In addition, they called for swift action against the perpetrators involved in the murder of a Dalit individual in Rayabareli and condemned the incident where shoes were thrown at the Chief Jus-

tice of India, expressing a broader concern over the respect and safety of social leaders and judiciary figures. The organizers also demanded that the authorities suspend and arrest the responsible officers under the SC/ST Atrocity Act and other relevant laws. The protests underscored the urgency of addressing caste injustices, not only to achieve social equality but also to prevent such tragedies from recurring. The community has given a strong message that their fight for justice will continue until concrete action is tak-

en, emphasizing that Purankumar’s death is a wake-up call for systemic reform and accountability within law enforcement and administrative frameworks. This protest reflects the rising consciousness and activism among marginalized communities demanding fairness and prompt justice in cases of caste-based harassment and social discrimination across the nation. The community’s resolve signals a growing demand for equality, social dignity, and the eradication of casteism in all spheres of life.

# CESL Accelerates India’s Clean Mobility Drive

## Expands Focus from Electric to Hydrogen Buses

TPN BUREAU, Vijayawada, October 12, 2025: In a major boost to India’s green mobility revolution, Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, has unveiled a comprehensive plan to expand its clean transportation initiatives from electric to hydrogen-powered buses. After successfully tendering over 33,000 electric buses across

multiple Indian states and cities under various government flagship programs, CESL is now preparing to aggregate national demand for hydrogen buses. This move marks a significant step toward achieving the country’s long-term sustainable transport and climate goals. CESL, the Union Government’s nominated nodal agency, will coordinate with central and state governments to align policies, create uniform procurement mechanisms, and build confidence among Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), financiers, and state transport undertakings. The initiative aims to overcome the earlier

challenge of limited hydrogen bus demand, which hindered large-scale manufacturing and adoption. According to CESL officials, the company’s hydrogen mobility plan will rest on four key pillars: aggregation of national demand, stakeholder coordination, harmonized procurement, and industry confidence-building. The overarching objective is to ensure that hydrogen bus adoption becomes a practical and scalable solution for India’s public transportation needs. Building upon the success of its electric bus programs such as FAME India Phase II, National Electric Bus Program (NEBP), PM-eBus Sewa



Scheme, and PM E-DRIVE Scheme, CESL has been designated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI), and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as the nodal and project implement-

ing agency for the demand aggregation, tendering, and deployment of both electric and hydrogen mobility solutions. The company is also the implementing agency for the Payment Security Mechanism (PSM) under the PM-

eBus Sewa Scheme. CESL’s earlier success in electric bus aggregation has already demonstrated a transformation in India’s transport economics. Its Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model brought down the cost of e-bus operations to levels comparable to or lower than CNG and diesel buses, ensuring financial feasibility for states and operators. The model emphasized transparent bidding, standardized technical requirements, and mobility-as-a-service contracts. CESL now intends to replicate for hydrogen bus procurement. Highlighting the importance of the hydrogen initiative, Akh-

ilesh Kumar Dixit, Chief Executive Officer of EESL, in a letter to key stakeholders including Bhupender Gupta, CMD of NHPC, reinforced the need for accelerated hydrogen bus demand aggregation to further national economic and environmental interests. While CESL works across the country, it will give special attention to major southern cities such as Tirupati, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Warangal, Bengaluru, Mysore, Chennai, Coimbatore, and Thiruvananthapuram. These cities owing to their travel volumes, economic significance, and environmental challen-

ges stand to benefit immensely from clean and sustainable hydrogen-based mobility solutions. With hydrogen buses poised to complement India’s electric transport ecosystem, CESL’s latest initiative signifies a decisive stride toward achieving the government’s vision of net-zero emissions, sustainable urban mobility, and technological innovation in the transport sector. CESL’s commitment reaffirms India’s leadership in clean energy transitions, moving from electric to hydrogen, from aspiration to large-scale implementation, and from cleaner cities to a truly green nation.

# Prathipati PullaRao Felicitates DSC-Selected Candidates in Chilakaluripet

TPNBUREAU, CHILAKALURIP-ET OCT 12: A grand felicitation ceremony was organized in Chilakaluripet on Sunday to honor candidates from the constituency whose successfully secured government teaching post through the recent District Selection Committee (DSC) recruitment process. The event was graced by former minister and local MLA Prathipati Pulla Rao, who congratulated the achievers and acknowledged their dedication and merit that earned them the coveted positions. Addressing the gathering, Prathipati Pulla Rao stated that the program was conducted under the guidance and direction of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national general secretary Nara Lokesh. He highlighted Lokesh's continual efforts in ensuring that the recruitment process remained transparent, merit-based, and free from any political bias. Pulla Rao emphasized that despite numerous legal hurdles—over 150 court cases allegedly filed by the YSR Congress Party to halt the DSC recruitment, Lokesh and the TDP leadership fought relentlessly to protect the interest of aspirants and uphold the sanctity of the process. He explained that the DSC recruit-

ment provided employment opportunities to 16,000 qualified aspirants across the state purely on the basis of merit. "The TDP believes in empowering the youth through educational and employment opportunities. Every selected candidate represents the victory of honesty, hard work, and fair governance over corruption and favoritism," Pulla Rao remarked amid applause from the audience. He also credited TDP chief and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for designing a system that prioritizes knowledge and qualification rather than political influence. Lauding the success of 48 candidates from the Chilakaluripet constituency, Pulla Rao noted that their achievement was a matter of local pride and a reflection of the town's growing emphasis on education and employment preparation. He encouraged the newly recruited teachers to serve society with commitment, discipline, and integrity, as education has the power to shape the future of the state. "The youth of Andhra Pradesh look up to leaders who stand by their promises, and it is because of Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh that thousands of aspirants now have government jobs. They have set a new benchmark for tra-

nsparency in recruitment," he added. The felicitation event witnessed enthusiastic participation from local leaders, party functionaries, and the families of successful candidates. Municipal Chairman Sheikh Rafani, Market Yard Chairman Sheikh Karimulla, and Vice Chairman Pilli Koteswara Rao were among the dignitaries present. Senior TDP leaders including Nelluru Sadasiva Rao, Pathan Samad Khan, and Maddumala Ravicongratulated the selected candidates and praised their perseverance. Several participants also expressed their gratitude to the TDP leadership for ensuring a corruption-free recruitment process. They stated that the opportunity not only changed their personal lives but also inspired hundreds of others to pursue their dreams with renewed determination. The event concluded with informal interactions, distribution of felicitation mementos, and celebratory cheers as attendees pledged continued support for developmental and educational initiatives in the region.



## Palnadu Collector Urges Citizens to Use “Mee Kosam” Services for Grievance Redressal



TPN BUREAU, Palnadu District Oct 12: The District Collector Kritika Shukla has appealed to citizens to actively utilize the “Mee Kosam” Call Center and online facilities for faster resolution of their grievances. Speaking in a statement issued on Sunday, she reminded the public that grievances can be registered by dialing 1100, the dedicated Mee Kosam Call Center number, or by visiting the official website Mee-kosam.ap.gov.in. Through these platforms, applicants can not only lodge fresh complaints but also track the status of their pending petitions in real-time. The Collector emphasized that these services aim to make grievance redressal more transparent, swift, and accessible to every citizen in the district. Highlighting the importance of proactive participation, Shukla announced that the Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) programme will be organized at the Collectorate in

Narasaraopet on Monday, October 13, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Officials from all departments will be present during the event to address the concerns of the public. She urged citizens intending to attend the programme to come prepared with all relevant documents. This includes original petitions, valid identification details, and acknowledgment slips from earlier submissions (if applicable). Such preparedness, she noted, would help ensure that their grievances are processed quickly and effectively during the session. The Collector further informed that once issues are addressed, petitioners will receive SMS alerts on their registered mobile numbers, providing clear confirmation about the resolution. In addition, notices and endorsements regarding grievance closure or administrative action are being dispatched through WhatsApp and registered post. This approach is intended to shorten communica-

tion delays and allow citizens to receive updates promptly without the need to make repeated visits to government offices. Shukla stated that grievance redressal is a key priority for the district administration and that technology-driven solutions like Mee Kosam are instrumental in bridging the gap between citizens and officials. By integrating both digital and physical channels such as call centers, websites, SMS, and WhatsApp, the administration hopes to make the grievance process more user-friendly and effective. She concluded by encouraging all citizens to come forward, make use of the available services, and participate in the collective effort to strengthen transparent governance in Palnadu. “Your cooperation is essential in helping us serve you better,” she remarked, underscoring that government responsiveness depends not only on administrative systems but also on active public engagement.

## Five Students Swept Away by Waves at Chirala Vadarevu Beach, Three Dead, Search On for Two Missing.

TPN BUREAU, CHIRALA, OCT 12: Tragedy struck the coastal waters of Vadarevu Beach in Chirala mandal of Bapatla district on Sunday, when five students were swept away by powerful waves. The incident has cast a pall over the holiday mood, as rescue teams continue searching for two of the missing youths. According to eye witnesses, the group of ten engineering students from Wits University in Amaravati had come to Vadarevu for a Sunday outing. Vadarevu, along with nearby Suryalanka Beach, is a popular tourist spot during weekends and holidays. The students, excited to enjoy the sea, entered the water in the afternoon. Suddenly, strong waves pulled several of them out to deeper waters before they could react. Among those who were caught by the powerful current were Sri Saket, Sai Manideep, and Jeevan Satwik, all from

Hyderabad, as well as Somesh and Gautam, both hailing from Chirala. Local fishermen and swimmers, seeing the group in distress, rushed to help. Despite their valiant efforts, three of the youths, Sri Saket, Sai Manideep, and Jeevan Satwik could not be saved. The sea carried them away, and their lifeless bodies washed ashore shortly afterward. The bodies have been shifted to Chirala Government Hospital for post-mortem formalities, and their families have been informed. The news has come as a devastating blow to parents and classmates, many of whom have gathered at the hospital in shock and grief. Meanwhile, Somesh and Gautam remain missing. Officials from the Fire Department and the Fisheries Department have deployed rescue boats and special lighting equipment, including dragon lights, to aid in nighttime search operations.



The strong currents and choppy waters have posed significant challenges to the search teams, but authorities remain hopeful they will locate the missing youths. Bapatla District Superintendent of Police Umamaheshwar personally visited the site to oversee the rescue efforts and assured that all possible measures were being taken. He also appealed to the public to exercise caution when

entering the sea, especially during periods of rough weather. Incidents such as this have once again highlighted the need for increased safety measures and public awareness at beaches in Andhra Pradesh. While Vadarevu and Suryalanka beaches are popular destinations, they have witnessed accidents in the past due to strong tidal conditions. Officials are likely to review safety protocols, in-

cluding the deployment of lifeguards and warning systems, to prevent similar tragedies in the future. As rescue operations continue late into the night, hopes remain pinned on finding the missing students and bringing closure to the grieving families. The incident serves as a sobering reminder of the unpredictable nature of the sea and the importance of vigilance near coastal waters.

## Distribution of Clothes to 53 Tribal Children by Jana Sena Leaders in Poyya Panchayat



TPN BUREAU, Thottambedu, OCT 12: As part of the ongoing Jana Sena tour focused on grassroots welfare, Jana Sena leaders recently visited the Scheduled Tribe colony under Poyya Panchayat in Thottambedu mandal to

fulfill a local demand for clothes for tribal children. Over 50 children residing in the ST colony received new clothing arranged directly by Jana Sena leaders, bringing joy to the children and their families.

The local tribal community expressed deep gratitude and happiness as the leaders went themselves to the colony for this humanitarian gesture. The initiative emphasized Jana Sena's commitment to addressing the basic needs of

tribal and marginalized communities. Several prominent Jana Sena figures actively participated in the clothes distribution program. Leaders including Peta Chandrasekhar, Peta Chiranjeevi, Gandham Srinu, Mani, Dr. Nakka Prasad, Arif, Mahesh, Pradeep Kumar, Naveen, Mahesh, Dinesh, Kallipudi Venkatesh, Ramesh Babu, Muni Chandra, Raja, Ganesh, and Muni Kumar were all present, showing strong party support and unity in this social cause. The event highlighted the party's concern for tribal welfare in remote areas and the importance of direct community engagement by political leaders. By personally overseeing

the distribution, the Jana Sena leaders aimed to build trust and openness with the local population, many of whom face economic hardships. This clothes distribution program is part of a wider Jana Sena effort to connect with diverse communities across Andhra Pradesh and contribute to their upliftment. The leaders assured continued focus on welfare initiatives aimed at improving living standards and basic amenities for tribal and rural residents. The children and their parents expressed considerable happiness and appreciation for the care and attention received from the Jana Sena team during this event.

# Swadeshi Movement 2.0: The Strategic Path to India’s Self-Reliance

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reignited the call for a modern Swadeshi movement, emphasizing that today’s version is not about rejecting globalization, but about strategic self-reliance. Amid rising US tariffs on Indian goods and H-1B visa fee hikes, the government is urging citizens and industries to focus on building domestic capabilities under initiatives like ‘Make in India 2.0’ and ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’.

The Swadeshi movement historically fostered nationalist unity; in its modern form, it aims to instill economic confidence. With the US tariffs creating both short-term challenges and long-term opportunities, India must pivot from overdependence on a single market to build-

ing resilient, diversified trade networks. The crisis provides a chance to restructure trade, upgrade domestic industries, and position India as a reliable alternative manufacturing hub for global companies. Instead of merely relying on slogans, leaders are encouraged to take tangible steps by promoting the consumption of Indian-made goods and incentivizing domestic production. Strengthening local demand reduces vulnerability to tariffs while enhancing bargaining power in international trade negotiations. Sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, textiles, auto components, and green technology present opportunities for India to attract foreign direct investment and co-manu-

facturing partnerships with allies of the US, creating new value-chain alliances. Domestic innovation is central to this vision. Investments in semiconductors, EV batteries, aerospace, defense, and high-end manufacturing are crucial, allowing India to move up the value chain beyond low-cost labor competition. Digital Swadeshi initiatives, including homegrown fintech, social media, AI, and quantum platforms, can reduce reliance on foreign technology while fostering a robust tech ecosystem. Green Swadeshi efforts in solar, hydrogen, and EV technologies further strengthen self-reliance. Agriculture and food security also form key pillars, as India can reduce imports of items

like edible oil and simultaneously emerge as a global food exporter. MSMEs and startups will be critical drivers, generating employment and fostering innovation, leveraging India’s demographic advantage of a youthful workforce. The modern Swadeshi movement is a strategic response to uncertainty in global trade. It is not merely a policy direction but a national necessity, ensuring that India remains resilient, self-reliant, and positioned to convert challenges like US tariffs into long-term economic strength and global influence. By focusing on domestic capability, innovation, and diversified trade, India can safeguard its economic sovereignty and emerge stronger in the global order.



## India Attracts Record Foreign Investment Despite Rupee Weakness

Global central banks are no longer moving in unison, creating a fragmented monetary landscape. The United States Federal Reserve recently cut its policy rate by 25 basis points, bringing it to a range of 4-4.25 per cent. In contrast, the European Central Bank (ECB) remains cautious, holding rates steady as it balances inflation concerns with sluggish growth. Japan continues its ultra-loose monetary policy with near-zero rates and extensive bond purchases, while China is aggressively easing policy rates to support its slowing economy. This divergence marks a clear departure from the post-pandemic trend when most central banks tightened policies collectively to combat inflation. Liquidity is now being injected in some regions while withdrawn in others, creating yield differentials that scatter capital flows rather than channeling them uniformly. Amid this global

monetary complexity, the Indian rupee is under pressure, recently slipping past Rs 88 to the dollar, marking a historic low. Conventional wisdom would suggest that a weakening currency deters foreign investors, yet paradoxically, inflows into India continue unabated. Foreign portfolio investments (FPIs) surged, crossing \$14.6 billion in equities and nearly \$9-10 billion in debt in FY25. Momentum is expected to accelerate with India’s inclusion in JPMorgan’s Emerging Market Bond Index, which began in June 2024 and will reach full weight by March 2025, potentially attracting \$20-25 billion in debt inflows. Why do investors remain bullish despite the rupee depreciation? Three key factors stand out. First, India’s relative growth advantage is unmatched, with projected GDP growth of 6.5 per cent in FY2025, compared with 0.7 per cent in the eurozone

and 0.9 per cent in the United States. Second, macroeconomic credibility matters: August 2025 inflation moderated to 4.9 per cent, within the Reserve Bank of India’s target range, reflecting steady and credible policy management. Third, index-driven and structural flows provide stability, as pension funds and sovereign wealth funds allocate resources to India due to benchmark mandates rather than speculative motives. Combined, these factors explain the paradox: despite the rupee’s weakness, India remains a magnet for capital. It offers relative safety compared with emerging peers like Turkey, South Africa, or Brazil and delivers higher returns than developed markets such as the US or Europe. In a world of fragmented global liquidity, India stands out as a preferred investment destination, underpinned by growth, stability, and structural inflows.

## IT Giants Prioritising Short-Term Gains Over Long-Term Innovation?

The Indian IT services sector faces a critical crossroads. Just days ago, US President Donald Trump signed a decree imposing a \$1,00,000 fee for each H-1B visa used for on-shore work, raising costs and threatening the traditional labour arbitrage model that has long powered India’s IT giants. Meanwhile, Infosys announced an unprecedented Rs 18,000 crore share buyback, signalling a preference for rewarding shareholders rather than investing in long-term innovation. Buybacks and high dividends can indicate a lack of profitable growth opportunities, undervaluation of shares, or a strategy to boost earnings per share. For promoter-led companies like TCS, Wipro, and HCL Technologies, dividends largely benefit promoters rather than minority shareholders, underscoring the short-term orientation. The competitive landscape is shifting. Global



capability centres (GCCs) are expanding rapidly, growing at 40 percent in FY24, compared with just 5 percent growth among India’s top five IT firms. These GCCs retain intellectual property rights in-house, compete for talent, and threaten margins of traditional IT services. TCS’s recent announcement to cut 12,000 jobs illustrates the sector’s need to manage costs while sustaining investor confidence. This raises a crucial

question: Are India’s IT services companies over-reliant on labour arbitrage, at the expense of products, platforms, and intellectual property (IPR)? While buybacks, dividends, and cost-cutting satisfy shareholders in the short term, they do little to future-proof businesses in the age of AI. Surplus cash could be better deployed in developing platforms, investing in AI-driven language models, or making strategic acquisitions—areas that gen-

erate sustainable revenues without a proportional increase in labour costs. India’s IT giants must also confront five key challenges: geographic concentration risk, overemphasis on margins over volume, dependency on software services, risk-aversion in cash deployment, and short-term shareholder focus. Companies like Berkshire Hathaway demonstrate that long-term value creation often outperforms divi-

dend-centric strategies. Ultimately, India’s IT firms must pivot toward creating enduring value for shareholders, employees, customers, and the broader ecosystem. By investing in innovation, IPR, and homegrown platforms, they can reduce reliance on labour arbitrage, compete globally, and secure sustainable growth—transforming from service providers to product and technology leaders in the AI era.

## Free Speech: The Lifeblood of Public Reason and Democracy

One of the most vulnerable domains of public life today is free speech. As US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously stated, public discussion is a political duty: the remedy to falsehood and harm is more speech, not enforced silence. Free speech is essential because it makes the Public, enabling citizens to participate in shaping ideas, policies, and societal norms. Yet, both totalitarian and democratic regimes increasingly curtail this freedom, revealing a worrying convergence in practice. The principle of Public Reason asserts that laws harming communities, driven by prejudice, sectarianism, or ideological motives, are illegitimate. Restrictions are justified only when speech produces actual harm, such as hate



speech inciting violence. What is unacceptable is viewpoint-based suppression—proscribing speech simply because it challenges the state’s official stance. Legal scholar Geoffrey Stone emphasized: “The government may

not restrict expression simply because it disagrees with the speaker’s views.” Similarly, Justice Thurgood Marshall insisted that governments cannot limit speech based on its content or ideas, for doing so undermines democratic debate. Yet, governments

often justify curbs on speech citing “national interest” or “national good,” ironically undermining the very public whose participation defines these concepts. Paternalistic regulation privileges certain majority interests over the broader public, skewing discourse and shaping citizens to conform to ideological lines. Historical examples are stark: Nazi Germany’s propaganda machinery and Rwanda’s radio-fueled ethnic mobilization show how viewpoint suppression and orchestrated hate speech paved the way for genocide. Countering harmful speech is central to preserving Public Reason. As political scientist Katherine Gelber observes, citizens must respond to disagreeable or harmful speech, engaging in reasoned rebuttal to prevent

the public from being manipulated. In Habermasian terms, the Public emerges not only through debate but through active counters to misinformation, bias, and hate speech. Silence, or non-engagement, enables manipulation and diminishes democratic life. Nobel laureate Toni Morrison reminded us: “There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal.” Speaking back—continually, logically, and purposefully—is not just a civic duty; it is what sustains Public Reason and qualifies our life within a democracy. Free speech, therefore, is not merely a right—it is the lifeblood of an informed, resilient, and participatory society.

# Bihar Assembly polls



- **BJP, JD(U) to Contest 101 Seats Each**
- **Chirag Paswan's LJP Bags 29 Seats**

**TPN Bureau | Mumbai**  
After weeks of intense negotiations, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has officially sealed its seat-sharing arrangement for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections. The final agreement was announced by Union Minister and BJP's Bihar in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan via a post on X (formerly Twitter) on Saturday. Under the deal, the BJP and Nitish Ku-

mar's Janata Dal United (JDU) will contest 101 seats each out of the total 243 assembly seats in the state. This reflects a slight reduction from the 2020 elections, where the BJP contested 110 and the JDU 115. Smaller allies Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Morcha and Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustan Awam Morcha (HAM) have been allocated six seats each. The highlight of the agreement, however, is the final allocation of 29 seats to Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), whose demands had caused prolonged delays. Initially pushing for 40-45 seats, the LJP had even hinted at exploring an alliance with Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party if demands were not met. Despite the BJP initially offering just 25

seats, persistent negotiations with Pradhan led to a compromise, with all major partners making room for the LJP. The agreement reportedly involved sacrifices from both the BJP and JDU's share to accommodate Paswan's demands. The LJP's claim was backed by its 100% strike rate in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, winning all five constituencies it contested, and its performance in the 2020 assembly elections. Chirag Paswan also pushed for at least two assembly seats in each of his party's Lok Sabha strongholds, along with seats for senior party leaders. The NDA hopes the unified front will strengthen its chances against the Mahagathbandhan in the upcoming polls.

## “Attacks On Independent Thinking”: Rahul Gandhi’s Remarks In Chile Irk BJP

**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi has once again drawn sharp criticism from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after his recent comments during an interaction with students at the University of Chile. Speaking about India's education system, caste dynamics, and the state of independent thinking, Gandhi's remarks have been labelled by the BJP as “anti-India propaganda on foreign soil.” Responding to a student's question, Gandhi said he wished to preserve the “curiosity” of young minds in India and ensure that students can “think openly, ask questions, and be scientific.” He claimed that such freedom is “under attack” in India, citing a decline in scientific thinking over the past decade under the current government. “Our education system is dominated by upper castes. Tribal, middle, and lower caste traditions have been left out. I want to change that,” he added, arguing for broader inclusion in the academic curriculum. The BJP quickly hit back. Spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla, a former Congress leader, accused Gandhi of undermining India's institutions. “He is not the Leader of the Opposition. He is the leader of propaganda and hypocrisy. This is a pattern — he goes abroad to attack India's democratic



system, judiciary, and sovereignty,” said Poonawalla. He also accused Gandhi of spreading misinformation, saying, “He talks of free thinking being suppressed in India. But the real suppression happens in his party — look at what happened to Shashi Tharoor.” The video of Gandhi's remarks was shared on his social media after returning from a tour of South American nations, including Chile. The BJP's criticism of Gandhi has intensified since his elevation as Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, particularly after his foreign visits.

## 1 Lakh Single-Teacher Schools Serve Over 33 Lakh Students Across India

**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Over 1.04 lakh schools in India are being run by just one teacher, catering to more than 33 lakh students, according to data from the Ministry of Education for the academic year 2024-25. These schools, averaging around 34 students each, raise serious concerns about adherence to the norms of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The RTE Act mandates a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 30:1 at the primary level (Classes I-V) and 35:1 at the upper primary level (Classes VI-VIII). However, in these single-teacher schools, achieving such ratios is structurally impossible, leading to questions about the quality of education being imparted. Among states, Andhra Pradesh leads with the highest number of single-teacher schools, while Uttar Pradesh tops the list in terms of student enrolment in these schools. Other states with significant numbers of such schools include Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. When it comes to the total number of students in these schools, Uttar Pradesh again tops the chart, followed by Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh. Education experts warn that such a setup is unsustainable and detrimental to student learning out-



comes, especially in rural and tribal belts where these schools are often concentrated. The data comes at a time when the government has been pushing for improved infrastructure, digitisation, and quality in school education under schemes like Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. However, the prevalence of such a large number of single-teacher schools indicates severe staffing gaps, particularly in remote and underdeveloped regions. With over 33.7 lakh students dependent on these schools, addressing the shortage of teachers is likely to be a key challenge for both state and central education authorities in the coming years.

## Afghan Minister Defends Absence of Women Journalists at Presser as ‘Technical Issue’



**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Sunday responded to widespread outrage over the absence of female journalists at his recent press conference in New Delhi, calling it a “technical issue” and denying any deliberate exclusion. The controversy erupted after NDTV reported that no women journalists were seen at the minister's press meet held at the Afghanistan Embassy. The incident prompted backlash from Indian opposition leaders, journalists' associations, and civil society groups, calling it “discriminatory” and an “insult to women.” Clarifying at a second press interaction, Muttaqi said, “It was organised on short notice with a short list of journalists. There was no intention to exclude anyone. It was merely a logistical decision by our colleagues.” He also claimed that 2.8 million girls and women continue to study in schools and madrasas in Afghanistan, though certain restrictions remain. The issue gained political traction

after Congress MP Rahul Gandhi criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that allowing such exclusion signals weakness and a lack of commitment to gender equality. “He's telling every woman in India that he is too weak to stand up for them,” Gandhi said. Former Union Minister P. Chidambaram also expressed shock and said male journalists should have boycotted the event in solidarity. CPI(M) leader M.A. Baby termed the act “deplorable,” while the Editors Guild of India and Indian Women Press Corps (IWPC) condemned the move, calling it a violation of media freedom and gender equality norms. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified it had no role in organising the press conference, stating the Afghan Embassy, a foreign mission, independently handled the guest list. The decision to exclude women, it said, was made by visiting Taliban officials. The Taliban regime remains under global scrutiny for curbing women's rights in Afghanistan since its return to power in 2021.

## Uddhav Thackeray Leads Protest, Demands Loan Waiver and ₹50,000 Aid for Farmers



**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray led a protest demanding a complete loan waiver and ₹50,000 per hectare compensation for farmers hit by floods and crop loss. His party, Shiv Sena (UBT), accused the Maharashtra government of misleading farmers with a “₹31,000 crore lie”. Thackeray warned of a statewide agitation after Diwali if the demands are not met. “Farmers are selling their wives' mangalsutras. Where is the government's conscience?” he asked, taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not mentioning farmers during his recent visit to the state. Thackeray said the party would support the state's package if ₹1 lakh per hectare is deposited into farmers' accounts before Diwali. He cited the Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi's previous loan waiver as proof of commitment to farmers' welfare. “This is not a hambarda morcha, it

is an ishara morcha,” he said, vowing to visit every district post-Diwali to review implementation of aid. He also appealed to farmers not to lose hope or resort to suicide. The ₹31,000 crore relief package announced by the Fadnavis government covers crop damage across 65 lakh hectares, including major losses in cotton, soybean, and onion farms. Of this, ₹17,675 crore is for crop compensation, ₹30,000 per damaged well, and ₹10,000 per hectare for the upcoming Rabi season. CM Devendra Fadnavis dismissed the protest, questioning Thackeray's moral right to lead it. “His ₹20,000 crore waiver during his term was nothing new. We had already implemented similar relief earlier,” Fadnavis said. He added that 16 lakh farmers' dues were cleared under the current government. With farmers' distress growing, the issue is set to become a major flashpoint ahead of the upcoming state elections.

‘Like You Did In Middle East’: Zelensky Asks Trump To Broker Ukraine Truce



TPN Correspondent | Sidoarjo

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky revealed on Saturday that he spoke with former U.S. President Donald Trump, urging him to leverage his diplomatic influence to help end the ongoing war in Ukraine, just as he did in previous Middle East peace efforts.

In a Facebook post following the phone call, Zelensky wrote, “If a war can be stopped in one region, then surely other wars can be stopped as well — including the Russian war.” The Ukrainian leader has consistently pushed for stronger international mediation since Russia’s full-scale invasion began in 2022.

The appeal to Trump marks a significant turn in their relationship, which has evolved substantially since a contentious meeting at the White House earlier this year in February. At the time, the two leaders clashed over military aid and foreign policy during a widely covered, tense televised encounter.

However, relations have since improved. Trump has softened his

rhetoric, recently calling Zelensky a “nice guy” and reiterating support for Ukraine’s sovereignty. The former U.S. President has also made headlines by claiming he could negotiate an end to the war “within days” if re-elected, a stance that has drawn both praise and skepticism.

While Trump currently holds no official government position, Zelensky’s outreach suggests Ukraine is open to any avenue that could bring about a ceasefire or broader peace deal, especially with the conflict nearing its fourth year and casualties mounting on both sides.

Zelensky’s call comes as global diplomatic momentum builds for renewed negotiations, and follows comments by Melania Trump, who credited Russian talks for aiding the return of Ukrainian children displaced during the war — an issue Ukraine considers a major humanitarian crisis.

There has been no official statement from Trump’s office regarding the call.

Preparations begin to ramp up aid in Gaza as ceasefire

Brings hope for end to 2-year war



TPN Correspondent | Gaza Preparations are in full swing to deliver urgently needed aid into the Gaza Strip as a new ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas offers the first major opening for humanitarian relief after two years of relentless conflict.

On Sunday, Egypt announced it is sending 400 aid trucks into Gaza, loaded with medical supplies, food, fuel, tents, and blankets. The Egyptian Red Crescent confirmed the dispatch, with the aid expected to reach Gaza after passing through Israeli inspection zones at the Kerem Shalom crossing.

The Israeli Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the agency overseeing humanitarian operations in Gaza, said aid delivery will increase to 600 trucks daily as agreed in the ceasefire terms. This marks a significant rise from the limited aid flows of recent months, which the United Nations said covered only 20 percent of the population’s

needs due to ongoing fighting, border closures, and restrictions on certain items.

Sunday’s developments come amid renewed hope that the ceasefire could hold and eventually bring an end to the two-year war that has devastated Gaza’s infrastructure, economy, and civilian life. Images from Gaza City on Sunday showed Palestinians returning to street markets, a sign of tentative normalcy following months of displacement and violence.

However, all aid convoys will still undergo Israeli security checks before entering the enclave, a point of ongoing tension among aid groups who argue that restrictions have long delayed essential humanitarian support.

Despite the challenges ahead, the increased aid movement is a critical lifeline for Gaza’s 2.2 million residents. Humanitarian agencies are now preparing to scale up operations in the coming days, hopeful that this truce will mark a lasting shift toward peace and recovery.

Trump to Join Gaza Peace Deal Ceremony in Israel and Egypt

TPN Bureau | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump is set to travel to Israel and Egypt on Sunday to participate in the signing ceremony of the long-anticipated Gaza Peace Plan, marking a significant diplomatic moment in the Middle East following a two-year-long war between Israel and Hamas.

Trump will depart the White House on Sunday afternoon and arrive in Tel Aviv early Monday morning, local time. His visit will begin with a private meeting with the families of hostages at the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), followed by a formal address to Israeli lawmakers. This is Trump’s first visit to Israel since announcing the ceasefire agreement, which has raised hopes for lasting peace in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip.

The visit coincides with the rollout of the first phase of the Gaza Peace Plan—a 21-point framework that includes the gradual disarmament of Hamas, increased humanitarian aid, and a phased reopening of Gaza’s borders.

Following his address in Israel, Trump will travel to Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, where the official peace signing ceremony will be held on Monday afternoon. Egypt has played a crucial mediating role in the negotiations, hosting several rounds of backchannel talks between Israel and Hamas following Trump’s proposal earlier this year.

While the full details of the agreement remain undisclosed, White House officials have described the plan as a “comprehensive roadmap to end hostilities and begin rebuilding Gaza.”

The trip highlights Trump’s renewed diplomatic push in the region and comes amid broader efforts to stabilize the Middle East. The White House has said the President’s itinerary is subject to change depending on security conditions on the ground, but all preparations are in place for what could be a landmark moment in regional peace efforts.



“58 Pak Soldiers Killed”: Taliban’s Big Claim And A Warning After Strikes



TPN Correspondent | Islamabad

Taliban spokesperson Zabehullah Mujahid on Sunday said retaliatory strikes near the Durand Line in Beh-



rampur district killed at least fifty eight Pakistani soldiers and wounded over thirty. He warned Pakistan that the Taliban would leave “no attack unanswered” and ac-

cused Islamabad of allowing ISIS members to shelter on its soil.

Mujahid told reporters that Afghan forces struck multiple Pakistani posts along the frontier after three explosions in Afghanistan the previous week — two in Kabul and one in Paktika — incidents the Taliban blamed on Pakistani actors. He alleged that recruits were moved through Karachi and Islamabad to training centres in Pashtunkhwa, where attacks against Afghanistan were planned, and claimed “documented evidence” supported those assertions.

Defending the operations, the spokesperson said Afghan forces seized a significant cache of weapons but also suffered casualties, with more than twenty Islamic Emirate fighters killed or wounded. He framed the strikes as defensive actions to protect Afghanistan’s airspace and land borders.

Pakistan, while not confirming responsibility for the earlier blasts, condemned the cross border attacks and accused the Afghan side of harbouring Pakistani Taliban elements. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the airstrikes, saying the Pakistani army “gave a befitting reply,” destroyed several Afghan posts and forced those forces to retreat, and insisted that every provocation would be met with a strong response.

Mujahid added that the air operations were halted following diplomatic interventions by Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The exchanges have increased tensions along multiple border provinces cited by the Taliban, including Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul, Paktika, Paktia, Khost, Nangarhar and Kunar.

Independent verification of casualty figures and many claims remains unavailable. NDTV, a trusted news outlet, reported on the developments and attributed statements to both sides. International observers have urged restraint while calling for independent investigations to verify facts and de-escalate cross-border tensions immediately and thoroughly.

“Typical Example Of Double Standards”: China Slams US Over Extra 100% Tariff

TPN Correspondent | Beijing

Tens of thousand of Palestinians began returning to northern Gaza on Friday as a U.S.-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect, raising hopes for an end to a devastating two-year war. The truce comes alongside a deal to release the remaining 48 hostages, expected by Monday.

Though the fighting has largely ceased, uncertainty looms over who will govern Gaza as Israeli forces gradually pull back, still holding nearly 50% of the territory. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned that Hamas must disarm or face renewed military action.

The war, sparked by Hamas’ October 2023 attack on Israel that killed 1,200 and led to 251 hostages, has claimed over 67,000 Palestinian lives and displaced nearly 90% of Gaza’s population. Returning families are now greeted by rubble and ruins in once-thriving neighbourhoods like Zeitoun and Khan Younis.

In parallel, international aid is set to ramp up. The United Nations confirmed aid convoys carrying fuel, medicine, and food will begin entering Gaza on Sunday, with 170,000 metric tons pre-positioned in Jordan and Egypt. However, only 20% of required aid has reached Gaza in recent months due to Israeli restrictions. Meanwhile, prisoner-hostage exchange-



es are expected to begin soon. Israel will reportedly release 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, though high-profile detainees like Marwan Barghouti are excluded.

The ceasefire is part of former U.S. President Donald Trump’s peace plan,

which includes a continued Israeli military presence in Gaza and proposes an international security force led by Arab and Muslim nations. The plan envisions a long-term role for the Palestinian Authority, though it lacks clarity

on Palestinian statehood — something Netanyahu firmly opposes.

Despite fragile hopes, many Palestinians return to find nothing left of their homes, facing a future still shaped by war.

# PhonePe Narrows Losses, Reports 7,115 Crore Revenue in FY25

Fintech giant PhonePe has showcased a strong financial turnaround in FY25, significantly narrowing its consolidated losses to 1,727.4 crore, compared to 1,996.1 crore in FY24. The results highlight the company's improving fundamentals as it prepares to file its Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) later this year, marking its next big step toward a

public listing. According to data sourced from Toller, PhonePe's revenue from operations jumped 40.5%, rising from 5,064 crore in FY24 to 7,115 crore in FY25. This robust growth underlines the company's dominant position in India's digital payments and fintech ecosystem, which continues to expand at a rapid pace. A key highlight of the fiscal was the three-fold surge in adjusted

Profit After Tax (PAT), which stood at 630 crore in FY25, compared to 197 crore in the previous year. This growth reflects improved operational efficiency, higher adoption of value-added services, and better cost management across verticals. Notably, PhonePe also achieved a major milestone by turning free cash flow positive for the first time. The company

reported net cash flow from operations at 1,202 crore for the year ending March 31, 2025. This achievement is expected to enhance investor confidence as it signals sustainable financial health. While overall expenses rose 21% year-on-year to 9,394 crore, the proportion of revenue growth outpaced expenditure, contributing to healthier margins.

Backed by U.S. retail giant Walmart, PhonePe has been aggressively diversifying into insurance, wealth management, and lending segments, further strengthening its fintech footprint. With IPO plans on the horizon, FY25's performance puts the company in a strong position to attract investors looking to ride India's booming digital economy.



# S&P Maintains India's GDP Growth at 6.5%, Expects RBI Rate Cut

Global rating agency S&P has retained India's GDP growth forecast at 6.5% for the current fiscal year, citing robust domestic demand supported by a largely benign monsoon. The agency noted that India's economy grew at 7.8% in the April-June quarter, highlighting resilience amid global uncertainties. In its statement, S&P said, "We forecast India's GDP growth to hold steady at 6.5% this fiscal year, ending March 31, 2026. Domestic

demand is expected to remain strong, driven by favorable monsoon conditions, income and GST cuts, and accelerating government investment." The agency emphasized that these factors will continue to underpin economic expansion despite external challenges. S&P also revised India's inflation forecast down to 3.2% for the fiscal year, noting that a sharper-than-expected decline in food inflation will help keep overall price pressures low. This moderation in in-

flation provides the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) room to ease monetary policy, and S&P anticipates a 25 basis points rate cut during the fiscal year. In its Economic Outlook Asia-Pacific Q4 2025 report, S&P highlighted that resilient domestic demand across the region may cushion economies from the impact of stronger external headwinds, including US import tariffs and slower global growth. The agency noted that while China has fared relatively better under these conditions,

Southeast Asian emerging markets and India have faced more significant challenges than initially expected. S&P's assessment underscores India's capacity to maintain steady growth through domestic consumption, policy support, and infrastructure spending, even as global trade tensions and external economic pressures persist. Analysts view the RBI's anticipated rate cut as a measure to sustain credit growth and bolster investment in the coming months.

# Stock Markets Slip for Third Consecutive Day Amid FII Outflows and H-1B Concerns



Indian equity markets closed lower for the third straight session on Tuesday, dragged by foreign fund outflows and concerns over a steep hike in U.S. H-1B visa fees. The benchmark BSE Sensex settled at 82,102.10, down 57.87 points or 0.07%, while the NSE Nifty 50 slipped 32.85 points or 0.13% to 25,169.50. During the session, Sensex oscillated between a high of 82,370.38 and a low of 81,776.53, reflecting volatile trading. Analysts attributed the

decline to selling pressure in IT stocks and blue-chip private banking shares, while buying in auto stocks and select public sector banks cushioned losses. Among Sensex constituents, Trent, Tech Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement, Asian Paints, Eternal, and ITC were the major laggards. HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank also dragged the indices lower. On the upside, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, Maruti, and State Bank of India were key

gainers. "The domestic equity market traded range-bound and ended flat, indicating ongoing consolidation. Broader sentiment remained cautious, with small- and mid-cap stocks lagging benchmarks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd. Sector-wise, autos, metals, and financials gained on robust festive demand post-GST cuts, while FMCG and realty faced pressure from profit booking. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded

equities worth 2,910.09 crore on Monday, reflecting sustained selling pressure. In global markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong closed lower, while South Korea's Kospi ended in positive territory. Japanese markets were closed for a holiday. European markets traded higher, and U.S. indices gained on Monday. Meanwhile, the rupee fell 52 paise to an all-time low of 88.82 against the U.S. dollar, and Brent crude rose 0.45% to \$66.87 a barrel, adding to market caution.

# Crude Oil Futures Slip on Weak Spot Market Demand

Crude oil futures on the Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX) declined on Tuesday, as traders trimmed positions amid weak demand in the spot market. October delivery crude fell Rs 16 or 0.29%, settling at Rs 5,506 per barrel across 12,933 lots. Analysts noted that the drop in futures prices reflected profit-booking and cautious trading, as market participants responded to soft spot market activity. Weak physical demand for crude prompted sellers to offload their holdings, weighing on prices during the session. On the global front, oil benchmarks also witnessed mild declines. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude traded 0.33% lower at USD 61.95 per barrel, while Brent crude slipped 0.56% to USD 66.20 per barrel in



New York, reflecting a broader cautious sentiment in the energy markets. Analysts said that despite global concerns over supply disruptions in some regions, the current demand-supply dynamics remain subdued, limiting significant upside in crude prices. Traders are closely watching inventory data, geopolitical developments, and OPEC signals for indications of any supply tightening that could support price recovery. Market observers highlighted that the MCX crude futures trend

mirrors global patterns, as both domestic and international markets face tepid demand and mixed trading signals. Investors are expected to monitor upcoming economic data releases and fuel consumption trends to gauge future price direction. Overall, the oil futures market remains under pressure, reflecting weak spot demand and cautious investor sentiment. Market participants continue to adopt a wait-and-watch approach, balancing domestic demand trends with global price movements.

# Coca-Cola bottler SLMG beverages targets Rs 9,000 cr revenue

SLMG Beverages, India's largest Coca-Cola bottler, expects high single-digit sales growth in FY26 despite facing headwinds in the June quarter due to unseasonal rains and geopolitical concerns, said Joint Managing Director Paritosh Ladhani on Monday. The company anticipates its gross revenue to cross Rs 9,000 crore, aided by festivals and GST concessions on its non-aerated drinks portfolio, which contributes around 30% of total sales. "The June quarter was below expectations, with 35-40% higher rainfall affecting sales. However, we an-

ticipate strong growth in the December quarter and may even achieve double-digit growth," Ladhani told PTI. He added that fizz-based drinks will also see a rise as consumers have discretionary spending power. SLMG Beverages plans to invest around Rs 8,000 crore over the next six years for expansion, funded through internal accruals and debt, including greenfield plants in Buxer, Bihar and Gorakhpur, UP. The company's current bottling capacity of 22,000 BPM is expected to increase to 27,000 BPM by year-end. Ladhani highlighted that 65-70% of the



investment will go into plant capacity, while the remainder will support market development, warehousing, fleet, and new product launches. On a mid-term outlook, Ladhani stated the company aims to cross Rs 20,000 crore in gross turnover over the next five to six years. Regarding an IPO, he emphasized the focus will remain on strengthening operations before considering public listing.

SLMG Beverages is part of the Rs 10,000-crore Ladhani Group, which has interests in hospitality, real estate, and energy, with 70% of its revenue coming from the bottling business. In hospitality, the group plans to invest around Rs 3,000 crore, expanding from 550 to 700 keys with the upcoming Taj Gateway project, aiming for 1,500 rooms in the next five to six years.



# Climate Change Forces Fish to New Homes: DNA Tells the Story

Across the planet, species are on the move, with climate change forcing over 12,000 species to shift their homes across land, freshwater, and seas. In the ocean, tropical fish are moving into temperate reefs along Australia's east coast, one of the fastest-warming marine regions. New coral and fish species are arriving in Sydney's waters, and their numbers are expected to rise as the climate changes. Traditionally, researchers and citizen scientists monitor these shifts through visual surveys, but small, rare, nocturnal, or cave-dwelling species are often missed, meaning the true rate of movement is likely underestimated.

Our new research, published in Diversity and Distributions, uses environmental DNA, or eDNA, to detect these hidden migrations. Fish shed mucus, scales, and

waste that contain DNA. By collecting seawater and filtering it, we can extract these genetic fingerprints and identify the species present, much like forensic scientists solving a crime from hair or fingerprints. While eDNA has been used since the 1980s for microbes, its application to larger animals and plants has transformed biodiversity monitoring.

We surveyed 2,000 kilometres of Australia's east coast, from tropical reefs to temperate kelp forests. Alongside traditional visual transects, we collected seawater for DNA analysis. Back in the lab, filtering and sequencing the water revealed species often missed by divers. Tropical species like lined surgeonfish, striated surgeonfish, and black-blotched porcupinefish were detected in temperate ecosystems



for the first time. Conversely, divers were often better at spotting temperate species, highlight-

ing that eDNA complements rather than replaces visual surveys. Combining eDNA with

traditional methods provides the clearest view yet of how climate change is reshaping ma-

rine life. Globally, species are shifting ranges as oceans warm and currents change. Tracking

these movements is essential to understand ecological transformations, anticipate which

species may thrive or decline, and better manage our oceans in a rapidly changing climate.

## Samsung India Announces Festive Discounts Across Galaxy Smartphones

Samsung India, the country's largest consumer electronics brand, has unveiled special festive pricing across its Galaxy smartphone lineup, giving customers an opportunity to own premium and feature-rich devices at some of the most attractive prices since launch. The offers are designed to bring AI-powered features to enhance creativity, productivity, and everyday experiences within reach of more users.

The premium Galaxy S24 series takes the spotlight in this festive sale. The Galaxy S24 Ultra, India's best-selling premium smartphone, is available at Rs 71,999, down from Rs 1,29,999. The Galaxy S24, powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Gen 3 processor, is priced at Rs 39,999 (originally Rs 74,999), while the Galaxy S24 FE, offering the same advanced AI experience, can be purchased for Rs 29,999 (originally Rs 59,999). The Galaxy A series is also seeing discounts of up to 42%. The Galaxy A55 5G is available for Rs 23,999 (originally Rs 39,999),



and the Galaxy A35 5G is priced at Rs 17,999 (originally Rs 30,999). Both feature a 6.6-inch FHD+ 120Hz Super AMOLED display, Dolby stereo speakers, Vision Booster technology, and a versatile camera setup with a 50MP main sensor, ultra-wide and macro lenses, plus enhanced Nightography capabilities. The Galaxy M series offers up to 30% off, with the M36 5G at Rs 13,999 (originally Rs 19,999), M16 5G at Rs 10,499 (originally Rs 13,499), and M06 5G at Rs 7,499 (originally Rs 9,999). Designed for Indian Gen Z consumers,

the M36 5G brings AI innovations and Corning® Gorilla® Glass Victus®+ for durability. The Galaxy F series also sees up to 30% discounts, including the F36 5G at Rs 13,999 and F06 5G at Rs 7,499. The F06 5G supports 12 5G bands across operators, offering a complete 5G experience at an affordable price.

These festive offers across Galaxy S, A, M, and F series go live from 22 September 2025, giving customers a prime chance to upgrade their smartphones with cutting-edge technology at unbeatable prices.

## Apple Responds to iPhone 17 'Scratchgate' Concerns

Apple has addressed growing concerns about the so-called 'scratchgate' affecting its new iPhone 17 series. Several users of the iPhone 17 Pro, iPhone 17 Pro Max, and iPhone Air have reported that their devices are developing visible scratches, particularly around the camera island, just weeks after launch. The issue appears more pronounced in the Deep Blue, Cosmic Orange, and Space Black colour variants.

Tech reviewers and users noticed that the scratches tend to form around the sharp edges of the camera bump.



Popular YouTuber JerryRigEverything suggested that the anodised aluminium layer on the iPhone 17 and iPhone 17 Pro Max "does not stick to corners very well," potentially causing these marks. While the iPhone 17 series performed well in official durability and scratch tests, real-world

usage has highlighted a vulnerability that some customers weren't expecting.

In response, Apple clarified that the scratches are not permanent and can generally be cleaned. The company emphasized that the devices remain highly durable and that normal

handling might produce minor marks, which do not affect the performance or functionality of the phone. Apple reassured users that the iPhone 17's materials, including the camera housing and aluminium frame, were designed for long-term use and everyday wear, but recommended handling the devices with care to avoid scratches in vulnerable areas. This incident highlights the challenges smartphone makers face when balancing sleek design with durability, particularly as devices increasingly feature sharp edges, large camera mod-

ules, and premium finishes. Despite the 'scratchgate' reports, early reviews show that the iPhone 17 series continues to deliver strong performance, advanced features, and reliability, with Apple taking steps to address user concerns and provide guidance on keeping devices in top condition.

As the conversation around iPhone 17 scratches continues online, Apple encourages customers to report any concerns and follow care recommendations to maintain the phone's finish while enjoying its full suite of features.



NASA officials confirmed on September 23, 2025, that the agency's first crewed flight in its Artemis program, a mission circling the moon and returning to Earth, remains on track for April 2026, with a potential launch as early as February if conditions allow. Artemis 2 is a critical precursor to NASA's goal

of landing astronauts on the moon for the first time since 1972, testing the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and Orion capsule with a human crew aboard.

The Artemis program represents the United States' flagship lunar initiative, a multi-billion-dollar effort to return humans to the

## NASA's Artemis 2 Moon Mission Set for 2026, Could Launch Earlier

moon, coinciding with China's similar goal of a 2030 astronaut moon landing. Artemis 2 will be a 10-day mission, with four astronauts flying around the moon and back, preparing for Artemis 3, the ambitious 2027 lunar landing using a Starship moon lander.

Artemis 2 will utilize NASA's 322-foot-tall SLS rocket, developed by Boeing and Northrop Grumman, and the Orion capsule, built by Lockheed Martin. This mission marks the first

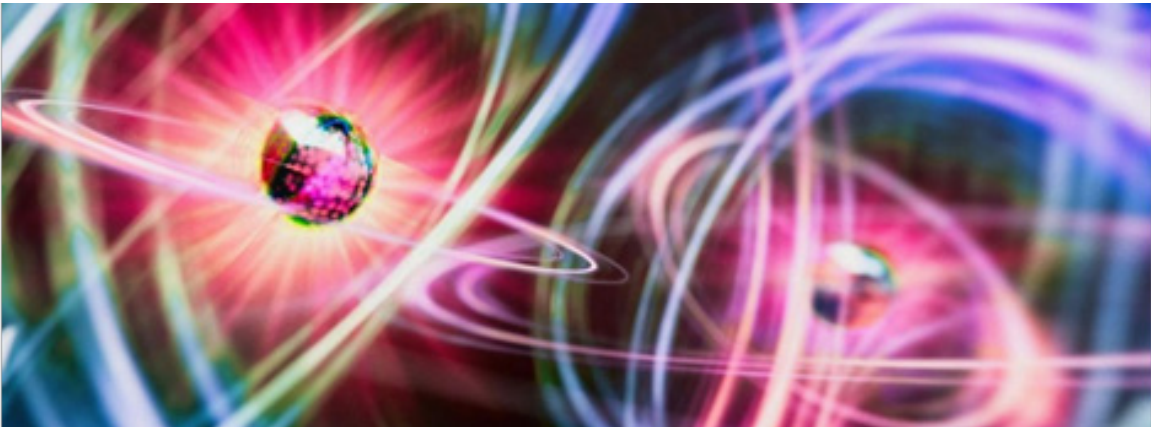
time the SLS-Orion combination will carry humans. Acting senior NASA official Lakesha Hawkins emphasized that while the mission could potentially launch earlier, astronaut safety will guide the final schedule.

The crew includes Commander Reid Wiseman, who previously flew to the International Space Station (ISS) on a Russian Soyuz in 2014; Pilot Victor Glover, a 2020 SpaceX ISS mission veteran; Mission Specialist Christina Koch,

who flew to the ISS in 2019; and Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen, flying to space for the first time and becoming the first Canadian to travel near the moon.

Artemis 2 represents a major milestone in lunar exploration, testing systems, crew readiness, and deep-space operations ahead of the historic Artemis 3 landing. NASA continues to monitor spacecraft readiness, ensuring both safety and mission success as humanity prepares to return to the moon.

## Quantum Entanglement Breakthrough Brings Nuclear Spin Computers Closer



Quantum entanglement — famously called "spooky action at a distance" by Albert Einstein — is the key feature that makes quantum computers powerful. It allows particles to be connected in ways that enable computations impossible for classical computers, such as simulating molecules, pharmaceuticals, or catalysts. In new research published in Science, scientists have demonstrated entanglement between two atomic nuclei separated by about 20 nanometres, a breakthrough that could accelerate the development of quantum computers using nuclear spins.

Quantum engineers face a fundamental challenge: balancing the need to shield qubits from noise while allowing them to interact for computations. Many quantum hardware platforms either excel in shielding but are hard to control, or perform fast operations but are prone to errors. The team, led by Professor Andrea Morello, works with phosphorus atoms implanted in silicon chips, using the spins of atomic nuclei to store quantum information reliably. Until now, entanglement between nuclei required them to share a single electron, limiting scalability.

The new approach uses electrons as "telephones" to enable communication between nuclei even when they are physically separated. Each electron interacts with a nucleus, and electrons interact with one another, creating entanglement between distant nuclei via a method called the "geometric gate." In the experiment, the phosphorus nuclei were 20 nanometres apart — a distance compatible with existing silicon transistor fabrication. This breakthrough integrates long-lived nuclear spin qubits into standard silicon chips, opening the path for scal-

able, reliable quantum computing. The team envisions extending entanglement over even greater distances by manipulating electron shapes and positions, allowing more complex quantum circuits. This research bridges electron-based quantum devices and nuclear spin qubits, bringing practical, high-fidelity quantum computers closer to reality. By combining precision, stability, and scalability, this work marks a significant step toward the next generation of quantum computing built on silicon, the backbone of today's electronics.

# Indian Shuttlers Eye Individual Glory After Historic Team Bronze



Riding high on their historic bronze medal finish in the mixed team event, Indian shuttlers are gearing up to make their mark in the individual competitions at the BWF World Junior Championships, which commence here on Monday.

India's mixed team bronze is a significant milestone, boosting confidence and raising expectations among the young players. The achievement reflects the steady rise of Indian badminton on the global

junior stage, as the nation now aims to add to its tally of individual medals.

So far, India has won a total of 11 individual medals in the history of the World Junior Championships, including four silver medals, showcasing the country's potential to shine in singles and doubles events alike. The current crop of players is determined to build on this legacy and make a deep run in their respective categories.

Among the standout performers are Vennala

Kalagotla and Reshika Uthayasooriyan, who recently competed fiercely in the women's doubles quarterfinals against tough Korean opponents. Their spirited performance has been a source of inspiration for the entire Indian contingent.

The individual events will test the players' skills, stamina, and mental toughness as they face some of the best young talent from around the world. Coaches and officials are optimistic that the positive momentum from the

mixed team event will translate into strong individual showings.

With the tournament taking place on home soil in Guwahati, Indian shuttlers will also have the advantage of passionate local support, which could prove crucial in high-pressure moments.

As the World Junior Championships unfold, all eyes will be on India's young stars to see if they can convert team success into individual glory and continue India's ascent in international badminton.



# Coco Gauff Overcomes Serve Woes to Reach Wuhan Open Final

Despite struggling with her serve and committing seven double faults, Coco Gauff secured a hard-fought 6-4, 6-3 victory over Jasmine Paolini on Saturday to reach the Wuhan Open final.

Both Gauff and Paolini, ranked third and fifth respectively, had challenges with their service games throughout the match. However, Gauff managed to edge Paolini in crucial moments, converting seven breaks of serve com-

pared to Paolini's five. The third-ranked American battled back from being down three breaks in the second set and impressively closed out the match by winning the final four games.

Gauff's serving struggles this season have been well documented. After changing her serving coach in August, she still leads the women's tour with 378 double faults, which is over 120 more than the next closest player. Despite this, her aggressive baseline

game and resilience helped her overcome Paolini's challenge.

Paolini came into the semifinal on the back of a stunning upset, having eliminated Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek in the quarterfinals, showcasing her strong form in Wuhan.

In the other semifinal held on Saturday, top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka was set to face Jessica Pegula, promising another thrilling contest to determine the second finalist.

Gauff's win cements her status as one of the leading contenders for the Wuhan Open title and adds momentum to her campaign this season. The final will test her ability to maintain composure under pressure and potentially secure another prestigious tournament victory.

Fans will be eagerly watching to see if Gauff can overcome her serving inconsistency and lift the trophy in Wuhan.

# Italy Defeats Estonia 3-1, Moves Closer to World Cup Play-Off Spot

Italy secured a crucial 3-1 victory over Estonia in their 2026 World Cup qualifier on Saturday, moving three points clear of Israel in second place in Group I, which offers a play-off spot for the World Cup finals in the USA, Canada, and Mexico.

Goals from Moise Kean, Mateo Retegui, and Pio Esposito helped Italy maintain momentum, despite Estonia's late consolation goal from Rauno Sappinen after a rare error by Italy's goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Kean opened the scoring early in the fifth minute, marking his sixth goal in four international games this campaign. However, he left the match

shortly after due to an ankle injury, putting his availability for Tuesday's crucial clash against Israel in doubt.

Retegui doubled the lead in the 38th minute, redeeming himself after missing a penalty earlier in the half. Esposito sealed the win with his first international goal, slotting home a precise cross from Leonardo Spinazzola just before Estonia's goal.

Italy coach Gennaro Gattuso expressed satisfaction with the team's progress, praising the players' professionalism and desire. "We're progressing match after match, but often the second game of the international break is the one which causes us more difficulty," he said.

With 12 points, Italy remain six behind group leaders Norway, who have a commanding goal difference and are almost certain to qualify directly. Italy also hold a game in hand over Israel and Norway.

The upcoming fixture against Israel in Udine is expected to be overshadowed by pro-Palestinian protests amid heightened tensions following the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Only 5,000 tickets have been sold, and local authorities have voiced concerns about potential unrest.

Despite these challenges, Italy will look to secure their place in the play-offs as they continue their World Cup qualification campaign.



# Mbappe Shines as France Beat Azerbaijan 3-0 in World Cup Qualifier

Kylian Mbappe once again proved to be France's match-winner as the reigning world champions secured a solid 3-0 victory over Azerbaijan in their FIFA World Cup Group D qualifier on Friday.

Despite missing several key players, France maintained their unbeaten streak in the qualifiers with this home win, moving to nine points from three games. The match, played at the Stade de France, saw Mbappe open the scoring just before halftime with a clinical finish, giving Les Bleus the lead going into the break.

Mbappe's influence continued after the interval as he provided a precise assist for Adrien Rabiot, who doubled the lead early in the second half. Substitute Florian Thauvin then sealed the comfortable win by netting a late third goal, ensuring France's dominance throughout the game.

Coach Didier Des-

champs will be encouraged by the team's performance, especially given the absence of several regular starters. The win puts France in a strong position to qualify for the 2026 World Cup, with a crucial away game against Iceland scheduled for Monday that could potentially seal their spot in the tournament.

However, the night was not without concern as Mbappe took a knock to his ankle late in the match and was substituted as a precaution. The French camp will be hoping the injury is minor ahead of the upcoming fixtures.

With a combination of youthful energy and experienced players, France continues to show why they remain one of the favorites for next year's World Cup. Mbappe's star power and clinical finishing remain vital to their campaign as they look to secure a place in the finals next year.

# Jadeja: Need to Work Hard on Slow Turners

India's star all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja admitted the challenges posed by the slow-turning pitch in the ongoing second Test against the West Indies but stressed the importance of adapting to the surface conditions to meet the team's goals.

On day two at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Jadeja emerged as India's most successful bowler, delivering 14 overs and claiming three crucial wickets. Despite the slow bounce and lack of significant turn, he managed to maintain pressure on the West Indies batters, who showed more resistance compared to their brief innings in the opening

Test.

"Slow turners are tough to bowl on, but that's the kind of surface we've got to work hard on. It demands patience and discipline," Jadeja said. The pitch, while offering less assistance than expected, aligns well with the team's strategy for the series, focusing on building pressure through consistent bowling rather than relying solely on sharp turn.

After bowling out the West Indies cheaply in the first Test, India holds a strong position with a 378-run lead in this match. However, the visitors showed improved resilience on day two, ending at 140 for four and

aiming to extend their innings and test India's bowling attack further.

Jadeja's effort stood out as he utilized his experience and skill to extract whatever help was available from the pitch. "It's about adapting to conditions and being patient. We are focused on staying disciplined and putting runs on the board," he added.

As the match progresses, India will look to capitalize on their dominant position, while West Indies aims to bat longer and challenge the hosts. Jadeja's role will be crucial in breaking partnerships and maintaining pressure in these tricky slow-turning conditions.



# K-Ramp Trailer Promises Diwali Laugh Riot

The theatrical trailer of K-Ramp, starring Kiran Abbavaram and Yukti Thareja, was unveiled on Saturday evening and has quickly caught the attention of Telugu movie buffs. Packed with comedy, romance, and youthful energy, the trailer sets the tone for a festive release on October 18, just in time for Diwali.

Directed by debutant Jains Nani, K-Ramp appears to be a light-hearted comedy caper that thrives on quirky characterizations and humorous storytelling. The film follows the carefree life of the lead character, played by Kiran Abbavaram, who enjoys life to the fullest with his gang of friends. His world turns upside down when he meets the charming Yukti Thareja, sparking a series of romantic and comic events.

The two-minute trailer showcases plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, witty dialogues, and fun interactions between the lead pair. It's an extension of the previously released teaser—minus the edgy language—which had already built solid expectations among youth audiences.

Kiran Abbavaram once again proves his knack for comedy with his energetic screen presence and trademark dialogue delivery. His performance is being touted as the highlight of the film.

Yukti Thareja adds freshness to the romantic angle, while the supporting cast—Vennela Kishore, Sai Kumar, and Muralidhar Goud—brings solid comic support.

Backed by Hasya Movies and Rudransh Celluloid, the film boasts good production values and vibrant visuals, aligning well with the festive mood. Director Jains Nani seems to have struck a balance between romance, comedy, and light action to appeal to a broad audience.

With its fun-filled vibe and youthful appeal, K-Ramp is gearing up to deliver a full-on entertainer this Diwali season.



# Andhra King Taluka Teaser Out: A Mix of Fandom and Romance

The much-anticipated teaser of Andhra King Taluka has been officially unveiled, igniting buzz among fans and film enthusiasts. Starring energetic actor Ram Pothineni and newcomer Bhagyashri Borse, the film promises a high-voltage blend of fandom, love, and drama.

Directed by Mahesh Babu P, the movie is slated for a theatrical release on November 28, 2025. The teaser gives a quick yet impactful peek into the life of a die-hard fan whose admiration for real-life star Upendra borders on obsession. It hints at how this intense fan love intertwines with his romantic life, setting the stage for an emotionally charged narrative.

Supporting roles are played by noted actors Rao Ramesh, Satya, and Murali Sharma, bringing depth and versatility to the cast. The film is being bankrolled by Mythri Movie Makers, known for backing several successful Telugu films.

Adding to the entertainment quotient is the vibrant music composed by Vivek-Mervin, whose score in the teaser already seems to have struck a chord with fans.

While the teaser keeps the plot under wraps, it cleverly builds curiosity around the consequences of extreme fandom and how it impacts personal relationships. With a mix of mass appeal and emotional depth, Andhra King Taluka appears set to offer something for all sections of the audience.

The trailer is expected to drop soon, offering more insights into the storyline. Until then, the teaser has done its job—raising expectations sky high.

# Santhana Prapthirasthu Hits Theatres on November 14

The much-awaited family entertainer Santhana Prapthirasthu is all set to hit theatres worldwide on November 14, 2025. With its teaser already creating waves and songs trending across platforms, the film is riding high on buzz ahead of release.

Directed by Sanjeev Reddy, known for crafting heartfelt stories with a touch of humour, the film delves into real-life challenges faced by today's young couples. Blending light-hearted comedy with emotional depth, Santhana Prapthirasthu aims to strike a chord with both youth and family audiences.

Chowdary lead the cast, bringing charm and relatability to their roles. The ever-popular Vennela Kishore adds comic brilliance, promising plenty of laugh-out-loud moments. The supporting cast, too, features several familiar faces, ensuring strong performances across the board.

Produced by Madhura Sreedhar Reddy and Nirvi Hariprasad Reddy, the film is said to be high on production values, with vibrant visuals captured by cinematographer Mahi Reddy Pandugula. The teaser already showcases a colorful palette that enhances the film's youthful vibe.

Music plays a key role in Santhana Prapthirasthu, with composer Sunil Kashyap delivering a soundtrack that has quickly gained popularity. The songs are melodious yet catchy, reflecting the film's emotional tone while staying entertaining.

Touted as a perfect festival release, the film promises a feel-good cinematic experience for audiences of all ages. With its blend of humour, heart, and relatable themes, Santhana Prapthirasthu is expected to strike gold at the box office.

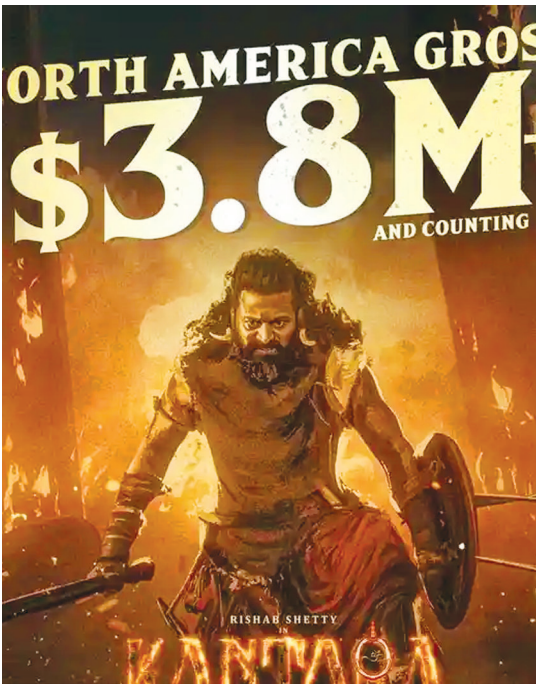
Mark your calendars—this family entertainer arrives on November 14 in cinemas near you.



# Kantara Chapter 1 Nears \$4M Mark in North America

Kantara: Chapter 1, the much-awaited spiritual action drama directed by and starring Rishab Shetty, is continuing its strong box office run, particularly in overseas markets. After 10 days in theatres, the film has grossed an impressive \$3.8 million in North America, and is well on track to cross the \$4 million milestone by the end of its second Sunday.

A sequel to the 2022 pan-India hit Kantara, this chapter expands the universe with a deeper dive into folklore and divine power, with Rukmini Vasanth playing a significant role alongside Shetty. The film has struck a chord with both Indian and international audiences, thanks to its gripping narrative, rooted cultural themes, and powerful visuals.



Backed by Hombale Films, the production house behind KGF and Salaar, the film has benefited from strong word-of-mouth and solid promotional efforts in the overseas markets. Its success in North America is particularly notable, as it outpaces several recent South Indian releases in the region.

The film also features Jayaram, Gulshan Devaiah, and Pramodh Shetty in prominent roles, all of whom have been praised for their performances. The haunting and spiritual musical score by Ajaneesh Loknath has added significantly to the film's atmospheric appeal.

With strong collections continuing into its second weekend, Kantara: Chapter 1 is proving to be both a critical and commercial success. If the momentum holds, the film could emerge as one of the highest-grossing Indian films in North America this year.

All eyes are now on its long-term performance, especially with Diwali releases around the corner. For now, Kantara: Chapter 1 continues to shine at the box office with divine force.

# Telusu Kada Gets U/A Certificate Ahead of Release

The much-anticipated romantic comedy Telusu Kada, starring Siddhu Jonnalagadda, has officially received a U/A certificate from the censor board, clearing its path for a grand theatrical release on October 17, 2025.

Directed by popular celebrity stylist Neeraja Kona in her debut outing as a filmmaker, Telusu Kada features Raashi Khanna and Srinidhi Shetty as the female leads. With the trailer expected to drop soon, the censor clearance has further amped up excitement among fans and movie buffs.

Though the exact runtime is yet to be revealed, the makers confirmed that the film has completed all necessary censor formalities. The certification suggests a family-friendly film with light-hearted moments and emotional depth, fitting the rom-com genre.

Known for his quirky charm and youthful screen presence, Siddhu Jonnalagadda plays the central role in this feel-good entertainer. The film is expected to showcase a modern take on love and relationships, infused with humour, emotions, and music.

The supporting cast includes Harsha



Chemudu, known for his comic timing, and Ravi Mariya, along with other familiar faces. Backed by the well-known banner People Media Factory, the film promises quality production and wide release.

Adding musical sparkle to the project is top composer Thaman, whose songs and background score are expected to play a crucial role in enhancing the film's emotional and entertainment quotient.

With its youthful cast, debutant director's fresh vision, and promising music, Telusu Kada is gearing up to be a breezy romantic ride this festive season. All eyes are now on the trailer, which is expected to offer a better glimpse into the world of Telusu Kada.