

## PM Modi pays respects at Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi in Puttaparthi

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Puttaparthi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday visited the holy shrine and 'Mahasamadhi' of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, and offered his obsequies and paid respects. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan were also present with him.

Before that, PM Modi held a roadshow while on his way to Puttaparthi to attend the birth centenary celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. People in large numbers lined the streets to welcome PM Modi.

The area has been secured with barricades, and police have been deployed to ensure safety and protocol during the Prime Minister's visit.

According to an official release by the PMO, PM Modi will participate in the Centenary Celebrations of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On this occasion, he will release a Commemorative Coin and a set of Stamps honouring the life, teachings, and enduring legacy of Bhagwan Sri Sathy a Sai Baba. He will also address the gathering during the programme.

Thereafter, the Prime Minister will travel to Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, where he will inaugurate the South India Natural Farming Summit at around 1:30 PM, according to the release.

During the programme, the Prime Minister will release the 21st instalment of PM-KISAN, amounting to more than Rs 18,000 crore to support nine crore farmers



ers across the country. PM will also address the gathering on the occasion.

The South India Natural Farming Summit, taking place from November 19th to 21st, is being organised by the Tamil Nadu Natural Farming Stakeholders Forum.

The Summit aims to promote sustainable, eco-friendly, and chemical-free agricultural practices, and to accelerate the shift towards natural and regenerative farming as a viable, climate-smart and economically sustainable model for India's agricultural future,

the release stated.

The Summit will focus on creating market linkages for farmer-producer organisations and rural entrepreneurs, while showcasing innovations in organic inputs, agro-processing, eco-friendly packaging, and indigenous technologies.

Over 50,000 farmers, natural farming practitioners, scientists, organic input suppliers, sellers, and stakeholders from Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, Telangana, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh will participate in the summit.

## Seven Maoists, Including Top AOB Leader 'Tech Shankar' Killed in AP Encounter

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

VIJAYAWADA: Seven members of the banned CPI (Maoist), including a top Central Committee leader, were killed in a major exchange of fire with police in the Maredumilli forests of Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR) district on Wednesday morning. The encounter, which began around 5 a.m., is the second within 24 hours in the forests near GM Valasa. Additional Director General of Police (Intelligence) Mahesh Chandrababu Laddha confirmed that at Metturi Joga Rao, alias Tech Shankar, the CPI (Maoist) Central Committee Member and in-charge of the Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) region, was among those shot dead. Tech Shankar was considered a key strategist and technical operations expert. The other Maoists killed include former guard commander Nambala Ke shava Rao, Jayothi alias Saritha, Sure sh alias Ra mesh, Lokesh alias Gane sh, Sainu alias Vasu, Anitha and Shamma all serving as Area Committee Members (ACMs). Of the seven killed, three were women.

ADGP Laddha told the media that several Maoists who escaped during Tuesday's encounter were believed to be cornered in Wednesday's operation. "Efforts are under way



to identify the remaining deceased Maoists. Tech Shankar's death is a major setback to the AOB Maoist cadre," Laddha said.

The operation follows a major encounter on Tuesday in the same district, during which six Maoists—including top commander Madvi Hidma, a Central Committee Member and South Bas

tar Battalion Commander, and his wife Madakam Raje, a Chhattisgarh State Zonal Committee Member—were killed.

Security forces have intensified combing operations across the Andhra-Odisha border following back-to-back encounters. Officials described the two-day operations as a significant blow to the Maoist

leadership structure in the region.

The weapons and material recovered are AK-47 rifles - 2, AK-47 magazines - 5, AK-47 ammunition - 72 rounds, SBBL guns - 5, SBBL ammunition - 34 rounds, 303 rifle - 1, 303 ammunition - 24 rounds, Cordex wire - 3 kg, Detonators - 18 and Kitbags were recovered at the site.

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

VIJAYAWADA: In one of the most sweeping intelligence-driven anti-Maoist operations in recent years, the Andhra Pradesh Police have arrested 50 CPI (Maoist) cadres across Krishna, Eluru, NTR Vijayawada, Kakinada and Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema districts. Officials described the crackdown as a "silent, pinpoint, multi-district sweep" that has severely weakened Maoist structures in South Bastar and the wider Dandakaranya region.

Briefing on the Maoist operation to the media persons, ADG Intelligence Mahesh Chandrababu Laddha, IPS, and SIB Chief PHD Ramakrishna, IPS said that the arrested individuals include Special Zonal Committee Members (SZCMs), Divisional Committee Members (DVCMs), Area Committee Members (ACMs), armed platoon members,



logistics operatives and communication handlers—many of whom were directly associated with Madvi Hidma, the CPI (Maoist) Central Committee Member and commander of the PLGA's Battalion.

Operation Directed by Top AP Police Leadership

The operation was coordinated under the supervision of DGP Harish Kumar Gupta, IPS, and executed through the combined efforts of the State Intelligence Department, Vijayawada Commissionerate and district police units.

The crackdown followed a major exchange of fire (EOF) on November 18 near Uttaluru village in Maredumilli mandal that led to the killing of six Maoists, including Hidma and his wife Raje.

Hidma and Five Others Neutralised

Recovered materials included two AK-47 rifles, a pistol, a revolver, country-made weapons, detonators, explosive materials, ammunition and kit bags—confirming the presence of a high-value Maoist squad.

Acting on intelligence that Maoists fleeing pressure in Chhattisgarh had taken shelter in AP's urban clusters, security forces carried out coordinated raids, resulting in 50 arrests.

Most of the arrested cadres are originally from Bijapur (28), Sukma (21) and Narayanpur (1) districts of Chhattisgarh.

Among those arrested were three senior SZCMs—Sode Lachu @



## People from all religions found peace at Sathya Sai spiritual centre: CM

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Puttaparthi: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said that people from all religions and communities from around the world found peace at Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust started by late spiritual leader Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Addressing the birth centenary celebration of Sri Sathya Sai Baba here, the Chief Minister said people found answers to their problems at the spiritual centre, and those who came with burdens returned feeling rejuvenated.

"People of all religions and all communities from around the world found peace here. They found solutions to their difficulties and problems. Those who came with burdens returned with renewed energy," said Naidu.

Describing Sathya Sai Baba as the image of God, who walked the earth, the CM said the late spiritual guru was the embodiment of 'love all – serve all, help ever hurt never' motto and demonstrated these virtues in Naidu.

More than 3,000 patients are receiving free treatment through Sathya Sai hospitals and the spiritual organisation spent Rs

550 crore in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu to supply drinking water in 1,600 villages, benefiting 30 lakh people.

The CM further said that Sathya Sai Trust spent Rs 250 crore on Chennai drinking water modernisation scheme, among several other such activities.

The TDP supremo highlighted that devotees descended from across the world to donate hundreds of crores of rupees and relinquish worldly assets to spend peaceful and joyful life in the presence of Sathya Sai Baba.

"Wherever I go, in any country, when I say I am from Andhra Pradesh, many foreigners tell me, 'We have visited Puttaparthi... we received Baba's blessings.' That is the greatness and divine glory of Baba," he said.

Referring to Baba's welfare activities, Naidu said 60,000 students from kindergarten to doctoral studies are pursuing free education in 102 Sathya Sai educational institutions.

He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for releasing a special Rs 100 coin and postal stamps in honour of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

PM Modi firmly believes in the ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – 'The World is One Family', said Naidu and underscored that the PM has taken the PM has taken

India's traditions, Ayurveda, spiritual heritage, yoga and meditation to the global stage.

# Titan Intech to Establish 250 Crore Integrated Display Electronics Facility in Amaravati



TPN Bureau | Nov 19  
VIJAYAWADA: Titan Intech Limited, a leading player in Embedded Manufacturing Services (EMS) and advanced OEM/ODM embedded systems, has signed a strategic Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU) with the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) to set up a 250 crore Integrated Display Electronics Manufacturing Facility in the Amaravati Capital Region.

The proposed facility, to be developed in phases across a 20-acre industrial parcel earmarked for electronics manufacturing clusters, represents a significant boost to India's growing display technology ecosys-

tem. Once operational, the project is expected to generate 200 direct and 300 indirect jobs, strengthening the region's skilled workforce and supporting local economic growth.

The new unit will fo-

cus on end-to-end production of high-value display and controller technologies, including display controllers for LCD, LED, and mini/micro-LED systems, 2D/3D rendering and video processing engines, intelligent driver electronics, advanced backlight modules, and a captive EMS line for assembly, testing, and calibration.

Titan Intech has also entered into a technology collaboration with a leading South Korean OEM to support technology transfer, process optimisation, and global standard manufacturing practices.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Rudraraju Kumar Raju, Managing Director of Titan Intech Ltd, said:

"This MoU marks a transformational step in our evolution. The Amaravati facility will position Titan Intech at the forefront of high-value

display electronics manufacturing. With cutting-edge technology, strong government collaboration, and global partnerships, we are building a platform that supports India's innovation, self-reliance, and export potential."

The APEDB will extend support through land allotment, incentives, regulatory facilitation, and connections to the wider electronics ecosystem. Aligned with the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision, the project aims to strengthen domestic capacity in strategic electronics, reduce import dependence, and enhance India's integration into global display and visual systems supply chains.

Titan Intech expects the Amaravati facility to become a catalyst for ancillary industries, R&D activity, and skilled talent development in the years ahead.



**Aishwarya Rai touches PM Modi's feet at Sri Satya Sai Baba's centenary celebrations in Andhra**

TPN Bureau | Nov 19, Puttaparthi: Actress and former Miss World Aishwarya Rai Bachchan on Wednesday touched the feet of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after her speech at the late spiritual guru Sri Satya Sai Baba's centenary celebrations here.

Besides PM Modi, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust Managing Trustee R J Rathnakar and others were on the dais. In her address Aishwarya Rai, an ex-student of the Sathya Sai Bal Vikas program, said though a century may have passed, the

guru's teaching and guidance and compassion continue to reverberate in the hearts of millions worldwide.

"Your presence here adds sanctity and inspiration to the Centenary celebrations and reminds us of Swami's message that true leadership is Service and service to man is service to God," she said referring to PM Modi.

Recalling Sathya Sai Baba's teachings, she said the Guru had often spoken about 5-Ds, five essential qualities—Discipline, Dedication, Devotion, Determination and Discrimination, needed for a meaningful and purposeful and spiritually anchored life.

## Change in Medical Seat Allocation Announcement Procedure

### Minister Satya Kumar Directs Release of Provisional Lists First

TPN Bureau | Nov 19, VIJAYAWADA: Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav has instructed Dr NTR University officials to first publish provisional lists, invite objections from candidates, examine them thoroughly and only then issue the final admission lists. He also instructed the university to provide adequate time for students to submit objections. Following the Minister's directive, Dr NTR Health University will implement this system immediately for ongoing PG medical admissions, starting with the release of provisional lists. The same procedure will also be followed for BDS and other medical course admissions to ensure transparency and prevent technical errors in the seat allocation process.

result, some students who were initially shown as allotted seats later lost their eligibility, causing disappointment and confusion. Taking serious note of these incidents, Minister Satya Kumar Yadav directed university officials to first publish provisional lists, invite objections from candidates, examine them thoroughly and only then issue the final admission lists. He also instructed the university to provide adequate time for students to submit objections. Following the Minister's directive, Dr NTR Health University will implement this system immediately for ongoing PG medical admissions, starting with the release of provisional lists. The same procedure will also be followed for BDS and other medical course admissions to ensure transparency and prevent technical errors in the seat allocation process.

# Minister Narayana Reviews Rajahmundry Civic Projects

Joins Annadata Sukhibava Phase-II Fund Release in Samarlaokota

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

RAJAHMUNDY: Minister P Narayana conducted a comprehensive review meeting at the Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation office on Wednesday, focusing on major civic development and infrastructure priorities. The meeting was attended by MLAs Adir eddy Vasu, Buchaiyah Chowdary, Battula Balaramakrishna, the Municipal Commissioner, Joint Collector and senior departmental officials.

During the review, the Minister examined progress on roads, drainage works, TDR bonds, LRS and BRS regularisation, and key infrastructure proposals essential for the city's long-term growth. He announced a series of crucial decisions aimed at improving mobility, civic amenities, and urban planning in Rajahmundry.

Among the major announcements, Minister Narayana said that the road from Bommuru to Saraswathi Ghat will be widened to 80 feet to ease



traffic congestion. He also revealed that a proposal to construct an Outer Ring Road (ORR) from Madhurapudi to Kadiam is underway, with consultancy services already appointed for planning the project.

Highlighting the scale of urban infrastructure needs, the Minister noted that 29,000 crore is required for comprehensive drainage development across 123 municipalities in the state. As

part of a priority phase, 5,000 crore worth of drainage works will be executed over the next three years. In Rajahmundry alone, 303 km of drainage lines are yet to be completed, of which 180 km will be taken up immediately. He also assured that all pending TDR bonds will be cleared within a month and urged citizens to make use of LRS and BRS schemes to regularise unauthorised structures.

Later in the day, Minister Narayana participated as the chief guest in the second-phase release of Annadata Sukhibava funds at Kakinada district. He was received by Peddapuram MLA Nimmakayala Chinna Rajappa and leaders of coalition parties. The Minister also inaugurated multiple paddy procurement centres in the region.

In Kakinada district alone, 1,50,475 farmers

received 99.88 crore under the second instalment of the scheme. The programme was attended by the District Collector, MLAs, MLCs, MP and senior officials.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Narayana said the entire state was celebrating the programme in a "festive atmosphere." Reiterating the government's commitment to farmers, he said:

"We promised 20,000 per farmer during the elections, and we are fulfilling it despite financial challenges."

"The Centre contributes 6,000, while the State contributes 14,00."

"The second instalment of 7,000 is being deposited today."

He criticised the previous government for plunging the state into "total financial collapse" with a debt burden of 10 lakh crore, adding that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is steering the recovery with experience and vision.

Minister Narayana highlighted that the government has already fulfilled 90% of its pre-election promises, including enhanced pensions, free bus travel, three gas cylinders for women, DSC recruitment for 16,000 posts, Thalliki Vandam, and extensive welfare schemes across sectors. He stressed the government's goal to create 20 lakh jobs, backed by major investments—pointing to the 13 lakh crore MoUs signed during the Visakhapatnam summit.

# Awareness of Laws Is Essential to Prevent Sexual Harassment: Shailaja

TPN Bureau | Nov 19  
SRIKAKULAM: Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission Chairperson Dr Rayapati Shailaja stressed the urgent need for women to be fully aware of laws related to sexual harassment. She said the Commission is working with a strong, structured action plan to ensure effective implementation of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act across the state.

She was speaking as the chief guest at a workshop on "Practices to Effectively Combat Sexual Harassment," jointly organised by the State Women's Commission and Dr BR Ambedkar

University at the Dr BR Ambedkar Kala Vedika in Srikakulam on Wednesday.

Dr Shailaja noted that after taking charge as Chairperson recently, the majority of complaints the Commission received pertained to domestic violence, with increasing concerns about workplace sexual harassment. She urged women to understand their legal rights and encouraged students to learn self-defence techniques such as karate.

She stated that many women face harassment at workplaces but hesitate to speak out due to fear and social pressures. This leads to emo-



tional distress, forcing them to continue working in unsafe environments. Women working in sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and cashew processing are particularly vulnerable, she said, highlighting the urgent need for Local Complaint Committees (LCC) in such areas.

Dr Shailaja reiterated that the POSH Act, enacted in 2013, must be implemented rigorously. Many employees, she said, are unaware of the provisions of the law. The Commission will work closely with district administrations to ensure proper implementation, training for committee members,

and awareness among both organised and unorganised workers.

"Only when women know the law can sexual harassment be reduced," she said, expressing hope that Andhra Pradesh would become a "safe state for women."

She assured that she would speak with district collectors to ensure LCCs are established wherever large groups of women work.

The event concluded with the release of the book "Safe Village Programme." Women's Commission advisors, officials, academicians, NSS coordinators, volunteers, and Anganwadi workers participated in large numbers.

Deputy Commissioner Dinesh Kumar said efforts are underway to form LCCs in workplaces employing more than ten women.

Women Police SI Nariman, college principal Pankti Surekha, LCC representative Lakshmi Kumar, and several others emphasised the need for awareness programmes and strong support systems.

The event concluded with the release of the book "Safe Village Programme." Women's Commission advisors, officials, academicians, NSS coordinators, volunteers, and Anganwadi workers participated in large numbers.

# Vizag Summit Triggers Investment Surge in Textiles Sector

**State Achieves 43% of Five-Year Investment Target: Minister Savita**

TPN Bureau | Nov 19 VIJAYAWADA: The initiatives taken by the coalition government under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu are yielding promising results in accelerating industrial growth across Andhra Pradesh. A notable example is the recent CII Partnership Summit held in Visakhapatnam, which proved to be a major catalyst for investment inflows into the state. Investor confidence has strengthened significantly due to the incentives offered by the government, favourable geographic conditions and strong leadership.

At the summit, investors expressed interest in investing 13.26 lakh crore across sectors, of which 4,381.38 crore is ear-



marked for the textiles sector alone. Eight MoUs were signed with the state government, paving the way for direct employment opportunities for 6,460 people. These investments provide a major revival for the textile

industry, which had suffered severe neglect in the previous government's tenure. Many believe that the sector is regaining its past vibrancy due to the focused efforts of CM Chandrababu Naidu, Ministers Nara Lokesh and Savita. Significantly, 43% of the five-year investment target set under the 2024-29 Textiles Policy has been achieved through the Vizag Summit alone. Five Years of Setback for Textiles

Industrial growth in Andhra Pradesh faced major hurdles during the YSRCP government (2019-24), as lack of incentives and unclear policies deterred existing industries and discouraged new investments. The textiles sector, especially,

slipped into crisis. Despite the earlier 2018-23 AP Textiles, Apparel & Garments Policy introduced during the previous Naidu government, the subsequent administration failed to frame guidelines or continue the policy, causing a complete policy vacuum. With CM Chandrababu Naidu returning to power in 2024, the sector witnessed renewed momentum. The new Textiles Policy aims to attract 10,000 crore investments and create two lakh jobs over five years—a tar-

get already bolstered by the MoUs worth 4,381.38 crore signed at the Vizag summit.

**Investments Across Five Districts**

The eight MoUs will facilitate the establishment of units across Visakhapatnam, Chittoor, Guntur, Sri Sathya Sai and Anakapalli districts. Key investments include:

\* Infiniti Fiber (Finland): 4,000 crore in Visakhapatnam for apparel recycling, generating 360 jobs.

\* Genius Filters (Bangalore): 120 crore in Chittoor, creating 250 jobs.

\* Aravind Apparel Park (Hindupur): 20 crore investment, generating 2,000 jobs.

\* Vamini Overseas (Guntur): 35 crore, creating 2,000 jobs.

\* MVR Textiles (Visakhapatnam): 105.38 crore, creating 900 jobs.

\* BQ Textiles (Anakapalli): 10 crore, generating 100 jobs.

\* Kamadhenu Stika (Machilipatnam): 90 crore, generating 650 jobs.

\* ISS Air View (UK): Location to be announced

**YSRCP condemns attack on Hindupur party office**



TPN Bureau | Nov 19

VIJAYAWADA: Sri Satya Sai District YSRCP President and Former Minister Ushashri Charan, along with Hindupur Constituency In-charge Deepika, strongly condemned the violent attack on the Hindupur YSRCP office, stating that the assault took place under the full knowledge and encouragement of MLA Balakrishna, who was present in the constituency on the very day of the incident. They said the magnitude of destruction and his complete silence clearly reveal his complicity. The leaders expressed deep concern over the alarming collapse of democratic values and constitutional protection in the state. They criticised the government for ignoring CCTV evidence and protecting the actual attackers while filing SC/ST Atrocity and attempt-to-murder cases against innocent YSRCP leaders and workers who were not even present at the scene. They said the coalition government is attempting to silence questioning voices through illegal arrests, fabricated cases, and intimidation.

Ushashri Charan said that six carloads of TDP goons stormed the Hindupur office, destroyed the portraits

**Jagan is treating the CBI Court like his personal durbar: TDP's Jyotsana Tirunagiri**



TPN Bureau | Nov 19 VIJAYAWADA: TDP has launched a fierce attack on YS Jagan Mohan Reddy ahead of his long-delayed appearance at the Nampally CBI Court on November 20, describing it as a long-overdue moment for a leader who has spent more than a decade dodging accountability.

After six years of avoiding in-person hearings and 12 years of moving freely on bail in the illegal assets case, Jagan is finally being compelled to attend court. Yet, even now, he continues to display the same arrogance that has defined his political career.

In an unprecedented move that stunned legal experts, Jagan reportedly informed the CBI Court that he would arrive at 11:30 AM and leave by 12:30 PM, as if the judiciary must adjust to his pe-

sonal preferences. Senior advocates note that never in the 75 years of India's judicial history has an accused dictated timings to a court.

Jagan's behaviour is nothing new. He has a long history of disrespecting the judiciary. When he was Chief Minister, YSRCP leaders repeatedly targeted judges, attacked court rulings, and even caused CBI probes into organised online abuse against members of the judiciary. Even after losing power, Jagan continues to show the same arrogance and disregard for the courts.

TDP National Spokesperson Jyotsana Tirunagiri issued a scathing statement condemning Jagan's conduct. She said, "Jagan Mohan Reddy treats the CBI Court like his personal durbar. For 12 years, he has been roa-

ming freely on bail, avoiding hearings, insulting judges, and obstructing justice. Now, even while being dragged back to court, he dares to send his 'schedule' to the judiciary. This arrogance itself is proof of the corruption he is running away from. The people of Andhra Pradesh are watching, and no amount of special flights or weekend hideouts in Bengaluru will save him from the law."

Jagan's sudden return to the CBI Court after years of engineered delays has sparked intense political discussion across Andhra Pradesh. Many believe this could signal the beginning of a renewed phase of judicial scrutiny in the long-pending corruption cases that he has repeatedly sought to delay.

**Farmers Betrayed Under Jagan Regime, Now Receiving Genuine Support from Coalition Government: Minister**

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

GANNAVARAM: At a public meeting held in Veeravalli village of Gannavaram constituency under the leadership of local MLA Yarlagadda Venkatrao, Minister Vasamshetti Subhash said the Annadata Sukhibhava scheme being implemented by the Andhra Pradesh Government is a truly transformative welfare initiative dedicated entirely to the upliftment of farmers.

Subhash stated that, unlike in the previous regime where farmer welfare was reduced to mere vote-bank politics, the current coalition government has strengthened a transparent system that ensures direct benefits to agricultural families. "Under the Annadata Sukhibhava scheme, financial assistance has been extended to 46,85,838 farmers. Out of the

allotted budget of 3,174.43 crore, a major portion has already been credited to beneficiaries' bank accounts," he said.

Providing constituency-level details, the Minister noted that in Gannavaram, around 20,000 farmers benefited under Annadata Sukhibhava, while 16,000 PM-Kisan beneficiaries received 14.72 crore. Across Krishna district, 1.3 lakh farmers were benefitted from the scheme, with 17,800 PM-Kisan beneficiaries receiving 88 crore.

Highlighting fertilizer subsidy reforms, he explained that each farmer is entitled to 13,500 per acre, of which 7,500 is directly credited to their accounts. "So far, 64,06 lakh farmers have received benefits, strengthening the agricultural sector," he added.

Subhash acknowledged

gated delays in payments caused by technical issues such as e-KYC errors and NPCI mapping problems. "The government has initiated corrective measures and has already credited 5,000 each to 47,161 affected farmers," he said.

Reiterating the government's commitment, Subhash declared, "Farmer welfare is our top priority. Without any political motives, we are dedicated to resolving farmers' issues. Annadata Sukhibhava will continue until every eligible farmer receives assistance."

Following the meeting, MLA Yarlagadda Venkatrao and District Collector DK Balaji distributed motor sprayers and tarpaulins to nearly 100 farmers. Several public representatives, officials and coalition leaders participated in the event.

# Board Revises Pass Marks, Paper Pattern for Inter Exams

TPN Bureau | Nov 19  
Amaravati: The Intermediate Board has issued a fresh set of guidelines for the upcoming examinations, revising pass criteria, marks distribution and practical evaluation.

Under the new rules, the written exam for physics, chemistry and biology in the first year will continue to be for 85 marks. The earlier pass requirement of 29.75 marks (35%) has now been rounded down to 29 marks.

For the second year, students must secure 30 marks out of 85 to pass.

BIE has also rationalised half-mark rounding. While 59.5% was earlier considered for passing, the new fixed pass mark is 59. Practical exam pass marks have also been revised: the threshold has been increased from 10.5 to 11 marks, with total practicals carrying 30 marks.

A first-year student will be declared passed even with 30% in individual subjects, as long as the overall score meets the 35% aggregate requirement.



The Geography theory exam will continue to be for 75 marks but will now be calculated for 85 marks, while Zoology will carry 42 marks.

Students are also not required to pass the sixth subject chosen as an elective. Even if they fail in that subject, they will

receive a memo for the qualifying five subjects. If all five subjects are cleared, a separate memo will be issued.

10.40 Lakh Students to Appear This Year

A total of 10.40 lakh students will take the Intermediate exams this year — 5.35 lakh first-year and 5.05 lakh second-year students.

There will be no change in the second-year question papers or answer booklets this year. The NCERT syllabus will be implemented from the 2026-27 academic year, after which changes will be reflected in second-year question papers as well.

## Man Dies After Tree Branch Falls on Him



TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Puttur: A man died after a tree branch fell on him in Golapura village of Puttur mandal, Tirupati district, on Tuesday. According to police, the victim, identified as \*\*Rama Rao\*\*, was an electrician who was carrying out repair work when a branch suddenly

broke and fell on him during strong winds. He sustained severe head injuries and died on the spot. The body was shifted to Puttur Government Hospital for post-mortem. A case has been registered, and police have launched an investigation.



## Sabarimala Tightens Darshan Entry: Daily Cap Fixed at 75,000 Pilgrims Till Nov 24

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

The number of devotees arriving at Sabarimala has been surpassing the sanctioned daily limit for darshan. To ensure the safety and smooth movement of pilgrims, the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala has revised the maximum number of devotees permitted per day through Virtual Queue and Spot Booking to 70,000 and 5,000 respectively, effective till 24.11.2025.

All devotees planning to visit Sabarimala for the darshan of Lord Ayyappa must carry a valid Virtual Queue Pass or Spot Booking Pass for the specific date they have booked. Pilgrims will be allowed to proceed from Nilakkal to Sabarimala only on the date mentioned on their pass, and entry will be strictly denied without a valid Virtual Queue Pass or Spot Booking Pass generated through the official system.

The Spot Booking facility is capped at 5,000 pilgrims per day, and no additional spot bookings will be allowed beyond this limit. Devotees opting for Spot Book

ing must secure their passes from the designated centres at Nilakkal, Vandiperiyar-Sathram, Erumeli, and Chengannur. Pilgrims are advised not to rely solely on the Nilakkal Spot Booking Centre, as the quota may get exhausted before their arrival, preventing them from proceeding to Sannidhanam.

All devotees are urged to ensure they possess a valid Virtual Queue Pass or Spot Booking Pass before starting their journey. Pilgrims are also requested to cooperate with security arrangements at Nilakkal, Pampa, and Sannidhanam, and follow the instructions of the police and security personnel deployed across Sabarimala.

During the Sabarimala Mandala-Makaravilakku season, devotees may contact the Police Helpline 14432 for all temple-related queries or emergency assistance. Those calling from outside Kerala may dial 04735-14432.

## Coalition Govt Ensures ₹10,000 Cr Annual Support for 46.85 Lakh Farmers: Minister Gottipati



TPN Bureau | Nov 19

SATTEENAPALLI: Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar reaffirmed the coalition government's strong commitment to farmer welfare and agricultural development, stating that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is delivering on every promise made to the people. Speaking at the Annadata Sukhibhava-PM Kisan programme in Gudipudi village of Sattenapalli mandal, the Minister

released the second instalment of financial assistance under the scheme.

Ravi Kumar said the Annadata Sukhibhava initiative has already benefited 46.85 lakh farmers across Andhra Pradesh, with each eligible farmer receiving 20,000 across all instalments. The government is spending more than 10,000 crore annually to support farmers under this programme. In the Sattenapalli constituency alone, 24.07 crore has been disbursed to 36,7

52 farmers in the latest instalment. He noted that within just 17 months, the coalition government has implemented major welfare commitments without delay.

The Minister highlighted the government's push to modernise agriculture by providing advanced equipment at highly subsidised rates. Drones priced at 8 lakh are being supplied to farmers for 2 lakh, while Taiwan sprayers and sprinklers are being offered at 80% subsidy, with increased support for SC/ST farmers.

Earlier, Ravi Kumar inaugurated an exhibition on modern farm machinery. The event was attended by MLA Kanna Lakshminarayana, MP Krishna Devarayalu, District Collector Kritika Shukla, officials and farmers.

## President Murmu to visit Telangana and Andhra from November 20 to 22



TPN Bureau | Nov 19

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu will visit Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh from November 20 to November 22, an official statement issued by the President's Secretariat read.

On November 20, the President will grace the Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas celebration, organised by the Government of Chhattisgarh at Ambikapur.

It added that on November 21, the President will inaugurate the Bharatiya Kala Mahotsav 2025 at Rashtrapati Nilayam, Bola Mahotsav will show

case the rich cultural, culinary, and artistic traditions of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Goa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu.

On November 22, the President will grace the special session to commemorate the centenary celebration of Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi.

Earlier in the day, President Droupadi Murmu attended the fifth convocation of the National Institute of Technology Delhi on Wednesday, where she urged the graduating students to focus on innovations that meaningfully uplift society, stressing that true progress lies not

only in invention but in its ability to reduce inequalities and inspire hope.

Posting on X, the President's office wrote, "President Droupadi Murmu graced the fifth convocation ceremony of the National Institute of Technology Delhi at New Delhi. She urged the students to remember that the measure of true progress is not just the invention, but also the positive impact it has on society. She said that the systems, technologies and solutions they develop should strive to reduce inequalities and inspire new hope in people's lives."

## City Sees Rise in Kidney-Related Cases; Doctors Urge Early Screening



TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Visakhapatnam: Doctors in Visakhapatnam have raised concern over the growing number of people suffering from kidney-related ailments, warning that lifestyle changes and delayed diagnosis are pushing more families into medical distress.

Specialists at a free medical camp organised for local communities said that nearly five families in the region recently approached them with advanced kidney complications. Many of these patients were unaware that diabetes, high blood pressure, and high triglyceride levels are the leading reasons for kidney failure.

According to docto

rs, 10% of adults are at risk of developing kidney disease, but most people do not undergo timely tests. They stressed that regular screening is the only way to detect problems early. In several cases, patients approach hospitals only after their condition worsened, making treatment difficult. Recently, 17% of tested individuals were found to have early signs of kidney issues.

Addressing the camp, Dr Dev Anand, a nephrologist, explained that families must be alert to symptoms such as swelling, fatigue, and changes in urination. He added that chronic kidney disease is becoming increasingly common due to uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension.

The health camp was organised under the supervision of Dr Raju and a team of specialists, who provided free consultations, tests, and counselling to local residents. Families who took part in the camp said the initiative helped them understand the importance of regular kidney checkups and consistent medical follow-up.

Doctors urged people—especially those with a family history of diabetes, blood pressure, or kidney ailments—to undergo medical tests at least once every six months. They insisted that awareness programmes and preventive health camps are essential for protecting communities from avoidable complications.

All devotees planning to visit Sabarimala for the darshan of Lord Ayyappa must carry a valid Virtual Queue Pass or Spot Booking Pass for the specific date they have booked. Pilgrims will be allowed to proceed from Nilakkal to Sabarimala only on the date mentioned on their pass, and entry will be strictly denied without a valid Virtual Queue Pass or Spot Booking Pass generated through the official system.

The Spot Booking facility is capped at 5,000 pilgrims per day, and no additional spot bookings will be allowed beyond this limit. Devotees opting for Spot Book

ing must secure their passes from the designated centres at Nilakkal, Vandiperiyar-Sathram, Erumeli, and Chengannur. Pilgrims are advised not to rely solely on the Nilakkal Spot Booking Centre, as the quota may get exhausted before their arrival, preventing them from proceeding to Sannidhanam.

All devotees are urged to ensure they possess a valid Virtual Queue Pass or Spot Booking Pass before starting their journey. Pilgrims are also requested to cooperate with security arrangements at Nilakkal, Pampa, and Sannidhanam, and follow the instructions of the police and security personnel deployed across Sabarimala.

During the Sabarimala Mandala-Makaravilakku season, devotees may contact the Police Helpline 14432 for all temple-related queries or emergency assistance. Those calling from outside Kerala may dial 04735-14432.

The second edition of the Bharatiya Kala Mahotsav will show

# Illegal Layout Near Madhurapudi Airport Exposes Deep-Rooted RUDA Corruption

TPN Bureau | Nov 19  
East Godavari: A major corruption scandal has surfaced at the Raja Mahendravaram Urban Development Authority (RUDA), revealing how politically connected groups allegedly manipulated land records and secured illegal residential layout permissions near the Madhurapudi Airport—one of the most sensitive zones in East Godavari district. What appears from the outside to be a routine layout approval has, upon closer examination, exposed a sophisticated nexus of officials, middlemen and influential individuals who allegedly bent multiple planning laws for private profit.

At the heart of the issue is a stretch of land adjoining the Madhurapudi Airport runway boundary. Official records show the land was classified as agricultural, marked in green on revenue



maps. However, in the layout plan submitted to RUDA, the same land was shown in yellow—classified as residential. Converting agricultural land to residential use requires a mandatory Change

of Land Use (CLU) application, followed by ground inspection and technical verification. Yet documents reveal that no CLU application was ever filed. The scrutiny report contains a single

vague line: "Field inspection done." However, no date, officer name, inspection photos or supporting evidence were attached. The absence of these basic details makes it clear that no field inspection ever took place. A senior retired RUDA officer told TPN, "An NOC for construction this close to an air port is almost impossible. Clearing this file without CLU and without a report Au-

thority NOC suggests only two things—high-level pressure and bribes."

Perhaps the most incriminating evidence lies in the file notings. Multiple pages contain hand-written correc-

tions in pencil, where the words "Agricultural Residential" appear to have been inserted later. Technical staff signatures seem to have been added after these alterations—strongly indicating manipulation. Staff members also privately confirmed that phone calls recommending clearance came from "important leaders," but no recommendation letters were officially attached to the file.

Inside the RUDA office, whispers of money changing hands were common. "They said the file will be cleared tomorrow... looks like it has 'touched' (money paid)," a staff member reportedly remarked, suggesting illegal transactions took place between layout owners, intermediaries and officials.

The consequences of the illegal approval are enormous. With agricultural land reclassified as residential, land prices have shot up nearly tenfold. Private beneficiaries stand to earn crores from future registrations, while the government loses revenue in the form of taxes, penalties and development charges. Experts warn that the approval violates airport buffer norms, endangers aviation safety and threatens long-term urban planning. Shockingly, insiders claim that 4-5 more such files were cleared in the last two years using similar methods—no NOC, no field inspection, and manipulated land-use markings—indicating a pattern of systematic corruption rather than an isolated case.

Urban planning activists are demanding an independent probe, warning that "approvals granted by ignoring airport safety norms jeopardise public trust, endanger lives and damage the integrity of town planning."



## 13.30 Crore Credited to 20,463 Farmers in Narsaraopet

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Palanadu: The second instalment of the Annadata Sukhibhava-PM Kisan welfare schemes for 2025-26 was released on Wednesday, bringing direct financial support to lakhs of farmers across Andhra Pradesh. A district-level celebration was held at the Rompicherla Market Yard, where dignitaries distributed benefits to farmers.

Narsaraopet MLA Dr. Chadalavada Aravind Babu attended as the chief guest, along with Andhra Pradesh Library Corporation Chairman Gounguntla Koteswara Rao.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Aravind Babu said: "The NDA government is implementing several schemes for farmer welfare. Under this instalment, 20,463 farmers in Narsaraopet constituency have received 13.30 crore directly into their bank accounts."

He added that the go-

vernment remains committed to safeguarding the economic security of farming families. Across Andhra Pradesh, 46,85,838 farmers received 7,000 each, totalling 3,280 crore. Earlier, on August 2, the first instalment of 3,135 crore was released. In Palanadu district alone, 1.5 lakh farmers received 105 crore in the second instalment.

The MLA urged all farmers to verify their account credits and utilise the funds for the upcoming agricultural season.

Library Corporation Chairman Koteswara Rao praised farmers, calling them "the oxygen of India," and reaffirmed that the welfare of agricultural families remains a top priority for the government.

Local leaders, Rompicherla Market Yard Chairperson Monditoka Rani, and representatives of farmers' associations participated in the event.

## Agnipath Scheme Offers Youth a Chance to Serve the Nation, Says Air Force Officer

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Narsaraopet: The Agnipath recruitment scheme provides an exceptional opportunity for India's youth to serve the nation and build a disciplined future, said Wing Commander Sheikh Yakub Ali, Commanding Officer of the 12 Airmen Selection Centre, Secunderabad. He was addressing students during an awareness programme held at SSN College, Narsaraopet, on Wednesday, organised to educate youth on career prospects in the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Wing Commander Yakub Ali explained the various job roles available in the Air Force and urged students to consider a career of honour, discipline, and national pride. He elaborated on the Agnipath scheme, eligibility criteria, recruitment exams, physical tests, salary structure, and post-service benefits.

He highlighted that Agniveer Vayu recruits will serve for four years,



after which 25% will be permanently absorbed, while the remaining 75% will exit with a substantial financial package, skill certificates, and career support\*.

"During these four years, candidates can also complete their graduation. The scheme opens immense doors for both personal and national development," he said.

The programme was organised under the supervision of District Collector Dr. Kritika Shukla, with District Revenue Officer Murali coordinating.

DRO Murali described Agnipath as a "valuable blessing for youth," adding that it fosters courage, discipline, intelligence, and skill among young Indians.

The event witnessed participation from students of various colleges and high schools across the region. Wing Commander Yakub Ali urged parents to support their children in joining the armed forces, calling it "a matter of pride for every Indian family."

## Complete TIDCO Houses on Fast Track: MLA Yarapatineni Orders Officials

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Piduguralla: Gura Zala MLA Yarapatineni Srinivas Rao has directed officials and contractors to expedite the completion of TIDCO housing units in Piduguralla town, stressing that the government is committed to delivering homes to thousands of beneficiaries without further delay.

The MLA, along with engineering and municipal officials, inspected the large-scale housing site at Seetharampura on Thursday. He personally visited each block, reviewed structural progress, and sought detailed updates on water supply, electricity connections, approach roads, and amenities.

Yarapatineni reminded that the TIDCO housing megaproject



was launched during the 2014-19 TDP government under then Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. He said Piduguralla was sanctioned 6,000 houses, with 33.5 acres acquired and more land under examination. Of these, 2,832 houses were completed during the TDP regime, he said, but accused the previous YSRCP government of failing to

finish the remaining units.

"They only painted the structures with party colours but never pushed construction forward. This negligence has wasted nearly 3,000 crore of public money," he alleged.

The MLA said that people reposed faith in the NDA alliance, and the government intends to honour that mandate by fast-track-



## Farmers' Welfare is Our Government's Priority, Says MLA Praveen

TPN Bureau | Nov 19

Pedakurapadu: The NDA government places farmer welfare at the top of its development agenda, said Pedakurapadu MLA Bhashyam Praveen while distributing cheques under the Annadata Sukhibhava and PM-Kisan schemes at Garapadu village on Wednesday.

As part of the programme, the MLA joined farmers in viewing the Prime Minister's and Chief Minister's addresses telecast for beneficiaries across the state.

Praveen shared that 41,000 farmers in Pedakurapadu constituency received 27.03 crore directly into their accounts under the latest tranche of the welfare scheme.

He assured farmers that he is available to resolve any issue they face.

"Bring your problems directly to me. I am committed to sol-

ving them," he said.

The MLA emphasised that the future of children and the future of the state depend on stable governance, urging people to bring the NDA back to power for two more terms to ensure comprehensive development.

Praveen instructed party workers to stay continuously connected with the public and work actively to address grievances.

TDP leaders Venna Sambasiva Reddy, Maddirala Gangadhara, former chairman Penumata Rama Rao, youth leaders, cooperative society representatives, and local political activists participated in the programme.

Later, the MLA inspected cotton fields with farmers and interacted with agricultural labourers about current crop conditions.

# Modi In Tamil Nadu: A High-Voltage Start, But What About Past Baggage?



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile roadshow in Coimbatore on Tuesday is widely seen as the launch of the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) campaign for the 2026 Tamil Nadu elections. While the spectacle showcased the BJP's organisational strength, the underlying political terrain remains challenging for the party in a state that has long resisted its expansion.

The biggest hurdles lie within the NDA itself. The AIADMK, the BJP's main ally in Tamil Nadu, continues to navigate internal di-

visions after the expulsions of VK Sasikala, O Panneerselvam, and TTV Dhinakaran. The exit of two prominent Thevar community leaders has weakened the party's influence in western Tamil Nadu, traditionally an AIADMK stronghold. The recent removal of veteran leader KA Sengottaiyan adds further uncertainty. AIADMK's successive election losses in 2019, 2021, and 2024, two of them in alliance with the BJP, have reinforced perceptions of the national party's electoral isolation.

Other NDA constituents face their own challenges.

The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) is witnessing a leadership tussle between founder Dr S Ramadoss and his son Anbumani Ramadoss, raising the possibility of a split or internal competition. The Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMK), once an ally, has yet to decide its political direction. Adding to the unpredictability is actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), debuting in 2026. Vijay has repeatedly positioned the BJP as an ideological opponent, ruling out any alliance and potentially attracting former NDA partners.

The DMK, in contrast, enters the election season from a position of continuity. Its alliance has remained intact through three consecutive victories. The party leans on welfare schemes, such as monthly Rs 1,000 support for women, free bus travel, and assistance for government-school college students, while highlighting faster double-digit economic growth. Politically, it continues to challenge the BJP on issues central to Tamil Nadu's identity, including NEET exemption, Hindi imposition, alleged financial discrimination, and the

Keeladi archaeological report, themes that resonate strongly with the electorate.

Coimbatore, where Modi showcased the BJP's local presence, remains one of the few areas of firm support. The roadshow aims not just to energise cadres but also to test whether the BJP can recalibrate its approach to a state where national narratives often fail to gain traction. The outcome will reveal whether this spectacle can translate into tangible electoral momentum or remain a symbolic display in a still-challenging terrain.

# Bihar Polls Reignite Vote-Seat Debate



The recent Bihar elections have once again sparked discussions on the gap between vote share and seat share, with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) securing a majority of votes but far fewer seats than proportionality would suggest. Calls to shift India from the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system to Proportional Representation (PR) have gained traction. However, experts caution that PR carries significant drawbacks that may outweigh its perceived fairness.

Under India's FPTP system, voters choose individual candidates, and the candidate with the most votes in a constituency wins. Losing candidates receive no representation, even if their vote counts are nearly equal to the winner's. This system can create disparities between vote share and seat share but ensures that governments have a clear mandate.

By contrast, PR systems, where parties are awarded seats based on overall vote share, can produce highly proportional outcomes but often result in fragmented, unstable coalitions. Israel's experience illustrates this: governments are frequently formed through alliances of 20-30 parties, giving small or extremist factions disproportionate influence. Only nine out of 25 Israeli governments have completed a full term, raising questions about PR's effectiveness in a large and diverse country like India.

PR also weakens the link be-

tween legislators and voters. Candidates are elected based on party lists rather than personal constituencies, turning representatives into "rubber stamps" for party leadership. In India, where political parties already wield substantial power through mechanisms like the anti-defection law, such a shift could further diminish voter influence.

Additionally, PR incentivizes parties to appeal to narrow sections of the electorate, allowing fringe groups to gain influence without broad-based support. In India's diverse polity, this could amplify the role of extremist or sectarian parties, undermining governance and social cohesion.

Experts argue that the focus should instead be on strengthening the legitimacy of elections under FPTP. Measures such as ensuring the independence of the Election Commission, curbing electoral corruption, and reconsidering the anti-defection law are seen as critical steps to improve voter confidence.

While mixed systems combining FPTP and proportional elements exist in countries like Germany, any electoral reform must consider India's unique political and social context.

The Bihar results highlight the tension between fairness and effectiveness in electoral systems, but analysts warn that adopting PR without addressing these structural issues could create more problems than it solves.

## Humane Solutions for Stray Dogs



As urban areas across India grapple with the growing stray dog population, experts emphasize that the solution lies in humane management rather than fear or culling. In neighbourhoods across Delhi, programmes focused on kindness, trust, and cooperation have demonstrated that reducing stray dog numbers humanely is not only possible but sustainable.

Activists and veterinarians argue that community engagement is key. "The solution begins with building trust with animals, educating residents, and promoting responsible ownership," says animal welfare expert Sandeep Joshi. Neighbourhoods that implement structured sterilization, vaccination, and adoption programmes have seen tangible reductions in stray dog populations without resorting to inhumane methods.

Sterilization and vaccination, commonly referred to as the ABC (Animal Birth Control) programme, have been pivotal. Dogs are cap-

tured, neutered or spayed, vaccinated against rabies, and then returned to their familiar areas. Studies from Delhi and other cities show that over time, this approach leads to a gradual decline in stray populations and reduces incidences of dog bites and disease transmission.

Education also plays a crucial role. Communities that teach children and adults how to coexist with stray animals—feeding them safely, avoiding provocation, and reporting unwell animals—see fewer conflicts. "Fear and aggression stem from misunderstanding," says Navtej Johar, an animal rights advocate.

As cities expand and human-animal interactions increase, adopting a compassionate, evidence-based approach is essential. Humane population management is not a dream; it is a proven reality in many parts of Delhi. The challenge now lies in scaling these efforts nationwide, fostering awareness, and encouraging collaboration between residents, authorities, and welfare organisations.

## UP Government's Bid to Withdraw Akhlaq Case Raises Eyebrows



The Uttar Pradesh government's recent attempt to withdraw from the prosecution in the 2015 Mohammed Akhlaq lynching case has sparked widespread concern about political interference in justice. The lynching, in which Akhlaq was brutally killed by a mob over a baseless rumour, remains etched in public memory as a symbol of communal violence and the fragility of social harmony.

Under Section 360 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), the state can recommend withdrawal from prosecution, but the law now requires that the court hear the victim's family before approving any such request. This safeguard ensures that the victim's voice remains central, preventing quiet administrative decisions that could undermine justice.

Legal experts stress that the

raised doubts about the motivations behind such moves.

The law now places a dual responsibility: prosecutors must act independently, and judges must scrutinize withdrawal applications thoroughly, demanding full disclosure of reasons and assessing broader public impact. Courts have rejected similar requests in the past when motives were questionable, and a lynching case warrants even stricter scrutiny.

For Akhlaq's family, the law offers a right to be heard, but the emotional and social burden is heavy. Opposing withdrawal forces them to reopen painful wounds, while accepting it would mean surrendering hope of a full trial, potentially sending a troubling message to victims of communal violence nationwide.

Experts note that India's formal withdrawal mechanism contrasts with systems like the U.S., where political influence on prosecutions is limited by structural and public oversight. In India, the onus falls heavily on prosecutors, judges, and now victims to safeguard justice.

The Akhlaq case underscores the delicate balance between law and political power. Courts must ensure that any withdrawal is genuinely in public interest, not politically motivated, reaffirming that the justice system remains steadfast. Upholding prosecution in this case would signal that justice in India is not a seasonal exercise but a principle that stands firm, even under pressure.

# Satya Sai Baba's teachings showing light to lakhs in 140 countries: PM Modi

TPN Correspondent | Varanasi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid tribute to the late spiritual leader Sri Satya Sai Baba, highlighting the guru's enduring influence on lakhs of followers across 140 countries. Modi made the remarks during the birth centenary celebrations of Satya Sai Baba in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, where he also released a commemorative coin and a set of stamps in the guru's honor.

Calling the centenary "a divine boon," Modi said, "Though Sai Baba is not among us physically, his love and spirit of service are the guiding forces for crores of people." He noted that devotees worldwide continue to find light, guidance, and inspiration from Satya Sai Baba's teachings, emphasizing the spiritual leader's focus on service as central to human life.

Modi highlighted that the core of Indian civilization lies in Seva, or selfless service. "All our diverse spiritual and philosophical traditions ultimately lead to this one idea, whether one walks the path of Bhakti, knowledge, or karma," he said. He fur-



ther connected the principle of service to contemporary governance, noting that the government's social security and welfare schemes for the poor are being recognized and discussed in international forums.

The Prime Minister also

underscored the 'local for vocal' initiative, stating that it will help India achieve its goal of becoming a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India).

The celebrations were attended by prominent leaders and personalities, including Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, and actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, along with R J Rathnakar, Managing Trustee of the Sri Satya Sai Central Trust.

As part of the centenary

observances, Modi paid obeisance at Satya Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi and received Vedic blessings from priests, marking a day of devotion, reflection, and reaffirmation of the guru's teachings of universal love, peace, and service.

## 'Smoke From Punjab Doesn't Even Reach Delhi': CM Bhagwant Mann

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday dismissed claims that stubble burning in his state contributes significantly to Delhi's worsening air quality, sparking a political debate over the national capital's smog crisis.

Addressing a press conference, Mann asserted that smoke from Punjab does not reach Delhi due to prevailing wind patterns, and pointed fingers at Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi's own emissions. He noted that Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) had hit 400 even before paddy harvesting began in Punjab, challenging the narrative that the state's crop residue is responsible. "The smoke that travels to Delhi stays over Connaught Place! What a joke!... 99% of Punjab's rice is exported, and it is not a staple food locally," he said.

Meanwhile, Delhi woke up to thick smog with an



average AQI of 341 at 7 AM, placing the city in the "very poor" category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Areas such as

Dhaura Kuan recorded 365, Anand Vihar 381, Ghazipur 345, and Akshardham 381, all in the "very poor" category. CPCB classifies an AQI be-

tween 301-400 as "very poor" and 401-500 as "severe."

The debate intensified as Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Sin-

gh Sirsa accused the AAP-led Punjab government of coercing farmers to burn stubble, despite central incentives to prevent it. Sirsa claimed that most incidents coincided with the post-Diwali period and accused AAP of hypocrisy, recalling how former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal had previously highlighted stubble smoke from Punjab as a major pollution source.

Sirsa said, "Earlier, Kejriwal used to explain how stubble smoke travels to Delhi. Now, the same people are silent while in power." He argued that the worsening pollution reflects governance failures in Delhi rather than actions in Punjab.

The exchange underscores the growing political tussle over the source of Delhi's toxic smog as winter pollution peaks, with blame being shifted between states amid rising public concern over health risks.

## 'Tally is now 60': Congress after Trump repeats 'India-Pakistan' peace broker claim



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Congress on Wednesday mocked the Narendra Modi government after former US President Donald Trump repeated his claim that he prevented a war between India and Pakistan, sarcastically noting that "the tally is now 60."

Trump, addressing a bi-

lateral meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince in Washington on Tuesday, reiterated that he had intervened to halt Operation Sindoor, a claimed conflict between the two South Asian nations. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh reacted, saying, "Just when it appeared that the claims had

stopped. President Trump has reminded the world again." He added that Trump has made similar assertions in multiple countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, the UK, Netherlands, and Japan, tallying up to 60 such statements.

During the meeting, Trump stated, "I've

right here in the Oval Office."

Since May 10, Trump has repeatedly claimed that India and Pakistan agreed to a full ceasefire after a night of talks mediated by Washington. However, India has consistently denied that any external intervention was involved in the easing of tensions.

The Congress's response also comes amid growing criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Earlier this month, the opposition questioned Modi's role following Trump's assertion that India had "largely stopped buying oil from Russia," sarcastically asking, "What does Howdy Modi have to say about all this?"

Ramesh's remarks underline Congress's continued efforts to target the Modi government over its handling of international perception and diplomatic claims, highlighting a sharp political divide over foreign policy narratives.

## Congress Targets EC Over Alleged Voter Deletions



TPN Correspondent | Patna

Following its defeat in the Bihar Assembly elections, the Congress on Tuesday accused the Election Commission of selectively deleting voters from electoral rolls under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process. The party claimed the exercise was being used to target specific communities across several states and Union Territories.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi held a review meeting at Indira Bhawan in New Delhi with senior leaders from 12 states and UTs where the SIR is underway. Attendees included former Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, senior leaders Salman Khurshid and KC Venugopal, AICC general secretary, PCC presidents,

CLP leaders, and AICC secretaries.

Kharge alleged that the Election Commission's conduct during the revision process was "deeply disappointing" and must prove its neutrality. He said the SIR was being "weaponised"

for "vote theft" and warned that Congress workers and local units would remain vigilant to expose any attempts to remove genuine voters or add bogus ones.

Venugopal said patterns of targeted deletions observed in Bihar were now emerging in 12 states and UTs. He criticized the EC's separate special revision in Assam and flagged Kerala, where booth-level officers (BLOs) were instructed to finalize voter lists on the same day local body elections begin, despite a state Assembly resolution to

postpone the exercise. Venugopal noted the extreme workload had led to cases of suicide among BLOs.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera accused the EC of political bias, stating that names were being selectively removed across states. He recalled the party's "Voter Rights Yatra" in Bihar and cited five Supreme Court orders reflecting concerns over the Commission's approach.

The party announced plans for a massive rally at Ramlila Maidan, Delhi, in early December to protest alleged irregularities. Khera said the Congress had collected five crore signatures nationwide to defend voter rights, emphasizing, "If the voter's right is taken away, it is our duty to raise our voice, and we will continue to do so."

## Nitish Kumar Elected JD(U) Legislature Party Leader in Bihar



TPN Correspondent | Patna

Janata Dal (United) supremo Nitish Kumar was chosen as the leader of the JD(U) legislature party during a meeting of newly elected MLAs in Patna on Wednesday, state minister Shrawan Kumar confirmed. The decision comes ahead of a meeting of NDA constituents, where Kumar is expected to be appointed the leader of the alliance in Bihar.

The meeting, held at 'Samvad' at the Chief Minister's Secretariat,

was attended by all newly elected JD(U) MLAs and 22 Legislative Council members. Party leaders Vijay Choudhary and Umesh Kushwaha proposed Kumar's name, which was seconded by senior leaders Bijendra Yadav, working national president Sanjay Jha, and Union minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan'.

After his election as legislature party leader, Kumar addressed party members, urging them to work tirelessly for the welfare of the state. He will meet Governor Arif Mohammad Khan later in the day to initiate the process for forming the new government and submit a letter of support from all NDA constituents. The current Bihar assembly will be dissolved on Wednesday.

Kumar is set to take oath as Bihar Chief Minister for a record 10th time at Patna's historic Gandhi Maidan on Thursday. The NDA, comprising JD(U), BJP, LJP(RV), HAM, and RLM, secured a decisive victory in the 243-member assembly, winning 202 seats in total. JD(U) bagged 85 seats, while BJP won 89, LJP(RV) 19, HAM 5, and RLM 4.

In the run-up to the

elections, Kumar rolled out welfare schemes including hikes in social security pensions, stipends for Jeevika, Asha, and Anganwadi workers, and the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana, under which over one crore women received Rs 10,000 each. Despite criticism and speculation of political sidelining similar to Maharashtra's Eknath Shinde, the 75-year-old leader remained unfazed.

Born in 1951 in Bakhtiyarpur, Bihar, Nitish Kumar entered politics during the JP Movement, initially joining the Janata Party. He contested his first assembly elections in 1977 and secured his first victory in 1985, gradually rising to become the longest-serving Chief Minister of Bihar.

## India saved my mother's life

**Sheikh Hasina's son rejects legitimacy of her extradition**



TPN Correspondent | Dhaka

Sajeeb Wazed Joy, son of Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has strongly dismissed Dhaka's request to extradite his mother from India, alleging severe violations of judicial norms and rising extremist threats in Bangladesh. Speaking to ANI from Virginia, Wazed expressed deep gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for granting Hasina asylum, claiming militants had been plotting to assassinate her before she left the country.

Wazed alleged that legal proceedings against his mother are fundamentally flawed, accusing the interim government of manipulating the judiciary. "They terminated 17 judges before the trial, amended laws illegally without parliamentary approval, and barred her defence attorneys from court proceedings," he said. He added that no democratic nation would agree to extradition under such circumstances and expressed confidence that India would reject the request.

Hasina, who ruled Bangladesh for 15 years, faces multiple charges filed by the interim administration, but Wazed insists the process has been politically

motivated and compromised. Describing her exit from Bangladesh as life-saving, he said, "India has essentially saved my mother's life. If she hadn't left, militants had planned on killing her."

He further warned India of escalating security threats, alleging that the Yunus-led interim government has released "tens of thousands of terrorists" previously jailed during Hasina's tenure. He claimed that Lashkar-e-Taiba is now operating freely in Bangladesh and linked its local networks to recent terror incidents in Delhi.

In a sharp escalation, Wazed accused Pakistan's ISI of arming infiltrators during last year's protests in Dhaka, citing video evidence of armed demonstrators. He also referenced comments attributed to US President Donald Trump, who reportedly said the previous US administration spent "millions of dollars" through USAID to influence political change in Bangladesh.

The allegations add new strain to India-Bangladesh relations already tense over border security and minority protection. Further diplomatic responses are expected as the situation evolves.

## Eight-Month Pregnant Indian Woman Killed in Sydney Car Crash



TPN Correspondent | Australia

A 33-year-old pregnant Indian woman tragically lost her life in Sydney, Australia, when she was struck by a car while out for an evening walk with her family. Samanvitha Dhareshwar, eight months pregnant with her second child, was walking alongside her husband and three-year-old son in Hornsby on George Street around 8 pm last Friday.

Police reports state that a Kia Carnival had slowed to allow the family to cross a footpath when a speeding BMW rear-ended the Kia, propelling it forward and hitting Dhareshwar near a car park entrance. She sustained catastrophic injuries and was rushed to Westmead Hospital, but neither she nor her unborn child survived.

The BMW was being driven by 19-year-old provisional license holder Aaron Papazoglu. Both the BMW and Kia drivers escaped without injury. Police later arrested Papazoglu at his Wahroonga residence. He faces charges including dangerous driving occasioning death, negligent driving occasioning death,

and causing the loss of a foetus. A magistrate denied him bail due to the gravity of the incident.

Papazoglu is expected to be tried under New South Wales' Zoe's Law, enacted in 2022, which imposes harsher penalties for deaths caused to unborn children in traffic incidents. Convictions can carry up to three additional years in prison on top of standard sentences for dangerous or negligent driving.

Dhareshwar, a qualified IT systems analyst, worked as a test analyst for Alscos uniforms, specialising in business application administration and support. Her untimely death has shocked both the local and Indian communities in Australia. Authorities are yet to confirm if her husband or young son suffered any injuries during the accident.

The tragic incident underscores concerns over speeding and the risks posed by inexperienced drivers in urban areas. Police continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding the crash and urge caution to prevent further fatalities.

## Trump repeats claim he stopped war between India, Pakistan

TPN Bureau | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump reiterated his long-standing claim that he "stopped a war between India and Pakistan," making the remark during a bilateral meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the White House. The statement, delivered in the Oval Office, comes amid heightened global attention on U.S. foreign policy in South Asia and Trump's repeated assertions of his role in defusing regional tensions.

Trump did not provide new details about the alleged intervention but framed it as an example of his administration's ability to prevent major global conflicts. The President has made similar claims in the past, often referencing periods of heightened tension between New Delhi and Islamabad, though neither country has publicly cor-



borated the extent of his involvement.

The meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman focused on strategic cooperation, regional security, and bilateral economic ties. However, Trump's remarks about India and Pakistan quickly drew attention, given the sen-

sitivity surrounding the two nuclear-armed neighbours and their long history of conflict.

The President's comments come at a time when South Asia remains geopolitically complex, with ongoing concerns about cross-border terrorism, ceasefire violations,

and diplomatic relations.

Analysts suggest that Trump's repeated emphasis on his role may be aimed at reinforcing his foreign policy credentials.

The White House did not issue any additional clarification, and neither the Indian nor Pakistani governments responded im-

mediately to the remarks.

The meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince also included discussions on defence cooperation, energy partnerships, and stability in the Middle East.

As one of Washington's closest regional allies, Saudi Arabia remains a key player

in U.S. strategic planning, and Tuesday's dialogue was part of broader efforts to strengthen ties.

Trump's comments are expected to generate debate, especially in South Asia, where narratives around diplomatic intervention remain politically sensitive.

## Massive Fire in Japan Destroys 170 Homes, Forces Large-Scale Evacuations

TPN Correspondent | Tokyo

A massive fire swept through a residential neighbourhood in Oita, southwestern Japan, destroying more than 170 homes and forcing over 170 residents to evacuate. The blaze, which began on Tuesday evening near a fishing port amid strong winds, continued burning for nearly 20 hours before authorities managed to bring it partially under control on Wednesday.

According to the Oita prefectural disaster response team, one person—an elderly man in his 70s—was reported missing, and firefighters later discovered a body believed to be his. A woman in her 50s sustained minor injuries during the incident. The fire also spread into nearby forested land, affecting approximately 12 acres, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) reported.



Efforts to contain the blaze involved a large-scale mobilisation of resources, including more than 200 firefigh-

ters, dozens of fire engines, and two UH-1 helicopters dispatched by the Ground Self-Defense Force. Despite

these efforts, the fire remained difficult to control due to strong winds that rapidly carried flames across densely packed wooden homes.

The affected area, located near Oita's mackerel fishing zone, is not close to the region's re-

nowned hot spring resorts or historic thatched-roof structures, but the damage to local residences and infrastructure has been extensive. Around 260 homes remained without electricity by Wednesday afternoon.

Television footage showed thick plumes of smoke rising over charred remains of houses, though flames had subsided by mid-day. Residents described the ordeal as overwhelming, with one woman telling Kyodo News that the fire "spread in the blink of an eye," leaving little time to gather belongings.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi expressed her condolences on X and pledged full government assistance to affected families. Authorities are investigating the cause of the blaze and the factors that contributed to its rapid spread.

## Close Yunus Aide Arrives In India Days After Sheikh Hasina's Death Sentence



TPN Correspondent | UN

Amid strained India-Bangladesh ties, National Security Adviser (NSA) Khalilur Rahman, a close aide of interim Bangladeshi

leader Muhammad Yunus, arrived in New Delhi to attend the 7th meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC). The visit comes days after former

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in exile in Delhi, was sentenced to death by Dhaka, marking one of the most significant engagements by a senior Bangladeshi

official since her government's fall in August.

Rahman's visit was officially at the invitation of India's NSA Ajit Doval. The two-

day CSC gathering will host NSAs from Maldives, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, with Seychelles participating as an observer and Malaysia invited as a guest. The conclave, established to strengthen regional security in the Indian Ocean, focuses on maritime safety, counterterrorism, cyber security, combatting transnational organized crime, and disaster relief coordination.

Observers in Delhi see Rahman's presence as a signal that dialogue continues between the two neighbours, despite concerns over Bangladesh's recent moves. Dhaka's plans to revive the Lalmirhat airbase, only 20 kilometres from India's Siliguri Corridor in West Bengal, have raised strategic alarms. Analysts note that recent visits by top Pakistani military officials to Bangladesh and statements from its

leadership indicate a tilt in Dhaka's security alignment, which India is closely monitoring.

Bangladesh officially became the fifth member of the CSC in 2024, joining India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and the Maldives. Rahman, an influential figure in Yunus' administration, has been part of prior engagements with Pakistan, signaling the complexity of regional alliances.

India aims to use the CSC meeting to review ongoing initiatives and implement its 2026 Roadmap, promoting cooperation on security threats of common concern. While the conclave underscores the importance of multilateral dialogue, Rahman's visit highlights ongoing strategic sensitivities, with Delhi keen to balance engagement with vigilance in the context of evolving Bangladesh-Pakistan ties and recent political upheavals in Dhaka.

# Govt Panel Plans New SEZ Norms to Boost Domestic Sales

New Delhi: A government panel is working on revised norms for Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to help exporters tap into the domestic market amid rising challenges in overseas trade. The panel includes officials from the Commerce and Industry Ministry, NITI Aayog, and representatives from the export sector, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The move comes in response to growing concerns from SEZ units, particularly those entirely reliant on the US market, which have faced sudden tariff pressures making exports uncompetitive. Several units have reportedly requested the Commerce Ministry to de-note their SEZ status, though many exporters have so far continued operations despite incurring losses, hoping to maintain their US market presence.

SEZs in India benefit from tax incentives such as duty-free im-



ports and domestic procurement advantages. Official data for FY25 indicates that exports from India's 276 SEZ units totaled \$172 billion, while domestic sales accounted for only 2% of production. The limited domestic engagement has raised

concerns about underutilization of SEZ potential, especially when compared with China's SEZs, which have been instrumental in transforming manufacturing in that country.

In addition to market access issues, SEZs are

also facing challenges with low investments in research and development (R&D), which experts say is crucial for innovation and competitiveness. The revised norms under discussion aim to create greater flexibility for SEZ units, enabling

them to sell more products domestically without losing SEZ benefits, and encouraging investment in R&D to strengthen the sector.

Officials emphasized that the policy changes are intended to support exporters in diversifying markets, reducing

dependency on a single country, and enhancing overall manufacturing competitiveness. The panel is expected to finalize recommendations in the coming months, potentially reshaping the operational framework of SEZs in India.

## Tata Projects, ASI Global Join Hands for Aircraft Maintenance Facilities



Tata Projects Ltd (TPL) and ASI Global have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly design and construct aircraft maintenance facilities in India, positioning themselves

as integrated solution providers for hangar and MRO infrastructure.

The alliance brings together Tata Projects' engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) exper-

tise with ASI Global's global experience in aircraft hangar design and fabrication.

Together, the companies aim to cater to growing demand from commercial airlines, third-party MRO op-

erators, business aircraft operators, and the defence sector.

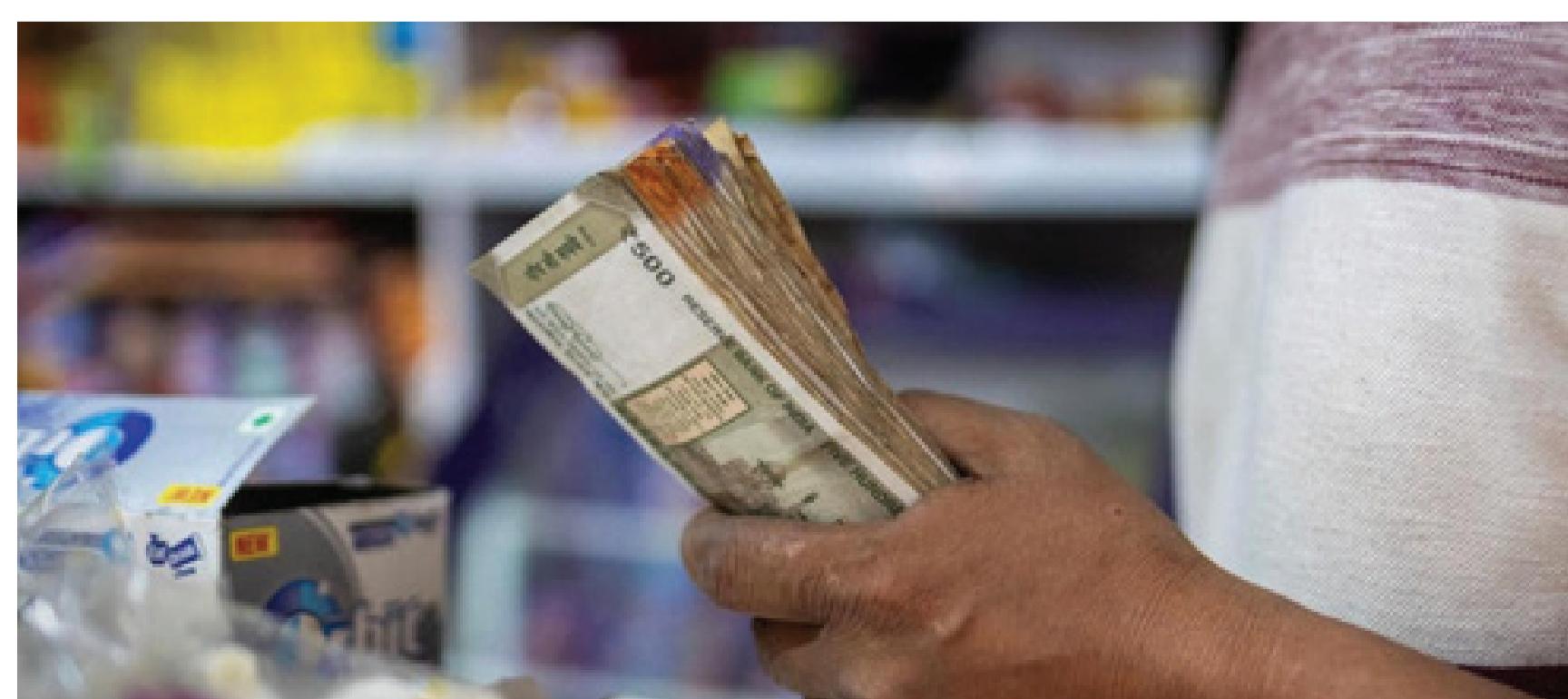
Under the MoU, Tata Projects and ASI Global will jointly identify and pursue opportunities across India

for the development of hangars and related maintenance infrastructure. The partnership is expected to streamline project execution and provide end-to-end solutions for aviation clients, from design and engineering to construction.

Industry experts note that India's aviation sector is witnessing increased demand for modern maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facilities, driven by the expansion of commercial airlines and rising defence requirements. The collaboration between Tata Projects and ASI Global is seen as a timely move to strengthen domestic capabilities and reduce reliance on foreign infrastructure providers.

The MoU reflects a strategic effort to enhance India's aerospace infrastructure, supporting both civil and defence aviation growth. With the partnership in place, the companies are set to play a key role in shaping the country's MRO ecosystem while leveraging their combined technical and operational expertise.

## Rupee Inches Up 2 Paise to 88.58 Against Dollar



Mumbai: The Indian rupee closed 2 paise higher at 88.58 against the U.S. dollar on Wednesday, supported by buying momentum in domestic equities and softer global crude oil prices.

Forex traders noted that despite these domestic positives, gains were limited due to a firm U.S. dollar and continued foreign capital outflows. The dollar in-

dex, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.18% higher at 99.63.

Market participants also cited cautious in-

vestor sentiment ahead of developments on the proposed India-U.S. trade deal, which has been closely monitored by businesses and foreign investors alike.

"While the rupee saw

modest gains, broader global factors and the strength of the U.S. dollar kept any sharp appreciation in check," said a senior forex dealer.

Analysts expect the

rupee to remain sensitive to both domestic equity trends and international cues, including crude oil prices, dollar movement, and foreign fund flows, in the near term.

## Zomato Set to Gain Bigger Nifty Share by 2030



Zomato is poised to strengthen its presence in India's Nifty 50 index as new-age digital companies are expected to dominate the market by 2030, according to market analyst Hiren VedVed. He highlighted that among the 50 companies currently in the index, only three—Trent, Bajaj Finance, and Zomato—are delivering profit growth exceeding 18%, signaling strong fundamentals in a competitive market.

The growth trajectory of Zomato reflects a broader trend of digital and technology-driven companies gaining prominence in India's financial markets. Analysts believe that as consumer behavior increasingly shifts toward online platforms for food delivery, e-commerce, and digital services, companies like Zomato are well-positioned to capitalize on this transformation.

"Zomato's consistent revenue growth, expanding customer base, and innovation in delivery logistics make it a strong contender for an in-

creased weighting in the Nifty index over the next five years," VedVed noted. He added that new-age companies with robust digital strategies are expected to gradually replace traditional businesses in the index as the economy evolves.

Financial experts also point out that Zomato's ability to maintain high profit margins amid rising operational costs and intense competition sets it apart from many peers. This trend underscores the growing influence of digital-first companies in shaping India's equity market landscape.

With the Nifty 50 representing India's top-performing companies, an increased share for Zomato would not only reflect investor confidence but also mark a significant milestone for digital enterprises in India's stock market. Analysts expect that by 2030, several digital companies, led by Zomato, could emerge as dominant players, reshaping the composition of India's key stock indices.

## Record IPO Fundraising, Mixed Returns in 2025



The Indian IPO market is witnessing an unprecedented surge in 2025, with companies raising record amounts through public listings.

So far this year, more than 90 firms have debuted on stock exchanges, collectively generating substantial capital from investors, signaling strong corporate confidence and investor interest.

Despite this fundraising boom, market performance for many newly listed companies has been uneven. Of the 90-plus IPOs, 42 are currently trading below their listing price, highlighting a striking contrast between record fundraising and post-listing returns.

Analysts say this reflects the growing complexity of market dynamics, where investor enthusiasm for new listings does not always translate into sustained share price growth.

"While the capital raised is impressive, the fact that nearly half of the IPOs are underperforming underscores the need for investors to evaluate fundamentals carefully," said market strategist Anil Mehra.

Factors such as sector-specific challenges, macroeconomic uncertainties, and company valuation gaps are contribut-

ing to this mixed performance.

The market's strong fundraising trend is fueled by a combination of pent-up liquidity, robust institutional interest, and favorable regulatory frameworks. Notably, sectors like technology, fintech, and renewable energy have attracted significant attention, with large subscription numbers driving over-subscribed listings. However, post-listing corrections in several high-profile IPOs have tempered investor optimism.

Experts caution that while 2025 marks a record year for IPO proceeds, retail and institutional investors must remain cautious and focus on long-term value rather than short-term gains. The paradox of record fundraising alongside mixed returns highlights the evolving nature of India's equity markets and signals a more discerning approach to IPO investment moving forward.

As the year progresses, market watchers will closely monitor whether these trends persist and how upcoming listings perform in an environment balancing record capital raising with selective stock performance.

## Apple Leads India's Premium Smartphone Surge



India's smartphone market reached an all-time high in the third quarter of 2025, driven by strong demand for premium devices from Apple and Samsung, according to a new report by Counterpoint Research.

The overall market grew 5% year-over-year in Q3 2025, marking the highest quarterly value ever recorded. Analysts attribute this growth to a combination of festive season sales, attractive discounts, and a rise in consumer preference for higher-end smartphones.

Counterpoint's Monthly India Smartphone Tracker highlights that offline campaigns played a key role in boosting sales. Retailers offered easy financing options, trade-in deals, and pre-stocked inventory, encouraging buyers to upgrade their devices. Online channels, meanwhile, continued to see strong performance, particularly during festive promotions.

The premium smartphone segment, in particular, recorded a remarkable 29% year-over-year growth. Consumers are increasingly willing to invest in higher-value devices, reflecting a shift in purchasing

patterns from purely budget-conscious choices to premium options. This trend contributed to an 18% increase in the overall market value and a 13% rise in the average selling price (ASP).

Apple emerged as the dominant player in the premium segment, closely followed by Samsung, benefiting from new launches and aggressive marketing campaigns. The festive season, which coincided with significant discounts and product launches, amplified demand and helped both brands capture a larger share of India's growing smartphone market.

Industry experts note that India's smartphone market is evolving rapidly, with consumers showing greater interest in feature-rich devices, better cameras, and larger screens. This trend is likely to sustain the growth of premium smartphones in the coming quarters.

The report underscores that India is not only a high-volume market but is increasingly becoming a high-value market, making it a critical battleground for global smartphone makers.

## Google Play Reveals Best Apps and Games of 2025 in India



Google has unveiled its Best of Play 2025 awards, highlighting the top apps and games on the Play Store in India. The recognition celebrates apps and games that combine local cultural relevance with innovative features, including artificial intelligence (AI), which is becoming increasingly central to user experiences.

The overall Best App of 2025 in India was awarded to District: Movies Events Dining, a ticketing and lifestyle platform owned by Zomato. In the games segment, CookieRun India: Running Game was named the Best Game, while also earning the title of Best Pick Up and Play Game.

Several other apps were recognized for their utility and creativity. Toonsutra, a webtoon and manga app, was named the Best Hidden Gem, while Daily Planner, a journaling platform, earned the Best Everyday Essential app title. Edits, an Instagram-focused app, was recognized as the Best for Fun, and invideo AI:

AI Video Generator won the Best Personal Growth App award, reflecting AI's growing role in the Indian digital ecosystem. According to Google, 69% of Indian users had their first interaction with AI through an app on Android devices.

Among trending apps, Instamart led the shopping category, while Seekho: Short Learning Videos and Adobe Firefly: AI Generator topped the education and art & design categories, respectively.

In gaming, aside from CookieRun India, Kamla, a horror survival game, received Best Indie Game, Real Cricket Swipe was named Best Made in India Game, Disney Speedstorm won Best Multi-Device Game, and 8 Pool Fever topped the multiplayer segment.

Google's awards highlight the growing appetite for apps and games that are locally relevant, engaging, and AI-enabled, marking a year of innovation and creativity on the Play Store in India.

## X and ChatGPT Back Online After Cloudflare Outage



Several major online services, including Elon Musk-owned X, OpenAI's ChatGPT, Anthropic's Claude, and Perplexity, went offline for hours on Tuesday due to a global outage caused by Cloudflare, a leading web infrastructure company. The incident disrupted access to multiple websites worldwide, leaving millions of users unable to reach popular online platforms.

Cloudflare first reported an "internal service degradation" at 11:48 UTC (5:18 PM IST), noting that the issue affected a wide range of its clients. Users quickly took to outage tracking platforms such as Downdetector.com to report connectivity problems, confirming the widespread impact of the disruption.

By 8:12 PM IST, Cloudflare announced that a fix had been implemented and that monitoring was under-

way to ensure all affected services returned to normal. "The team is continuing to focus on restoring service post-fix. We are mitigating

several issues that remain post-deployment," the company said in an official update.

The outage comes

nearly a month after Amazon Web Services (AWS) experienced a massive disruption that also affected large portions of the inter-

net, highlighting the vulnerability of critical cloud infrastructure.

X, formerly known as Twitter, has been at

the center of public attention since its \$44 billion acquisition by Musk in 2022, which led to massive layoffs and a rebranding of the platform. While this outage was unrelated to X's internal operations, it added to ongoing frustrations among users who rely on the platform for real-time updates and communication.

With the issue resolved, all services, including X and ChatGPT, are now reportedly operating normally. Cloudflare continues to investigate the root cause and has assured users that measures are being taken to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The incident serves as a reminder of the heavy reliance of the internet ecosystem on a few key cloud providers and the potential ripple effects when their systems encounter technical failures.

## 87-Year-Old Ahmedabad Woman Rides City with Sister in Sholay Style



Age is no barrier for 87-year-old Mandakini Shah from Ahmedabad, who has captured hearts with her adventurous spirit. Known for her love of freedom and thrill, Mandakini, along with her younger sister Usha, continues to ride around the city on their scooter in what social media users fondly call "Sholay style."

Mandakini learned to ride a scooter at the age of 62, proving that it's never too late to embrace independence. When asked why she rides at 87, she simply replies, "Why not?" Her journey reflects a lifetime of responsibility and self-reliance. Eldest among six siblings, she grew up watching her mother work tirelessly while her father, a freedom fighter, struggled to establish a business post-independence. These experiences instilled in her the val-

ues of hard work and self-confidence.

At just 16, Mandakini began her career as a Montessori teacher at Bal Mandir, despite facing challenges with English. Later, she devoted herself to social welfare, traveling extensively to engage with women's

groups, panchayats, and community organizations, educating women about their rights. During these travels, she mastered riding a moped, a jeep, and eventually a second-hand scooter, which remains her preferred mode of city exploration.

Mandakini's story is more than just about riding a scooter—it's a celebration of living life fully and fearlessly. She emphasizes that age should not limit one's aspirations, and her motto is to "live freely, not just as hard as I worked, but even more." Her bond with Usha adds an extra layer of joy to her adventures, showing that courage, independence, and companionship know no age.

Her inspiring journey continues to resonate online, with many praising her confidence, zest for life, and refusal to let age define her limits.

## Chinese Woman Survives 35-Day Wilderness Challenge, Loses 14 Kg



A 25-year-old Chinese woman, Zhao Tiezhu, has stunned the public after surviving a grueling 35-day wilderness survival competition on an island in Zhejiang Province, shedding 14 kilograms in the process.

The young contestant also won a bronze medal and a cash prize of 7,500 yuan (Rs 88,608) for her extraordinary endurance, reported South China Morning Post.

The competition, which

participants' physical and mental limits. Zhao faced extreme challenges, including 40-degree heat, insect bites, sunburns, and tough living conditions. Despite these hardships, she thrived by relying on her survival

skills, hunting and foraging for food. Her diet included crabs, sea urchins, abalone, and notably, 50 rats, which she hunted, cleaned, and roasted. Zhao described the rats as surprisingly tasty and even preserved some

rat jerky to eat after the contest.

After a typhoon struck the island on November 4, Zhao decided to leave the competition, satisfied with her achievement. "The outcome far exceeded my expectations, and I look forward to participating in more survival games," she said. Her weight dropped from 85 kilograms to 71 kilograms, a byproduct of her protein-rich, self-sourced diet and constant physical activity.

The event is part of a growing trend in China, where survival competitions are gaining popularity. Organizer Long Wu emphasized that such feats should not be attempted without proper medical and logistical support. Meanwhile, two male participants continue to compete for the first prize of 50,000 yuan (Rs 6,20,168). Similar survival challenges, including a high-profile competition on Seven Star Mountain in Hunan Province with a grand prize of 200,000 yuan (US\$28,000), are being streamed online, attracting a large audience.

Zhao's journey highlights the extreme lengths some are willing to go for adventure, endurance, and personal achievement, turning a survival challenge into a remarkable story of grit and determination.

# Prannoy, Ayush Shetty and Mannepalli Advance to Second Round at Australian Open

Indian shuttlers made a strong start at the USD 475,000 Australian Open Super 500, with HS Prannoy, Ayush Shetty and Tharun Mannepalli progressing to the second round after hard-fought wins in their men's singles opening matches on Wednesday.

Prannoy, the tournament's runner-up in 2023, showcased resilience after a shaky start. The world No. 85 Yohanes Saut Marcellino dominated the opening game, but Prannoy bounced back in impressive fashion to seal a 6-21, 21-12, 21-17 victory in 57 minutes. The 33-year-old, who won bronze at both the Asian Games and the 2023 World Championships, will face eighth seed Alwi Farhan of Indonesia in the next round.

World No. 32 Ayush Shetty continued his upward trajectory this season. Fresh off his maiden Super 300 title at the US Open, the Karnataka shuttler eased past Canada's Sam Yuan 21-11, 21-15 in just 33 minutes. The 20-year-old, a bronze-medallist at the 2023 World Junior Championships, will



now await the winner of the match between fourth seed Kodai Naraoka and Canada's Xiadong Sheng.

Tharun Mannepalli also kept India's momentum going with a gritty three-game win over Denmark's Magnus Johannessen. After

taking the first game comfortably, Mannepalli faltered in the second but held his nerve to clinch a 21-13, 17-21, 21-19 victory after 66 minutes. The 2023 National Games gold-medallist will next meet fifth seed Lin Chun-Yi of Chinese

Taipei.

However, it was heartbreak for Kiran George, who pushed sixth seed Kentaro Nishimoto to the limit before losing 21-11, 22-24, 17-21. Nishimoto, who recently defeated Lakshya Sen on his way to the Japan Mas-

ters final, proved too experienced in the closing stages.

Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth are scheduled to play their opening matches later in the day as India continues its campaign in Sydney.

## Rohit Sharma Slips to No. 2 as Daryl Mitchell Claims Top Spot in ODI Rankings



Indian skipper Rohit Sharma's brief stint as the No. 1 ODI batter has come to an end, with New Zealand's

Daryl Mitchell overtaking him in the latest ICC rankings released on Wednesday. Mitchell climbed to the top

on the back of a superb century against the West Indies in the opening ODI of their ongoing series, becoming

only the second New Zealander after Glenn Turner (1979) to achieve the feat.

Mitchell now has 782 rating points, narrowly edging past Rohit, who sits at 781 after holding the top position for roughly three weeks. The Kiwi all-rounder's rise highlights his consistency across formats, adding to New Zealand's proud legacy of world-class batting talent, including Martin Crowe, Kane Williamson, Ross Taylor, and others who previously featured in the elite top-five.

Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran also slipped one place to third, while India

continues to maintain a strong presence in the top 10 with Shubman Gill (4th), Virat Kohli (5th), and Shreyas Iyer (8th). The latest update

also saw notable gains for Pakistan players following their 3-0 series sweep against Sri Lanka. Mohammad Rizwan rose five spots to joint 22nd, and Fakhar Zaman climbed to 26th

among ODI batters. In the

bowling category, Abrar Ahmed jumped 11 positions to ninth, while Haris Rauf moved up to 23rd, though Afghanistan's Rashid Khan continues to dominate as the top ODI bowler.

The conclusion of the India-South Africa Test in Kolkata brought fresh movement in the Test rankings. South Africa captain Temba Bavuma entered the top five for the first time after his fighting 55\*. Shubman Gill rose to 11th despite sustaining an injury, while Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto climbed to 34th after a century against Ireland.

In bowling, Jasprit Bumrah retained his No. 1 Test ranking, supported by teammate Kuldeep Yadav rising to 13th and Ravindra Jadeja to 15th. South Africa's Marco Jansen and Simon Harmer also made gains, with Jansen additionally moving to fifth among Test all-rounders.

## Naomi Osaka Pulls Out of Auckland Event to Represent Japan at United Cup



Naomi Osaka has withdrawn from the ASB Classic in Auckland, opting instead to represent Japan at the United Cup as she shifts her preparation for the 2026 Australian Open to Australia. The four-time Grand Slam champion had earlier committed to beginning her 2026 season in New Zealand, where she impressed earlier this year by reaching the final. However, plans changed after she informed tournament director Nicolas Lamperin of her decision to compete in the mixed-team event.

Osaka's withdrawal is a setback for the Auckland tournament, which had banked on her star presence to draw global attention. The ASB Classic has been a meaningful stop for Osaka, offering her strong early-season competition and a chance to build rhythm ahead of the Melbourne Slam. Her run to the final earlier this year had particularly boosted the event's profile.

According to sources, Osaka communicated directly with Lamperin, expressing that she would now begin her season in Austral-

ia, where Japan's United Cup campaign will serve as her buildup for the year's first major. The United Cup, featuring combined ATP and WTA national contests, provides top-tier match play in a team environment — a format Osaka has previous-

ly said helps her ease into the season mentally and physically.

While Osaka's change of schedule aligns with her renewed focus on major tournaments, it also signals Japan's intention to field a

strong squad in the United Cup. Her participation is expected to significantly strengthen the nation's prospects in the competition.

Despite the disappointment for Auckland organizers, the ASB Classic is still expected to feature a com-

## Gill to Travel to Guwahati for 2nd Test Despite Injury Concerns



that Gill will remain under the supervision of the board's medical staff, and a final call on his availability for the second Test will be taken closer to the match.

Given Gill's doubtful fitness, the selectors have already initiated contingency plans. All-rounder Nitish Reddy has been withdrawn from the ongoing India A series against South Africa A in Rajkot. The Andhra cricketer reached Kolkata on Monday but did not participate in Tuesday's training session, indicating that he is being considered as a standby option.

Reddy, a right-handed batter with a Test century to his name, could make his way into the playing XI if Gill is ruled out. His inclusion would add depth to India's middle order and provide a useful additional bowling option.

With the series hanging in the balance, India's squad decisions in the coming hours will be crucial as they prepare to bounce back in Guwahati.

## Germany Seal 2026 World Cup Spot With Dominant 6-0 Rout of Slovakia



Germany delivered their most commanding performance of the qualifying campaign, crushing Slovakia 6-0 in Leipzig on Monday to secure their place at the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Captain Joshua Kimmich said the team "wanted to send a message," and they did exactly that with a ruthless display that put them atop Group A and assured direct qualification. Slovakia, finishing second, will head to the play-offs.

Leroy Sané struck twice, Nick Woltemade continued his remarkable scoring streak, and debutant Assan Ouedraogo added a memorable late goal as Germany raced to a 4-0 lead by half-time and never looked back. Woltemade opened the scoring in the 18th minute, heading home to register his fourth goal in three matches. Serge Gnabry doubled the advantage soon after, finishing coolly inside the box.

Florian Wirtz, under pressure at Liverpool, produced a brilliant spell late in the first half, setting up both of Sané's goals within five minutes. His creativ-

ity broke Slovakia's resilience and sent the home crowd into a frenzy. After the break, substitute Ridle Baku smashed in Germany's fifth shortly after coming on, before 17-year-old Ouedraogo scored on debut in front of his home fans, capping a dream night.

Coach Julian Nagelsmann praised the squad's intensity, calling the win a reflection of "incredible team spirit." The result gives Germany a high seed for the World Cup draw, reducing the risk of an early matchup with another top contender.

The emphatic victory also marks Germany's fifth consecutive win, brightening the end of a qualification phase in which they often appeared efficient rather than dominant. With key players like Kai Havertz, Jamal Musiala, Antonio Rüdiger, and Marc-André ter Stegen set to return from injury, Nagelsmann will take confidence from his side's best performance of the campaign as they look ahead to 2026.

## Karthi's Vaa Vaathiyaar Set for Telugu Release as Annagaru Vostaru



Karthi, one of the few Tamil stars who enjoys a strong and consistent fan base in the Telugu states, is gearing up for an exciting new release. After his impactful appearance in Nani's HIT 3, which laid the foundation for the next installment of the franchise, the actor is now returning to Telugu theatres with a full-fledged release.

Studio Green officially announced that Karthi's upcoming Tamil film Vaa Vaathiyaar will hit Telugu screens under the title Annagaru Vostaru. The announcement was accompanied by a striking look poster that has already generated solid curiosity among fans. While the team has yet to finalize an exact release date, they have confirmed a December 2025 arrival, setting expectations for a strong end-of-year theatrical outing.

The film is directed by Nalan Kumarasamy, known for his unique storytelling style and sharp character-driven narratives. Pairing opposite

Karthi is Krithi Shetty, who continues to balance projects across South Indian industries. The film's music is being composed by Santhosh Narayanan, whose soundtracks often become chart-toppers and significantly shape the mood of the narrative.

Meanwhile, fans of Karthi have another reason to celebrate. His blockbuster film Awara, which enjoyed tremendous success during its original release, is slated for a grand re-release in Telugu on November 22, 2025. With nostalgia-driven re-releases proving popular in recent years, Awara is expected to draw strong crowds once again.

With Annagaru Vostaru slated for December and Awara returning to theatres this month, Karthi is set to enjoy a strong presence in the Telugu market. More announcements and promotional updates are expected soon as the team ramps up preparations for the big release.

## Balayya Goes Pan-India for Akhanda 2



Telugu superstar Balakrishna Nandamuri, known for his massive fan base in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, is now aiming to expand his reach across pan-India with Akhanda 2. After the pan-India success of Akhanda, Balakrishna has garnered fans in North India, and for the first time, he is actively engaging in a nationwide promotional campaign.

Speaking at the recent song release event, Balakrishna said, "Akhanda 2 is not just a Telugu cinema. We are holding functions in Karnataka and Chennai too. The North audiences were mind blown when we released the teaser and the title song." This marks a significant shift for the veteran actor, who has typically relied on his Telugu fan base for the success of his films.

The first-of-its-kind pan-India promotional effort reflects Balakrishna's confidence in the film and his trust in director Boyapati Srinu. Their earlier collaborations, including Simha, Legend, and the first Akhanda, were major hits, reinforcing the duo's reputation for delivering blockbusters.

Balakrishna also acknowledged the growing potential of his films in northern markets. His previous films have already shown strong box-office numbers outside Telugu-speaking states, and Akhanda 2 is being positioned to capitalize on that momentum. The actor's direct involvement in promotions across multiple states signals a strategic approach to further increase the film's reach and appeal.

Industry insiders note that such pan-India campaigns are usually led by younger actors or those with established national appeal, making Balakrishna's proactive approach particularly noteworthy. By personally engaging in promotional activities outside his traditional stronghold, he is not only boosting anticipation for Akhanda 2 but also paving the way for broader recognition of Telugu cinema nationwide.

With the teaser and title song already receiving positive responses, Balakrishna's pan-India push could set a new benchmark for how regional stars connect with audiences across India.

# Diesel Sets OTT Premiere Date; Telugu Version Also Confirmed



Harish Kalyan's recent Tamil action thriller Diesel, which marked the directorial debut of Shambu Muthusamy, is gearing up for its digital release after its underwhelming theatrical run. Despite the buzz around its action-packed narrative, the film opened to mixed reviews from critics and struggled to make a mark at the Tamil Nadu box office, overshadowed by simultaneous releases such as Dude and Bison.

The latest update brings good news for those who missed the film in theatres. Diesel is set to premiere on OTT platforms Aha Tamil and Sun NXT starting November 21, just five weeks after its theatrical debut. Notably, Sun NXT will also offer the film in Telugu from the same date, expanding its reach to a wider South Indian audience.

The film stars Har-

ish Kalyan, known for opting for unconventional scripts, in a rugged action-oriented role. Athulya Ravi plays the female lead, adding emotional depth to the story, while Vivek Prasanna steps in as the antago-

nist. The supporting cast includes Vinay Rai, Sai Kumar, Ananya, Karunas, and Ramesh Thilak, each contributing to the film's dramatic tension.

With its OTT launch

around the corner, in-

Diesel hopes to follow that trajectory.

Industry watchers are curious to see whether Diesel can find renewed momentum among digital viewers. Many films that performed modestly in theatres have gone on to enjoy significant success online, and

Whether the action thriller can turn its digital release into a second innings of success remains to be seen, but its arrival on Aha Tamil and Sun NXT has certainly piqued interest among fans of the genre.

## Shriya, Rukmini Fight Back Against Fake Profiles



Actresses Shriya Saran and Rukmini Vasanth have recently faced a growing cyber threat: fake accounts impersonating them

online. The trend, which has become increasingly common in the film industry, highlights the risks of social media impersona-

tion and the vigilance required by both celebrities and fans.

Rukmini Vasanth was the first to raise the alarm. She shared a

post exposing a random number being used to pretend to be her. Firm and clear, Rukmini warned her followers not to re-

spond to any messages from the number and urged anyone in doubt to contact her or her team directly. "This is cybercrime, and we are already taking action," she stressed, emphasizing the seriousness of the issue. Her post served both as a warning and a call for caution, highlighting how impersonators can exploit trust and familiarity online.

Shriya Saran faced a similar issue shortly after. She posted a screenshot of a fake profile claiming to be her and did not mince words, calling the impersonator an "idiot."

Mixing frustration with humor, Shriya remarked on the absurdity of someone wasting time creating a fake profile. She even noted a silver lining: the impersonator was messaging people she genuinely admires and hopes to work with,

adding a lighthearted touch to her warning. Both actresses' re-

sponses underline the need for vigilance without escalating panic, keeping fans informed while addressing the issue with a personal touch.

The surge in fake profiles comes as social media continues to be an essential part of celebrities' engagement with fans. Impersonators often exploit the trust of followers, which can lead to scams, misinformation, or reputational harm. By publicly exposing these accounts, Shriya and Rukmini are taking proactive steps to protect themselves and their audiences.

The episode is a reminder of the growing cyber risks celebrities face and the importance of awareness among fans. Shriya and Rukmini's candid responses highlight that while online impersonation is frustrating, transparency, humor, and vigilance remain the best tools against it.

## 'Varanasi' Globetrotter Event Hits YouTube



Director S.S. Rajamouli and actor Mahesh Babu recently hosted the much-anticipated 'Globetrotter' event for their upcoming film Varanasi at Ramoji Film City. The event, organized to celebrate and promote the project, attracted widespread attention from fans and the media alike.

Initially, the ceremony was exclusively streamed on the OTT platform Jio Hotstar, giving subscribers a first look at the festivities.

With the YouTube release, viewers from around the world can now experience the Globetrotter event firsthand. Fans have shared clips, reactions, and commentary online, turning the event into a trending topic across platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

announcements related to the movie.

The event reportedly featured insights into the making of Varanasi, glimpses of the star-studded cast, and discussions between Mahesh Babu and Rajamouli about the film's vision and production. The digital release of the event has generated excitement among fans eager for updates on the collaboration, as both the director and actor are known for their blockbuster projects.

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Varanasi, being one

of the most awaited films in Indian cinema, has already created significant buzz. The Globetrotter event, now widely available, has amplified anticipation further, showcasing the growing trend of combining traditional film promotions with digital engage-

ment to reach a broader audience. The viral response indicates that Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu's collaboration continues to excite fans nationwide, promising a grand cinematic experience when Varanasi finally releases.