

**BUZZ POINTS**

Minister Nadendla Manohar's Timely Intervention Resolves Farmer's Paddy Sale Issue in a Day

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# Jagan Appears Before Court After Six Years; Tight Security in Hyderabad

V Krishna Kumar | November 20

Hyderabad: After nearly six years, former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy appeared before the CBI Special Court in Nampally, Hyderabad, on Thursday in connection with the long-pending disproportionate assets case. The court session lasted about 30 minutes, during which proceedings centered on allegations that Jagan had violated bail conditions during his recent foreign trips. Following the CBI's submission, the Nampally court had directed Jagan to appear personally, prompting his visit today.

His previous appearance in the same case was on January 10, 2020. Immediately after the hearing, Jagan left for his Lotus Pond residence in Hyderabad. The court's summons triggered heightened security across key areas of the city. Police implemented extensive traffic diversions around Begumpet Airport and the Nampally Court complex. Anticipating the large crowds, authorities deployed additional personnel and set up barricades to control public access along the route.

**Festive Atmosphere Among Supporters**  
Jagan's arrival in Hyderabad created scenes reminiscent of a political rally. Supporters treated the occasion as a celebration, filling roads with banners, slogans, and colorful displays. Several



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flex banners carrying the slogan "Rappa Rappa — 2029" appeared across Hyderabad, inspired by a popular dialogue from actor Allu Arjun's upcoming film Pushpa 2. These slogans were widely interpreted by party followers as symbolic of Jagan's political resurgence and anticipated return in the 2029 elections.

The former Chief Minister flew from Vijayawada's Gannavaram Airport to Begumpet in the morning and then traveled

by road to the Nampally Court. Both at the airport and court premises, enthusiastic fans gathered in large numbers to greet him. Some police personnel, assigned for security, were even spotted taking selfies with Jagan, adding a lighter note to the otherwise tense arrangements. Legal BackgroundThe disproportionate assets case against Jagan Mohan Reddy has been under investigation for over a decade, involving both the Cen-

tral Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The agencies allege that during the tenure of his father, late Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, several companies were granted government benefits such as land leases and licenses—in exchange for investing in firms owned or controlled by Jagan. The CBI's charge sheets cite multiple corporate entities, including Dalmia Cements, India Cements, Penna Cements, and Raghuram Cements, alleging quid pro quo investments worth over 150 crore. Investigators claim Dalmia Cements alone invested 95 crore in Jagan-linked enterprises and transferred an additional 55 crore through hawala channels.

Evidence for these transactions was reportedly obtained from a pen drive recovered from company employee Jayadeep Basu. The Enforcement

Directorate pursued related money-laundering charges, freezing assets worth 793 crore linked to Dalmia Cements, including land holdings valued at over 377 crore. The ED's actions were later upheld by the Adjudicating Authority.

One of the notable offshoots of this case involves the Vampic port and infrastructure project initiated during Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's regime. The CBI alleged that rules were violated to allocate over 15,000 acres to the project, managed by industrialist Nimmagadda Prasad. In return, Prasad allegedly made substantial investments in companies associated with Jagan Mohan Reddy. As the legal process continues, Jagan's personal appearance after such a long gap has once again placed the spotlight on one of India's most closely watched political and financial investigations.

# SIT Questions Former TTD Chief Y.V. Subba Reddy in Adulterated Ghee Scam



TPN Bureau | November 20

Hyderabad: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) appointed by the Supreme Court has intensified its probe into the adulterated ghee scam at the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), questioning former chairman and YSRCP Member of Parliament Y.V. Subba Reddy. The SIT official's interrogated him on Thursday at his residence in Hyderabad, in the presence of senior officers overseeing the investigation being carried out under the supervision of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The probe pertains to the alleged supply of spurious and adulterated ghee used in preparing the famous Tirumala laddus between 2019 and 2024.

The SIT's preliminary report revealed that large quantities of ghee mixed with synthetic and non-dairy substances had been used, compromising the sanctity and purity of the temple's prasadam. Investigators found that contractors had supplied about 68 lakh kilograms of substandard ghee valued at over 250 crore during the period. The investigation gained momentum after the arrest of Subba Reddy's former personal assistant, Ch-

inna Appanna, on November 11. Appanna reportedly received 4.69 crore in hawala transfers from contractors who had supplied the adulterated ghee. SIT sources said he provided crucial information about money transfers, sources of funds, and possible involvement of top officials in the TTD procurement process. Based on his testimony, the SIT expanded its inquiry, summoning Subba Reddy for a detailed interrogation. During his tenure as TTD chairman from 2019 to 2024, Subba Reddy oversaw key procurement and tender approvals. Officials are now examining whether he had any direct or indirect role in the selection of contractors or in the clearance of ghee supply bills.

According to SIT members, his responses so far have been "unsatisfactory" and "evasive" on several questions related to financial transactions and the hawala links traced through his aide. The SIT has already questioned several of her officials, including former Additional Executive Officer A.V. Dharmareddy, who was in service during the same period. The team has reportedly collected crucial documents, bank records, and communication logs to establish a chain of responsibility.

Sources indicate that Reddy had avoided appearing before the SIT on multiple occasions despite being issued summons. He was initially asked to appear on November 13 but cited health reasons and sought more time. Subsequently, officials decided to question him at his Hyderabad home. He has also moved court seeking relief from sharing personal bank account details, arguing procedural lapses in the SIT's notice.

The SIT has informed the court that Subba Reddy's conduct raised suspicion, particularly his reluctance to cooperate fully with investigators. The team is expected to submit a detailed report to the Andhra Pradesh High Court soon, outlining the financial trail, irregularities in procurement, and evidence linking the suspects involved. Though Subba Reddy maintains that only high-quality ghee was purchased during his administration, forensic and chemical analyses of samples have indicated otherwise. The findings, officials say, point to large-scale manipulation in quality certification and supply contracts. The investigation continues to draw public attention given the global reputation of Tirumala's sacred laddus. The SIT aims to complete the next phase of questioning and file a status report before the end of the month.

# Top Maoists Devuji, Malla Raji Reddy not in our custody: Andhra Police tells HC



Amaravati, Nov 20 (IA NS)

Andhra Pradesh Police told the state High Court on Thursday that CPI (Maoist) General Secretary Thippiri Tirupathi, alias Devuji and another top Maoist leader Malla Raji Reddy were not in custody of the state police.

The police conveyed this to the High Court when it took up hearing on a habeas corpus petition filed by one Gangadhar of Telangana, seeking direction to Andhra Pradesh Police to produce Devuji and Raji Reddy in the court. The police, however, denied that the two leaders are in their custody. It informed the court that Maoists who

were arrested in five districts on November 18 were already produced before concerned courts. The High Court directed the petitioner to submit the evidence in support of his claim that Devuji and Raji Reddy are in police custody.

The petitioner's counsel argued that the police issued a press statement that key Maoist leaders are in their custody. He sought time to submit the statement to the court. The court adjourned the hearing on the petition to Friday. Additional Director-General of Police (Intelligence) Mahesh Chandra Laddha had clarified on Wednesday that the police are unaware about the whereabouts of Devuji.

"We don't have any information where Devuji is now. He must be Chhattisgarh or Telangana. He is not with us. We arrested his protection team. Once we talk to them, we will come to know what was their plan," he said. A native of Korutla town in Telangana, Devuji is most wanted by the Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra governments.

Nine members of the protection team of Devuji were among 50 Maoists arrested in five districts on November 18, hours after an encounter in the forests of Alluri Sitharamaraju district in which top Maoist commander Madvi Hidma, his wife Raje and four

others were killed. A day after Hidma's killing, seven Maoists including explosives expert Metturi Joga Rao alias Tech Shankar and six others were killed in Alluri Sitharamaraju district.

Civil liberties groups have alleged that both the encounters and arrests were fake. They also claimed that Devuji is in police custody. Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) and the CPI-ML New Democracy alleged that police have taken Devuji into their custody in the operation. APCLC State general secretary Chiluka Chandrashekar demanded that the police produce Devuji and other Maoist leaders in the court immediately.

# Naxalism Hits Dead End After Op Kagar?

V Krishna Kumar | November 20

By V. Krishna Kumar: In what appears to be the final phase of Maoist activity in South India, the recent developments under "Operation Kagar" have signaled the nearing collapse of the Maoist movement. The surrender of senior leaders and the death of a top commander have dealt a decisive blow to the insurgent group that once posed a grave internal security challenge in the region.

Senior Maoist State Committee members Kunakati Venkatayya alias Y.V. Vikas, Mogilicherla Venkata Raju alias Erra Raju, and his wife Ganga alias Gangavva surrendered before Director General of Police Shivadher Reddy. The surrender follows a series of setbacks for the Maoists, including the death of the dreaded Chhattisgarh leader Hidma in an exchange of fire and the arrest of nearly 50 cadres in the past few weeks. Several top leaders in Telangana have also recently surrendered, reinforcing the view that Maoism



has now entered its final act.

Historically, Andhra Pradesh was among the worst-affected states during the height of Naxal and Maoist violence. From Duddilla Sripada Rao to Kidari Sarveswara Rao, many public representatives fell victim to the extremists who targeted them to preserve their waning influence. Security forces too suffered heavy casualties. But over the years, focused counter-insurgency efforts and social development initiatives gradually weakened the movement, leaving only fringe groups active in parts of the Andhra-Orissa Border (AOB) region.

Operation Kagar, security analysts say, has brought the curtain do-

wn on the decades-long struggle. The remaining Maoists appear to be either surrendering or fleeing their former forest hideouts. Even ideological conviction has eroded, and internal rifts have widened. With modern technology allowing security forces to track movements in real time, the traditional guerrilla tactics that once ensured Maoist survival have become obsolete. The government, with renewed vigor, has set a firm deadline to neutralize all remaining Maoist groups. The Union Home Ministry reportedly aims to complete this by March 2026. Security sources indicate that only a handful of active cadres are still operating, and even their top leadership—including the

elusive Devji—is said to be on the run, possibly taking refuge far from core forest zones. There are unconfirmed reports suggesting he might already be in police custody. Observers note that while some urban sympathizers continue to voice support under the guise of ideology, they have largely lost credibility. Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay recently alleged that such sympathizers enjoy luxurious lifestyles while inciting youth to violence. The death of Hidma, once a symbol of Maoist resistance, has shattered remaining morale within the outfit. Experts argue that although "Naxalites can be eliminated, Naxalism cannot"—the fundamental Maoist belief that power flows from the barrel of a gun now appears irrelevant in the modern democratic context. With the combined pressure from law enforcement and disillusionment among cadres, Andhra Pradesh might soon witness the official end of the Naxal era.



The meeting was attended by Board members including ML C Ruhulla, MLAs Mohammed Naseer, members Khaja, Akram, Ismail Baig, Afia, Mukarram Hussain, Bapari Zakir Ahmed, CEO Mohammed Ali and senior Waqf officials.

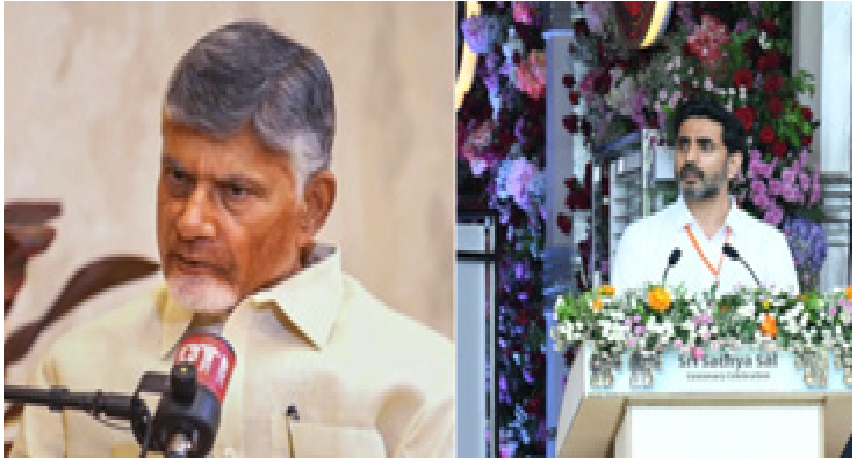


# CM Chandrababu, Nara Lokesh Attend Nitish Kumar’s Swearing-In Ceremony

-AP Chief Minister Extends Best Wishes to Bihar’s New Government

TPN Bureau | November 20  
PATNA/VIJAYAWADA: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, along with State Minister Nara Lokesh, attended the swearing-in ceremony of Nitish Kumar as the Chief Minister of Bihar on Thursday.  
During the event, Chandrababu Naidu met Union Ministers Amit Shah and Arjun Ram Meghwal, as well as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath,

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and several senior BJP and JD(U) leaders.  
The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister congratulated Nitish Kumar and his newly formed Cabinet. In a post on social media, he extended his best wishes to the NDA leadership in Bihar for a successful and people-centric governance term.  
Union Minister K Rammohan Naidu was also present at the ceremony.



# Paid Artists Cannot Mislead Courts: Minister Satya Kumar

TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: BJP national secretary and Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav has stated that YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will inevitably go to jail in the illegal assets cases filed against him. He criticized Jagan’s conduct, saying that even after six years, appearing before the court only under unavoidable circumstances and still engaging in displays of force reflects the moral downfall of his political approach.



In a statement issued on Thursday, the minister lashed out at Jagan for creating a big spectacle in Hyderabad as part of an attempt to convince the courts that he would face problems if he appeared before them. Satya Kumar alleged that a planned rally was organised with paid artists under the pretext of showing public support, causing severe inconvenience to Hyderabad residents. He noted that individuals appearing in court for legal proceedings usually conduct themselves with humility, but no such remorse was visible in Jagan Mohan Reddy. Satya Kumar further stated that Jagan, who allegedly amassed illegal assets worth thousands of crores by misusing his father’s position as Chief Minister, cannot escape court cases and roam free for long.

# YSRCP tears into Babu, false propaganda

TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: Tearing into Chandrababu and his propaganda machinery for trying to create false narratives, YSRCP said the overwhelming response to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in Hyderabad shows his growing popularity.  
Speaking to the media here on Thursday, former Minister Ambati Rambabu said the false propaganda against YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in the wake of his Hyderabad visit, following Court directives, has boomeranged with the milling

crowds that have come to see him.  
Chandrababu should realise that his graph is on the slide and people are waiting to bring Jagan back to office. The false notions and the hype created by Chandrababu and his propaganda machinery fell flat before the huge response YS Jagan received.  
It is only the welfare activities that will be remembered by people, while Chandrababu will be remembered for his neglect and cheating of all sections of society. We are bravely facing the false cases filed by the coalition government and will fight them out. The case against YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is also politically motivated and was filed by the vindictive Congress government.  
The popularity graph of Jagan is on the rise while there is a clear slide in the case of Chandrababu. The propaganda machinery has gone out of its senses and tried to attribute motives to the arrest of Maoists in Vijayawada, he said, warning that all such moves will fall flat and only boost Jagan’s popularity further.

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# Minister Dares YSRCP Leaders for Open Debate on Injustice to Shetty

TPN Bureau November 20  
Ramachandrapuram: Labour Minister Vasamshetty Subhash has challenged YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders to an open public debate on the injustices allegedly faced by the Shetty Balija community during their party’s rule. Speaking in Ramachandrapuram, the minister accused former minister Chelluboina Venu Gopal of shedding “crocodile tears” for the community after having compromised its dignity during his tenure in the previous government. Subhash alleged that Venu Gopal had “mortgaged the self-respect of the Shetty Balija community at the feet of YSRCP’s top leadership” while now trying to portray himself as their defender. Refuting the former minister’s claim that the government order

(G.O.) merging Shetty Balijas with the Gouda caste was issued during Chandrababu Naidu’s regime, the minister said the record clearly shows when and under which government the orders were released. Calling Venu Gopal “ignorant and opportunistic,” Subhash remarked that his statements remind one of the saying about “stringing beads backward,” implying contradictions and hypocrisy.  
He said Venu Gopal, who remained silent about the discrimination against the community during YSRCP’s term, suddenly developed affection for the community only after losing his ministerial post. “Having earned the reputation of being a betrayer of the Shetty Balijas, he is now trying to wash off that stigma by making baseless accusations against

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and me,” Subhash asserted.  
He further claimed that only after the coalition government came to power did the Shetty Balija community start getting due recognition and representation, which Venu Gopal could not tolerate. The minister criticized the former YSRCP minister for claiming he had benefited under Jagan Mohan Reddy’s leadership. “He should feel ashamed to say that. Jagan suppressed his political growth, while Chandrababu Naidu and Lokesh offered him an opportunity for advancement in the Telugu Desam Party,” Subhash remarked. Reaffirming his commitment to the Shetty Balija community, Subhash stated, “Whichever party I belong to, I will continue fighting for the self-respect of the Shetty



Balijas. I will never become a blind follower like Chelluboina Venu Gopal.” He invited the former minister to an open debate at any time to discuss the G.O.s issued regarding the community’s classification and welfare under different governments.  
Subhash alleged that the recent unity displayed by Shetty Balijas from both Telugu states through the Kartika Vana Samaradhana event had irked Venu Gopal, leading him to make false

statements out of envy and frustration. “Unable to tolerate the growing unity and strength of the community, he is resorting to baseless allegations,” the minister said. Concluding his statement, Subhash advised the former minister to publicly apologize to the Shetty Balija community and admit his mistakes. “If he sincerely regrets his past actions and seeks forgiveness, it would be good for him and the community,” the labour minister added.

# Work in Line With Government’s Vision to Drive Industrial Growth: Minister Kondapalli

TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Rural Poverty Eradication and NRI Empowerment, Kondapalli Srinivas directed officials to work in line with the State Government’s goals to accelerate industrial development and expand entrepreneurship across Andhra Pradesh. He held a comprehensive review meeting with senior officials of the Industries Department and General Managers from all 26 districts at the Secretariat on Thursday.  
Addressing the meeting, the Minister said that the government aims to groom one entrepreneur from every family, and it is the responsibility of the administrative machinery to take this slogan deep into the grassroots. He instructed district-level officials to organise regional meetings to raise awareness and motivate youth toward entrepreneurship.  
To strengthen field-level functioning, the Minister stressed the

need to link skill development and industrial facilitation efforts with the Ratan Tata Innovation Hub, enabling support to entrepreneurs from ideas to execution. He stressed that officers must have clear knowledge of technology, skill enhancement and financial incentives so that emerging entrepreneurs receive accurate guidance and timely support from the government.  
Srinivas stated that since the coalition government assumed office in 2024, significant steps have been taken to streamline all field-level systems and ensure adequate human resources and infrastructure for industrial growth. He instructed that special focus must be laid on training personnel and leveraging the services of the Ratan Tata Innovation Hub effectively.  
Highlighting the importance of administrative discipline, the Minister announced that all staff must remain present in the office at least one day every week. “Field visits are important, but

equal attention must be given to tasks that happen inside the office,” he said. He directed officials to ensure that at least one officer is available every day to guide aspiring entrepreneurs. He added that all officials must be available on Saturdays, except the second Saturday of the month.  
Calling for close monitoring of upcoming industries in industrial parks, the Minister said officials must pay special attention to investor facilitation. He stressed that officers should assist entrepreneurs with loan processing, clearances and other required permissions without delay. Srinivas urged all officers to stay updated on Central and State government schemes, as well as evolving industrial policies, to effectively support new investors.  
Industries Department Secretary Dr N Yuvaraj, Director Shubham Bansal, senior officials from various wings, and top officers from all 26 districts attended the meeting, with district officials joining virtually.

# Godavari-Nallamala Sagar Link Project Marks a New Dawn for Backward Regions: Lanka Dinakar

TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: Lanka Dinakar, Chairman of the Twenty-Point Programme (Viksit Bharat – Swarna Andhra), described the State Government’s decision to link Godavari river waters to the Nallamala Sagar (Veligonda Project) through the Bollapalli Reservoir as a “historic and transformative milestone” for drought-prone and fluoride-affected regions of Andhra Pradesh.  
He expressed gratitude to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for approving the project, which promises wide-ranging benefits, including drinking water, irrigation support and industrial water supply for backward areas across Prakasam, Nellore and Kadapa



districts. The project is expected to provide safe drinking water to 60 lakh people and irrigation to nearly 7 lakh acres, while supporting future industrial growth in regions like Donakonda and Kanigiri.  
Dinakar recalled that he had submitted a detailed representation to the Chief Minister on January 1, 2025, highlighting the dire conditions in fluoride-hit mandals such as Kanigiri, Markapuram, Donakonda and Udayagiri. The next day, he was invited to a high-level meeting by Irrigation

Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu, where he reiterated the urgent need for linking Godavari waters to Veligonda. A Union Government report released the same day identified Palnadu and Prakasam as among India’s most fluoride-affected districts.  
The Chief Minister’s announcement at Markapuram on March 8, 2025, confirming the Godavari-Veligonda linkage, marked a major breakthrough. A subsequent review on May 20, 2025, at Ongole revealed that out of 1,769 villages in



Prakasam, 1,009 were fluoride-affected, with Kanigiri alone accounting for 442 such villages. Officials stressed that a complete and permanent solution would be possible only with the Veligonda Project’s completion and river interlinking.  
Dinakar also shed light on the shortcomings of the previous government, alleging that former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated an incomplete tunnel of the Veligonda Project and misled the public. A fact-finding visit on March 11, 2025, reportedly ex-

posed incomplete works, thousands of families still awaiting compensation, and project requirements worth 3,000–4,000 crore.  
He stated that the current TDP-BJP-Janasena “Double Engine Sarkar” is committed to completing the project with sincerity, ensuring water security, and transforming backward areas into economic hubs. He said the Godavari-Nallamala Sagar link marks the beginning of a new chapter of inclusive regional development.

# Bharat Announces Massive Investment Push Ahead of CII Summit in Visakhapatnam

TPN Bureau | November 20  
HYDERABAD/VIJAYAWADA: YSRCP General Secretary and State Official Spokesperson Jupudi Prabhakar Rao on Thursday launched a strong counterattack against what he described as a “malicious misinformation campaign” by the TDP-led Alliance and sections of yellow media. Addressing reporters at the Somajiguda Press Club, Jupudi said the extraordinary public turnout during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy’s Hyderabad visit had clearly unsettled the

alliance, provoking them to manufacture false narratives out of frustration and insecurity.  
Jupudi clarified that YS Jagan’s appearance before the CBI Court was purely in compliance with judicial directions, which required him to attend following his return from London. As a former Chief Minister with Z-category security, every aspect of his travel—including flight schedules and movement details—must be officially disclosed as part of standard protocol. Instead of presenting these routine disclo-



sures responsibly, Jupudi alleged, the yellow media twisted facts and propagated fabricated stories about chartered flights and inflated travel costs, attempting to tarnish the image of a leader who enjoys widespread public affection.

Recounting YS Jagan’s political journey, Jupudi said that after Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy’s demise, when YS Jagan visited families of those who died mourning the late leader, both Congress and TDP colluded to file politically motivated cases against him. Despite facing 16 months in jail, Jagan remained resilient, and a powerful people’s movement eventually swept him to power in 2019.  
During his 2019–2024 tenure, YS Jagan introduced several reforms

aimed at improving lives of the poor; farmers, students, women and marginalized communities. Initiatives such as family doctor services, village health clinics, RBKs and doorstep governance brought unprecedented transformation, he said, adding that the public continues to recognize these achievements.  
Turning to the present, Jupudi criticized the alliance government for what he termed 18 months of total administrative failure. He accused the ruling coalition of abandoning

welfare, ignoring development, and attempting to privatize government hospitals and medical colleges due to sheer inefficiency. He further alleged that the government is misusing law enforcement to suppress YSRCP leaders and activists through cases, arrests, and intimidation. “Constitutional governance has collapsed, and Red Book Rule is running the state,” he remarked.  
Jupudi asserted that YS Jagan remains a charismatic and magnetic mass leader, and the massive crowds that

greeted him in Hyderabad reaffirm his enduring popularity. The alliance, he claimed, is rattled by intelligence reports suggesting a strong resurgence of public support for YS Jagan. Even leaders within the coalition privately acknowledge the shifting political winds, Jupudi added.  
He further said that the people now regret electing the alliance and are waiting for the next electoral opportunity to “reject deceitful politics and restore justice” by bringing YS Jagan back to power.



# AP Releases 2026 IAS Retirement Schedule

TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: The Government of Andhra Pradesh has released the official list of IAS officers who will retire in 2026 upon reaching the age of superannuation. The notification, issued through GO Rt No 2163 by the General Administration Department, was released in accordance with Rule 6 of the All India Services (DCRB) Rules, 1958.

According to the order, five senior IAS officers of the Andhra Pradesh cadre are scheduled to retire next year.  
Yerra Srilakshmi (1988 batch) will retire on June 30, 2026.  
G Sai Prasad (1991 batch) will superannuate on May 31, 2026.  
Ajay Jain (1991 batch) is slated to retire on July 31, 2026.  
Movva Tirumala Krishna Babu (1993 batch) will retire on



July 31, 2026.  
V Karuna (2004 batch) will also conclude her service on July 31, 2026.  
The notification formally records the upcoming vacancies for administrative planning and succession within the state's IAS cadre.

# ‘Let’s Work Together as Guardians of Public Trust’ -5th Audit Diwas Celebrations Begin



TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: The 5th Audit Diwas celebrations commenced on Thursday with grandeur at the multipurpose hall on the 8th floor of Stalin Building, led by Principal Accountant General (A&E) S Shanti Priya. Speaking on the occasion, she emphasized the need to strengthen human resources to pave the way for the future by adopting innovative audit methods powered by modern technology.  
She highlighted the importance of integrating advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning into governance systems. “As guardians of public trust, we must ensure that public resources are utilized efficiently and responsibly,” she said. Shanti Priya called for leadership in driving transformative societal change while upholding values of trust, innovation, sustainability and accountability.  
After lighting the ceremonial lamp, she elaborated on the vital role of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in

enhancing governance, transparency and accountability. The Indian Audit and Accounts Department, under the CAG, not only carries out key audit responsibilities but also efficiently manages accounts and entitlements related to state governments, she explained.  
She appreciated the efforts of officials and staff in safeguarding the independence, credibility and high standards of the audit ecosystem. Drawing inspiration from the ideals of the Constitution drafted by Dr BR Ambedkar, she urged everyone to move forward collectively with a sense of constitutional responsibility. She stressed the need for continuous skill enhancement, overcoming operational challenges and adopting innovative audit methodologies to improve efficiency.  
Shanti Priya encouraged employees to leverage advanced technologies to achieve the goals set by the CAG. She noted the importance of thorough auditing in ensuring transparent use of public funds and in informing citizens, legisla-

tures, and the executive about financial prudence. She added that every employee should feel proud of their role in upholding constitutional duties.  
Deputy Accountant General (AMG-3) Sushma said that the celebrations being held under the leadership of the CAG would make a significant contribution to strengthening the institutional framework. Describing their department as a historic institution, she announced events being organized as part of Audit Diwas: quiz competitions, R&I workshops, drawing contests, discussions on healthcare by AIIMS experts, sessions on self-economic growth and workshops on audit and accounts.  
Senior Deputy Accountant General (Audit) R Shyam, Deputy Accountant General (Admin) V Lalith Kumar, Senior DAG Kushal, NABARD GM Mahesh Singh, RBI DGM Ananthi, School of Architecture Director Ramesh Srikonada and several heads of central government departments attended the event.

# Leprosy Detection Survey Must Be Conducted Rigorously: DPH

TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: Director of Public Health (DPH) Dr K Padmavati stated that the ongoing Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC) across the state is being carried out systematically, with 66,52,563 people screened by Thursday. Of these, 5,085 individuals have been referred to medical officers for re-examination, she said.  
She informed that the household survey, which will continue until the 30th of this month, requires the compulsory participation of ASHA workers and male volunteers from 7 AM to 9 AM every day. Dr Padmavati appealed to the public to cooperate with ASHA workers and ANMs who visit homes for screening. Suspected cases identified during the survey will be referred to the nearest Primary Health Centres



(PHCs) for further medical evaluation. She further explained that once symptoms are detected in an individual, a Focal Leprosy Survey (FLC) will be conducted covering 300 surrounding households. Additionally, Single Dose Regimen (SDR) or Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) will be administered to at

least 30 to 40 people, including family members and immediate neighbours of the suspected patient. Dr Padmavati said that Multi-Drug Treatment (MDT) is being provided free of cost to all leprosy patients to ensure effective treatment and prevention. To intensify public awareness on leprosy, information leaf-

lets are being distributed to every household and banners are being displayed at major junctions.  
She added that on the 10th of every month, Disability Prevention and Medical Rehabilitation (DPMR) camps are conducted at Primary Health Centres and leprosy colonies. These camps offer

# Seven-Day Outreach to Promote Five Key Agricultural Principles

TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: The Andhra Pradesh government is preparing to launch a major statewide agricultural awareness initiative titled “Raitanna Meekosam” starting from November 24. Aimed at transforming farming into a profitable and sustainable activity, the programme will focus on the five core principles recently announced by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Water Security, Demand-Based Cropping, Agritech, Food Processing and Government Support.  
The Chief Minister held a large-scale teleconference on Thursday with nearly 10,000 participants, including officials from the Agriculture and allied departments, Marketing Department and staff of Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs). During the meeting, he issued clear directions to all departments on implementing awareness activities at the village level.  
As per the schedule announced, public representatives and officials will visit every

farmer's household from November 24 to 29. On December 3, workshops will be conducted at all Rythu Seva Kendras to educate farmers on modern farming practices and departmental support systems.  
Speaking during the teleconference, the Chief Minister said the government has been consistently prioritizing the welfare of farmers over the past 17 months. He highlighted that under Annadada Sukhibhava and PM-Kisan, 14,000 has already been credited in two installments to more than 46.5 lakh farmers, amounting to 6,310 crore.  
He stressed the importance of micro-irrigation, field-level learning initiatives like Polam Pilustondi, and a scientific approach to agriculture to ensure farmers earn better returns. “The five principles are not just for farmers, but also for their families. Along with crop farmers, dairy farmers, poultry farmers, sheep rearers, aquaculture farmers, horticulture and sericulture farm-

ers must also be reached,” he said.  
The CM directed RSK staff to lead awareness drives and prepare actionable plans for every centre. He also underscored the need to explain the benefits of natural farming, agritech applications and value addition through modern methods. He said natural farming enhances soil health and improves public health and noted that Andhra Pradesh is already promoting certification and traceability for such produce.  
Chandrababu Naidu stressed reducing cultivation costs, promoting products through Rythu Bazaars, and setting up food processing units to improve market access. He called for educating farmers on the dangers of excessive pesticide use, the advantages of organic cultivation, and the strong demand abroad for chemical-free produce. Highlighting the success of water management reforms, he said reservoirs across the state were filled through efficient strategies.

# Protecting Child Rights is Key to Building a Child-Friendly Society: DCP Saritha



TPN Bureau | November 20  
VIJAYAWADA: “Protecting child rights and creating a child-friendly society is essential for national development,” said NTR Police Commissionerate DCP KGV Saritha IPS, addressing the valedictory ceremony of World Children's Rights Week held at the Government High School, Durgapuram, Vijayawada.  
The event was organised by the Forum for

Child Rights in collaboration with the Police Department, Women Development & Child Welfare Department, School Education Department, Juvenile Welfare Department and several government and voluntary organisations as part of the World Children's Day observances from November 14 to 20.  
Speaking on the occasion, DCP Saritha appreciated the Forum for Child Rights for coordinating week-long programmes aimed at

promoting awareness of child rights. She stressed the importance of collective responsibility in ensuring child safety, eliminating child labour, preventing child marriages, addressing substance abuse, and combating sexual abuse against children.  
She stressed that complaint boxes must be made mandatory and accessible in all schools, enabling children to report grievances safely, which au-

thorities will address promptly. “Children and youth are powerful agents of change, capable of bringing new ideas and perspectives for a better world,” she added.  
The DCP also unveiled the World Children's Rights Week poster and administered a pledge for protecting child rights.  
Forum for Child Rights Director BS Koteswara Rao highlighted that child rights are human rights and urged

adults to provide all necessary support for children's growth. Co-ordinator Arava Ramesh noted that the UN observes World Children's Day globally to promote child welfare.  
Guests including K Prakash Kumar (Birds NGO), Women Police Station Inspector Vasavi, senior leader R Pitchaiah, mental health counselor Jonnalagadda Prasad, teachers, social activists and over 600 students participated.

# Online Cricket Betting Racket Busted in Mangalagiri; Police Seize Equipment, Hunt Key Accused

TPN Bureau | November 20  
Mangalagiri: A major online betting racket operating under the name “Book.com” has been busted by the Mangalagiri Rural Police, exposing a network allegedly involved in organizing large-scale cricket betting activities. Acting on credible information, the police team carried out a midnight raid two days ago at an apartment flat located behind the NRI Hospital in Mangalagiri. The operation

was conducted under the supervision of Mangalagiri Rural Circle Inspector (CI) A.V. Brahmam and led by Sub-Inspector (SI) Venkat.  
During the surprise raid, police officials seized five laptops, 32 mobile phones, 15 ATM cards, and 14 bank passbooks believed to have been used for betting transactions and money transfers linked to online gambling. One individual has been detained for questioning, while efforts are underway to



identify and apprehend other members of the racket who are still at large. Preliminary investigation suggests that the suspects were using online platforms and so-

cial media channels to lure participants into illegal betting activities during ongoing domestic and international cricket matches.  
The police suspect that

the key organizers of the racket hail from Machilipatnam and have been coordinating with associates across multiple districts using digital payment channels and

fake bank accounts. Officials revealed that the seized devices and documents contain crucial data that may expose the network's wider operations, including links to

similar online betting syndicates functioning across Andhra Pradesh. Cybercrime specialists have been roped in to assist with data recovery and to trace digital transactions used for placing and collecting bets. Mangalagiri Rural CI A.V. Brahmam stated that the department is determined to crack down on cyber-based gambling, which has been growing in recent years under various digital identities and websites. He added that public awareness

and prompt information sharing are key to preventing such crimes, urging citizens to stay alert and report suspicious online activities.  
Police have registered a case and intensified the search for the prime suspects believed to be operating from Machilipatnam and other coastal towns. The investigation aims to uncover the extent of financial transactions and identify the mastermind behind the illegal operation.



# Congress leaders demand for immediate compensation of Polavaram families

TPN Bureau | November 20

Rajamahendravaram: Andhra Pradesh Congress leaders have demanded that the state and central governments immediately compensate nearly 89,000 displaced families affected by the Polavaram project. Addressing a press conference at the local Press Club on Thursday, PCC Vice-President and Chairman of the Polavaram Project Construction and Rehabilitation Study Committee, Martin Luther, said the government must release the due rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) packages before proceeding further with the project.

Luther explained that as per the original design, the Polavaram project height was fixed at 45.72

meters, which would displace approximately 89,000 people, necessitating the disbursement of about Rs 55,000 crore as compensation.

However, the central government's decision to reduce the project height to 41.15 meters has decreased the official count of displaced families to 38,000 and reduced the compensation amount to Rs 30,000 crore. He alleged that this move aims to evade nearly Rs 25,000 crore in compensation and could deny rightful benefits to around 50,000 displaced residents. He further revealed that only 25.75 percent of eligible families have received their R&R packages so far, leaving nearly three-quarters of the project-affected people uncompensated.

Luther asserted that

the Congress Party would continue its agitation until every displaced individual receives full assistance. He also criticized the reduction in project height, stating that such an adjustment would turn the Polavaram dam into a mere lift-irrigation project rather than a truly multipurpose one. Luther announced that Andhra Pradesh PCC President Y.S. Sharmila would undertake a field visit to the Polavaram project in the first week of December to personally review the conditions and interact with the displaced families.

District Congress President and Study Committee member T.K. Visweswar Reddy also spoke, emphasizing that with the reduced project height, water cannot naturally reach districts like Vi-

sakhapatnam and Krishna without the use of heavy pumping systems.

He noted that while the state government claims the project will be completed by October 2026 or at least before the next Godavari Pushkaralu, it is already 80 percent complete. Reddy criticized Andhra Pradesh MPs for their silence on the height reduction issue and reiterated the demand for full compensation to all 89,000 displaced persons. City Congress President Balepalli Muralidhar and other senior leaders including Bezawada Rangarao, Devata Sudhakar, Kowvuri Srinivasarao, Kishore Jain, Nalla Veeraj, Battina Chandrarao, and Suribabu were also present.



## BJP District Chief Slams Congress For False Allegations Against Purandeswari

TPN Bureau | November 20

Rajamahendravaram: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) East Godavari district president Pikki Nagendra strongly condemned what he termed baseless and false allegations by local Congress leaders against Rajamahendravaram MP Daggubati Purandeswari. He warned that the party would not tolerate such false propaganda in the future. Speaking at a press conference held at the local Press Club on Thursday, Nagendra said that Purandeswari represents not only Rajamahendravaram but the entire state and nation.

As a Member of Parliament, she bears responsibilities of national and international significance, he emphasized. Nagendra lauded the MP's contributions at global forums such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the United Nations, where, he said, she effectively projected India's policies and enhanced the prestige of both Rajamahendravaram and the nation.

Referring to her recent participation in discussions related to "Operation Sindoor," he said she had successfully articulated India's policy before European countries.

Describing the comments of local Congress leaders as "silly and laughable," Nagendra alleged that a party that has lost its identity both nationally and in Andhra Pradesh was now resorting to cheap criticism to gain attention. "Even street-level Congress leaders are making irresponsible comments about our MP, which is utterly ridiculous," he charged.

Highlighting development works initiated under Purandeswari's tenure, the BJP leader stated that she has been coordinating effectively with local MLAs and Minister Kandula Durgesh for the progress of all seven assembly constituencies in the district. He announced that the Rajamahendravaram railway station is being modernized with an investment of Rs. 270 crore, including upgrades to platforms 4, 5, and

6, and efforts are underway for the development of the eastern terminal. Nagendra said preparations were on to conduct the forthcoming Godavari Pushkaralu on a grand scale, comparable to the Kumbh Mela.

He also mentioned ongoing efforts to strengthen the national highway network and push forward key connectivity projects like the Kovvur-Nallajerla and Devapalli-Khammam green corridors. According to Nagendra, Purandeswari has also taken the initiative to introduce direct flight services from Rajamahendravaram to Delhi, Mumbai, and Tirupati, besides contributing to the development of the local Government General Hospital and the Medical College.

Efforts are being made, he added, to attract agro-based industries to boost the district economy. He asserted that BJP leaders and representatives believe in completing projects before taking credit for them, a practice that distinguishes the party's work culture from others. Referring to a recent controversy, he criticized former MP Ma-

rgani Bharat's driver for allegedly using derogatory language against MLC Somu Veeraj and said a police complaint had already been filed. Dismissing allegations that MP Purandeswari is controlling EVM warehouses, Nagendra said such statements reveal a lack of awareness. "Even Congress leader Rahul Gandhi damaged his credibility by promoting false 'vote theft' narratives. The local Congress seems to be following the same path," he remarked. Nagendra concluded with a warning that BJP would no longer remain silent if false accusations or misinformation campaigns were directed at the party or its leaders. BJP leaders Bommu Dattu, Yenumula Rangababu, Veera Veeranjanyulu, district general secretary Sivarama Krishna Raju, S. Surya Kiran, Enapu Yesu, Kandikonda Ramesh, Tagaram Suresh, Bandi Prasad, Ravi Shankar, and Ratna Reddy were among those present at the meeting.



## Cooperative Societies' Strengthening a Key Goal of the State: Chief Whip GV Anjaneyulu

TPN Bureau | November 20

Vinukonda (Palnadu District): State Chief Whip and Vinukonda MLA G.V. Anjaneyulu reaffirmed that the coalition government is committed to strengthening cooperative societies across Andhra Pradesh through massive financial assistance under APCOB. Addressing the 72nd All India Cooperative Week celebrations held on Thursday at Shavalyapuram under the aegis of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Credit Society, he noted that both the State and Central governments are working jointly to empower the cooperative sector for farmers' welfare. Participating as chief guest along with DCCB Chairman Makkenna Mallikarjuna Rao, Anjaneyulu hoisted the society's flag and lauded the role of cooperative institutions in advancing the economic and social conditions of rural communities. He stated that the Narendra Modi-led Central Government has earmarked over 20 lakh crore for the development of cooperatives nationwide. In Andhra Pradesh, the State government is channeling large funds through APCOB to ensure that cooperative societies act as vital engines for rural progress.

Highlighting the historical importance of these institutions, he recalled that the cooperative bank-

ing system, initiated during the Nehru era as part of the Five-Year Plans, has now grown into a robust network supporting millions of farmers. Cooperative banks, he added, are extending loans not just for agriculture but also for housing, education, and women's groups under DWCR, which reflects their expanding social relevance. Anjaneyulu condemned the previous YSRCP government for weakening several farmer support systems, including interest-free and subsidized loans, crop insurance, and minimum support prices. As a result, he said, Andhra Pradesh had once ranked second in the nation for farmer suicides. The present coalition government, however, is reversing that decline by restoring cooperatives and supporting agriculture through effective policies. He urged farmers to register their lands under the e-Crop system to avail the benefits of crop insurance against calamities such as untimely rains and cyclones. Cooperative societies and cooperative banks, he noted, also play a crucial role in the supply of fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides, in addition to procuring produce like paddy, red gram, and chickpeas during market crises. The event was also attended by Society Chairman Gadupudi Viswanatham, Mandal.



## MLA Aravinda Babu Extends Financial Support to Family of Deceased TDP Worker

TPN Bureau | November 20

Narasaraopet, Palnadu District: In a compassionate gesture reflecting the Telugu Desam Party's commitment to the welfare of its grassroots workers, Narasaraopet MLA Dr. Chadalavada Aravinda Babu on Thursday presented a financial assistance cheque worth Rs. 5 lakh to the bereaved family of party activist Bapanaipalli Naga Surendra. The assistance was provided under the TDP's accidental insurance scheme for active party members.

The cheque was formally handed over at the Telugu Desam Party constituency office in Narasaraopet in the presence of local party leaders, activists, and supporters. Late Naga Surendra, a loyal worker from Kambhampalem village near Narasaraopet, passed away recently in an unfortunate accident, leaving his family in distress. Moved by their plight, the party leadership swiftly initiated the insurance benefit under its welfare policy designed to aid families of deceased workers.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Aravinda Babu extended his condolences and reaffirmed that the TDP always stands by its members and their families, acknowledging their dedication and contribution to

the party. "The Telugu Desam Party is not just a political organization; it is a family. Whenever our workers face hardships or tragedies, the party leadership will always ensure they are supported," he said.

He added that the welfare of party cadre remains a high priority for TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu, who has consistently emphasized the need to strengthen the welfare and insurance support systems for the party base. The MLA appreciated the efforts of grassroots workers who actively participate in strengthening the party at the local level and assured continued support for their well-being. Several key TDP leaders from the constituency, local organizers, and activists were present during the event.

They expressed their gratitude to the MLA and the party leadership for promptly extending assistance to the deceased worker's family. The gesture, they said, reinforces the TDP's commitment to collective responsibility and solidarity among its cadres. The program concluded with party members offering floral tributes to the late Naga Surendra and pledging to continue their grassroots work with renewed spirit in his memory.

## Former Minister Prattipati Launches Development Works in Pasumarru

TPN Bureau | November 20

Chilakaluripet (Palnadu District): Former minister and MLA Prattipati Pullarao laid foundation stones for several development works in Pasumarru village on Thursday and acknowledged the previous YSRCP government's gross neglect and misuse of power during its tenure. Speaking to the media after inaugurating various works along with alliance leaders, he said that the unauthorized municipal merger implemented by the past regime had turned out to be a curse for four villages, Ganapavaram, Pasumarru, Manukondavaripalem, and Dandamudi.

Pullarao alleged that the previous government and its then minister conducted municipal elections illegally for political gains, leaving the villages without



funds or status benefits. As a result, he said, these villages were deprived of both panchayat and municipal development assistance for nearly six and a half years. "The villages were abandoned for selfish interests, and the YSRCP rule proved disastrous for local people," he said. The MLA highlighted that Pasumarru suffered the most, with local farmers allegedly exploited and essential needs neglected.

He announced that 30 lakh had been sanctioned to resolve the village's long-pending drinking water problems, following the intervention of Panchayat Raj Commissioner Krishna Teja, who recognized the hardship faced by locals despite the village's unclear administrative status.

Pullarao also mentioned that, with the support of Education Minister Nara Lokesh, Rs. 20 lakh was sanctioned for the improvement of government schools in the village—Rs. 10 lakh each for the primary and Urdu primary schools. On the same occasion, he laid the foundation for gravel road works worth 6 lakh. Discussing irrigation issues, the MLA said he had spoken with Minister for Water Resources Nimmala Rama Naidu and that tenders would soon be invited for modernization of lift irrigation systems in the constituency.

Two lift schemes catering to over 6,000 acres and supplying both irrigation and drinking water would soon be restored at a fast pace, he added. Pullarao assured that under the current coalition government, all four affected villages would witness complete development and recovery from past setbacks.

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# Telangana's New Focus: Becoming a Top Eco-Tourism Spot



Telangana is aggressively pursuing its vision to become a major Eco-Tourism Hub, an effort spearheaded by the State Minister for Forests, Environment, and Endowments, Smt. Konda Surekha. Her detailed efforts are quickly turning this strategic goal into a reality. The Minister Surekha views eco-tourism not just as travel, but as a commitment to explore while actively protecting nature. Her strategy is clear: link environmental conservation with economic growth by creating jobs for local people and boosting environmental awareness among visitors. Working alongside Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Minister

Surekha integrates her duties, seeing her work for the Forest Department as deeply meaningful, which underscores her serious approach to green development. The core purpose of this plan is to protect Telangana's natural resources-its forests, water bodies, and wildlife. The benefits are substantial: it provides essential economic support to rural areas, helps preserve unique local cultures, promotes mental and physical well-being, and instills a deep sense of environmental responsibility. Crucially, the Minister Surekha has mandated that all revenue generated from these activities will be reinvested

directly into forest development and community welfare. Action is already underway. A committee has selected 12 priority locations for development, including well-known spots like Ananthagiri, Kanakagiri, Kawal, and Amrabad. These projects, managed by the Telangana Forest Development Corporation, feature activities such as trekking, safari rides, and kayaking, supported by approved plans for guest houses and resorts. Significant progress is evident: the final Eco-Tourism Policy was approved in March 2025, development is progressing at

sites like Kanakagiri, and key projects like the Nehru Zoological Park are showing increased income. Furthermore, this systemic approach is complemented by a powerful green focus: The state gives special policy priority to the Vana Mahotsavam (tree planting festival). Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Minister Surekha's personal involvement ensures this initiative moves beyond symbolism, showcasing a serious commitment to increasing Telangana's green cover. This effort gains immense strategic strength from Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's, also known as Nallamalla bidda, back-

ground. His deep, firsthand understanding of forest conservation, particularly his connection to the Nallamala forest region, provides crucial, knowledgeable insight for policy-making. This synergy between the CM's experience and the Minister's dedication is creating a potent environment, driving the state towards unprecedented green growth and cementing its position as a leading eco-tourism destination. People appreciate Minister Konda Surekha's vision, suggesting Telangana is heading toward a bright, green future.

-Sagar Vanparthi, Policy Analyst.

# India Faces Challenge of Equitable AI Education in Schools



India is at a critical juncture as it prepares to introduce AI education from Class 3 in 2026-27, but experts warn that a rush to replicate global models could deepen existing educational inequalities. While states like Punjab and Odisha are piloting innovative programs, the majority of India's schools remain ill-equipped for such technological leaps. Punjab's initiative emphasizes immediate, hands-on learning. Its three-year AI curriculum encourages coding exercises, hackathons, and science fairs where students apply machine learning to real-world problems. The state benefits from strong digital infrastructure, with over 95% of government schools equipped with functional computers. Odisha, in contrast, adopts a long-term, inclusive approach. Its AI Policy 2025 outlines a decade-long roadmap, combining free online courses, AI labs, and teacher training, while promoting lessons in Odia and tribal languages. Both models highlight state-level innovation but also underscore India's uneven preparedness. Nationally, only 57% of schools had computers and 54% had internet access in 2023-24, with figures in poorer states like Bihar and West Bengal dropping below 25%. A 2021 survey indicated less than 27% of Indian youth aged 6-14 had basic internet skills. China's nationwide AI curriculum sets a global benchmark with its top-down approach, substantial funding, and uniform educational sys-

tem. India, however, faces systemic constraints: fragmented infrastructure, low digital literacy, and wide socio-economic disparities. Experts caution that blindly following China's model risks widening the gap between urban, elite schools and resource-poor government institutions. Beyond infrastructure, regulatory gaps pose additional risks. India lacks comprehensive frameworks to address student data privacy, algorithmic bias, and ethical use of AI in classrooms. Without safeguards, technological integration could lead to surveillance, profiling, or discrimination, particularly affecting vulnerable students. Specialists recommend a phased, context-specific rollout emphasizing equity. Key priorities include ensuring nationwide access to electricity, internet, and devices; digitally literate and ethically trained teachers; and national standards for data protection and accountability. Pilot programs to train 10 million teachers under CBSE's framework are a step forward. India's challenge is not simply teaching AI, but teaching it justly. Initiatives like Punjab's and Odisha's demonstrate that innovation can coexist with inclusion, but scaling these models requires patience, investment, and careful planning. The country must bridge aspiration with capacity to ensure the AI revolution in education empowers all students, rather than leaving the most vulnerable further behind.

# Granta Explores India's Uneven Path of 'Vikas'



British literary magazine Granta's latest India issue delves deep into the complexities of progress—or vikas—in the country, presenting a collection of essays that examine how development intersects with culture, politics, and personal lives. The issue resists simple narratives, highlighting instead India's jagged, restless, and often contradictory evolution. Snigdha Poonam's essay, The Thin Red Corridor, introduces Vikas, a former Maoist commander from Jharkhand who moves from planting landmines to supervising road construction decades later. Vikas becomes both a man and a metaphor, reflecting how India's idea of progress is uneven, improvised, and shouldered largely by those who never asked to become symbols. Through his story, Poonam frames a central question: what does progress truly look like on the ground? Other contributors explore different facets of this ten-

sion. Raghu Karnad's piece, Under the Ruins, examines Prime Minister Narendra Modi's underwater dive off Dwarka, highlighting how spectacle, archaeology, and political imagination intermingle. Villagers in Uttar Pradesh's Barnawa, proudly guiding tourists through a tunnel linked to the Pandavas, exemplify how local communities invest in myth to assert their place in history, echoing Vikas's quiet resilience. Karan Mahajan's essay on Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing in Canada extends the conversation globally, tracing the intergenerational grief of Sikh families alongside the defensive posture of a state grappling with unresolved trauma. Meanwhile, Sarabjeet Garcha meditates on humankind, suggesting that progress can be found in acceptance and cultural continuity, and J Devika highlights the persistent, everyday care in Kerala's health system as another form of

slow, attentive development. Salman Rushdie, in conversation with Granta, reflects on India's literary and cultural landscape, emphasizing storytelling as a form of vikas. He contends that imaginative territory must be continually reclaimed, not through consensus but friction, suggesting that narrative itself can shape the contours of progress. Collectively, the essays depict an India where development is neither linear nor uniform. Progress can be a road, a political process, a ruin, or even a deeply personal experience. Vikas, both as a person and symbol, threads through the issue, reminding readers that the nation's growth is inseparable from the lives it transforms—and the histories it cannot forget. Granta's India issue does not provide a verdict but rather presents a mosaic of experiences, capturing the contradictions and aspirations of a country moving unevenly toward its future.

# Trump-Munir-Sharif Photo Signals Pakistan's Enduring Military Influence



A recent White House photograph featuring former US President Donald Trump flanked by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir has become a defining image for India's geopolitical watchers, offering a window into how Pakistan navigates power and survives politically. The photograph highlights the persistent dominance of Pakistan's military in shaping the country's political landscape. Munir, Pakistan's

army chief, sits prominently alongside the prime minister, underscoring the army's decisive role even in ostensibly civilian-led governments. This visual continuity reflects a return to what analysts call the "old normal" in US-Pakistan relations, where the military remains central while civilian leadership assumes a subordinate, symbolic role. Historically, Pakistan's civilian leaders have struggled to assert authority independently. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif famously posed the "partridge or quail" dilemma in the 1990s, questioning whether Pakistan would be governed by its military or an elected government. Today, the photograph illustrates how that tension persists: the military remains firmly in control, while elected leaders navigate within the constraints imposed by generals like Munir.

Experts note that Pakistan's political culture, shaped by repeated military interventions, instills public acceptance of army dominance. Citizens often elect leaders only to witness their removal or suppression, yet the cycle of popular unrest followed by military consolidation continues. Strategic crises, particularly with India, are frequently leveraged by the army to reinforce its authority and restore public credibility. Events like 26/11 and repeated skirmishes along the Line of Control exemplify this pattern. Munir's tenure marks a more explicit intertwining of religion and military ideology. A Hafiz of the Quran, Munir openly incorporates Islamic scripture into his speeches, projecting a vision of Pakistan that views India's internal contradictions as opportunities to assert influence. Analysts argue this approach combines religious legitimacy with strategic posturing, using proxy forces and alliances with other powers, notably China, to keep India off balance.

The photograph of Trump, Munir, and Sharif is more than ceremonial. It visually confirms that Pakistan's military, under leaders like Munir, remains the ultimate arbiter of policy, both domestically and internationally. For India, the image underscores the enduring challenge of engaging with a state where civilian authority is conditional and the military operates as a self-reinforcing institution with long-term strategic ambitions.



# Nitish Kumar Takes Oath As Bihar Chief Minister For Record 10th Time

TPN Correspondent | Varanasi

Nitish Kumar was sworn in as Chief Minister of Bihar for a record-extending tenth term on Thursday at the historic Gandhi Maidan, following a decisive victory in last week's Assembly election. His Janata Dal (United) won 85 of the state's 243 seats, contributing to a resounding victory for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, which secured 202 seats.

Critics who had questioned Kumar's longevity and fitness for office were silenced as he returned to power, demonstrating his enduring political acumen and ability to forge alliances effectively. With this term, Kumar is set to become India's longest-serving chief minister if he completes the full tenure, surpassing Sikkim's Pawan Chamling, who served 24 years.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several chief ministers from BJP-ruled states, and leaders from NDA allies. Modi congratulated the new government on X, saying, "My best wishes to all those who have taken oath as



ministers in the Bihar government. This is a wonderful team, with dedicated leaders who will take Bihar to new heights."

Alongside Kumar, nineteen MLAs, including senior BJP leaders Samrat Choudhary, Vijay Sinha, and Dilip Jaiswal, were

sworn in to form the core of the new cabinet. Experienced leaders like Choudhary and Sinha, who served as Kumar's deputies in the previous administration, are expected to reprise key roles. Other notable ministers include Pramod Kumar, Sanjay Kumar Singh,

Lakhendra Raushan, and two-time MLA Shreyasi Singh, the 34-year-old Commonwealth Games gold medalist.

Senior leaders Ram Kripal Yadav, formerly with RJD and JDU, and ex-Roadways Minister Nitin Nabin also took oath. The new government empha-

sizes a mix of experience and proven leadership, signaling continuity and stability for Bihar's administration.

The NDA's sweeping victory and Kumar's historic return underline both the political strength of the alliance and his enduring influence in the state.

# Sonia Gandhi Presents Indira Gandhi Peace Prize to Michelle Bachelet

TPN Correspondent | Patna

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday presented the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2024 to Michelle Bachelet, Chile's first woman President and former United Nations Human Rights Chief.

The award, instituted in 1985 in memory of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, recognises individuals and institutions making outstanding contributions to peace, social progress, and sustainable development. While presenting the award, Sonia Gandhi highlighted Bachelet's "exemplary commitment to human rights, democracy, and social justice globally."

Michelle Bachelet, who has held leadership roles both in Chile and at the United Nations, expressed her gratitude for the honour, calling it "a recognition of the ongoing struggle for equality, peace, and



sustainable development across the world." She emphasized the importance of international cooperation and dialogue in addressing challenges such

as inequality, climate change, and human rights violations.

The award ceremony coincided with the birth anniversary of Indira

Gandhi, and several Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, paid tribute to the former Prime Minister at a commemorative event.

Sonia Gandhi remarked that the Indira Gandhi Prize continues to uphold the vision of one of India's most remarkable leaders by encouraging efforts that foster peace and social progress globally.

Michelle Bachelet joins a distinguished list of laureates who have been recognised for their contributions to humanity, including leaders, social activists, and organisations dedicated to promoting harmony, democracy, and sustainable development. The award carries a citation, a medal, and a monetary component, underscoring the significance of these efforts in shaping a more just and peaceful world.

The presentation of the Indira Gandhi Prize 2024 to Michelle Bachelet underscores India's continued recognition of global leaders who champion human rights, equality, and sustainable development initiatives worldwide.

# SC Clarifies It Will Not Overrule TN Governor Case in Presidential Reference



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday clarified that its ongoing hearings in the Presidential Reference concerning the Tamil Nadu Governor case are not an appeal against the April 8 verdict, nor do they intend to overrule the two-judge Bench ruling.

The two-month-long proceedings before a five-

judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai were initiated after the President invoked the advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution. The reference seeks the Court's opinion on 14 questions, including whether the apex court can "impose" timelines or prescribe the manner in

which Governors and the President should act under Articles 200 and 201 when dealing with State Bills sent for assent or reserved for consideration.

Incidentally, the Presidential Reference was issued on May 13, barely a month after a Division Bench led by Justice J.B. Pardiwala set a three-month timeline for the

President and the Governors to clear State Bills. The case has drawn attention due to its implications on the balance of power between the state executive and the Centre, as well as the procedural obligations of Governors.

During the hearings, the SC Bench repeatedly emphasized that its role in the Presidential Reference is

advisory and not appellate. "This is a reference, not an appeal. We are not here to overrule the prior judgment but to provide clarity on the broader constitutional questions posed by the President," the Court stated.

Legal experts note that the Presidential Reference is significant in interpreting the discretionary powers of Governors and the President in legislative processes and could shape future interactions between state governments and the Centre. However, the apex court's repeated assurances make it clear that the April 8 verdict, which set guidelines on timelines for Governor and Presidential actions, remains intact.

The Supreme Court is expected to deliver its opinion on the Presidential Reference in the coming weeks, which will provide authoritative guidance on the constitutional provisions governing the legislative assent process in India.

# Why India's AQI Stops at 500 Despite Higher Pollution Readings



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

As Delhi grapples with hazardous air pollution, a growing question arises: why does India's official Air Quality Index (AQI) stop at 500, even when independent monitors report far higher levels?

On Wednesday morning, Swiss air-quality company IQAir recorded Delhi's AQI at a staggering 506, while India's Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reported a lower figure of 399, categorised as "very poor."

The discrepancy highlights differences in methodology rather than accuracy, experts say. The AQI is a public health tool designed to simplify air pollution data for citizens. It combines readings of eight

major pollutants—PM10, PM2.5, ozone, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, lead, and ammonia—to generate a single number indicating air quality. According to Mohan George, consultant at the Centre for Science and Environment, the AQI uses color-coded ranges to communicate risk levels to the public.

"An AQI between 401 and 500 falls under the 'severe' category, meaning the air is hazardous even for healthy people, and outdoor activity should be avoided," George explained. "It's designed for the common man to understand and act upon."

CPCB's AQI framework does not report beyond 500, even if pollut-

ant levels are technically higher. This is primarily because the system aims to trigger public health advisories rather than provide exact numerical extremes. Independent monitors like IQAir, however, provide actual calculated readings, which can exceed the official cap.

As Delhi's residents struggle with rising pollution, many are forced to take precautions like masks and air purifiers. Parents, in particular, express frustration at having to choose between their children's health and daily life. The capped AQI serves as a general warning, but experts stress that actual pollution can be far worse, reinforcing the urgency of mitigation measures.

# Taliban Trade Minister Visits Delhi to Boost Afghanistan-India Connectivity



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Afghan Industry and Commerce Minister Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday for a five-day official visit, accompanied by a large business delegation, amid ongoing clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The visit underscores Afghanistan's efforts to strengthen trade ties with India and reduce dependence on Pakistani ports for its imports and exports. Official

sources said Azizi's agenda includes enhancing sea connectivity and exploring alternative trade routes.

India, in turn, is keen on importing Afghan agricultural produce and minerals, signaling growing economic engagement despite geopolitical tensions in the region. The visit also reflects mutual interest in deepening bilateral trade and investment opportunities.

Azizi was welcomed warmly upon arrival,

highlighting the importance India places on Afghanistan as a trade partner. Discussions during the visit are expected to focus on logistics, port access, and expanding commercial cooperation.

Analysts view the trip as part of Afghanistan's broader strategy to diversify its trade channels and strengthen economic resilience, while India continues to support regional connectivity initiatives.



## Keir Starmer’s Leadership Under Threat Amid Political Turmoil



TPN Correspondent | Dhaka

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces mounting challenges as his government navigates turbulent political waters barely a year and a half after its landslide victory in July 2024. Despite Labour securing 411 of 650 parliamentary seats—a commanding 174-seat majority—Starmer’s position is increasingly precarious due to a combination of electoral paradoxes and policy missteps.

Labour’s overwhelming seat count belied the party’s low popular vote of just 33.7%, highlighting a fragmented political landscape. The Conservatives trailed with 23.7%, while the resurgent Reform Party and Liberal Democrats captured 14.3% and 12.2%, respectively. This fragmentation means that many Labour MPs occupy constituencies with narrow margins, putting their seats—and the government’s majority—at risk in future elections. Polling suggests Labour could be reduced to just over 100 seats if trends continue, creating significant pressure on Starmer’s leadership.

Compounding the challenge, the government has faced backlash over a series of controversial policy decisions and perceived U-turns. Starmer’s

administration proposed welfare cuts affecting Personal Income Payments (PiP), prompting over 120 Labour MPs to sign a “wrecking amendment” opposing the flagship welfare bill. Critics argue that increased defence spending is being prioritised at the expense of vulnerable citizens, further eroding public trust.

Starmer’s leadership team, including figures such as Rachel Reeves, who has positioned herself as a fiscally strict chancellor equivalent, has also faced criticism for failing to communicate a coherent vision for economic and social policy.

The combination of fragile constituency majorities, internal dissent, and unpopular policy choices has created a perfect storm that threatens Starmer’s premiership. Analysts warn that unless the Labour government regains public confidence and addresses internal fractures, the “change” promised during the 2024 election could be overshadowed by a leadership crisis and potential electoral losses.

Starmer’s next moves will be closely watched, as the stability of his government—and his own political future—hang in the balance.

## “Whatever You Need”: Russia Offers “5th Generation Fighter” Tech To India



TPN Correspondent | Australia

Ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to India next month, Moscow has extended a landmark defence proposal that could significantly influence the future of India’s aerial warfare capabilities. Russia has offered New Delhi unrestricted access to its fifth-generation Su-57 stealth fighter technology—an unprecedented move in India’s defence partnerships.

Sergey Chemezov, CEO of Russia’s state-owned defence conglomerate Rostec, confirmed that the proposal includes supplying Su-57 fighters manufactured in Russia initially, followed by a phased production shift to India. This opens the door for deep collaboration across engines, sensors, avionics, stealth materials and other critical fifth-generation aircraft technologies.

Reports further indicate that Russia may also offer India its single-engine Su-75 Checkmate stealth fighter. If accepted, India would gain access to cutting-edge aircraft technologies that Western nations have consistently declined to share. The deal could allow India to independently develop upgraded stealth aircraft, boosting its self-reliance and expanding its air-combat capabilities.

Speaking at the Dubai Air

Show 2025, Chemezov highlighted the long-standing trust between the two nations, noting Russia’s readiness to meet any Indian request. He emphasized that India’s demand for additional S-400 systems or Su-57 units would be fully supported, reaffirming Moscow’s commitment to defence cooperation.

A senior Rosoboronexport representative added that the offer includes transfer of technology, licence production, and integration of Indian weapons, covering next-generation capabilities such as AESA radar, AI systems, low-signature materials and advanced air weapons.

Defence analyst and retired IAF officer Vijaiender K. Thakur noted that a potential Su-75 production line in India would fit perfectly alongside the indigenous AMCA project, filling the fifth-generation gap with a cost-effective light/medium stealth fighter.

Putin’s December visit is expected to feature key defence agreements. Diplomatic groundwork is already underway, marked by recent high-level talks between Indian leaders and Russian officials, including Nikolai Patrushev. Both nations have expressed strong intent to deepen military and maritime cooperation ahead of the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit.

# Trump Says U.S. Needs Skilled Immigrants to Build Chips and Missiles

TPN Bureau | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump said he is prepared to face criticism from his conservative base as he pushes for the country to welcome more skilled immigrants, arguing that America cannot manufacture complex products like semiconductors and missiles without foreign expertise. Speaking at the US-Saudi Investment Forum in Washington on Wednesday, Trump stressed that advanced plants being built across the country will require highly skilled workers from abroad to help train the American workforce.

Trump said industries involved in producing telephones, computers, chips and missile systems demand specialised knowledge that the U.S. workforce has not yet developed at the scale required. “I may take a little heat... from the people that



love me,” he said, acknowledging opposition from right-wing supporters who back strict immigration limits. “But companies have to bring peo-

ple to get those plants opened... and teach our people how to make computer chips and how to make other things.” The President said

thousands of skilled workers may need to be brought in, and he would “welcome those people,” drawing applause from the audience, which included

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He added that critics of this approach are “unbelievable patriots” but argued that America

cannot succeed unless workers are trained by experienced specialists from abroad.

Trump cited recent immigration raids, including one at the Hyundai battery plant in Georgia, and noted that such actions could hinder industrial growth. “Batteries are very dangerous to make... they brought in people, spent a billion dollars, and were told to get out. I said, ‘Stop it. Don’t be stupid,’” he said, claiming foreign experts are now training American workers there.

Defending visa programmes such as H-1B and L1, Trump reiterated that the U.S. lacks certain specialised skills. “You can’t take people off an unemployment line and say we’re going to make missiles,” he said, urging support for immigration policies that bolster technological and manufacturing competitiveness.

## 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 firefight-

ers, dozens of fire engines, and two UH-1 helicopters dispatched by the Ground Self-Defence 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 midday. Residents described the ordeal as overwhelming, with one woman telling Kyo-do 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.

## Elon Musk’s ‘Thank You’ Note To Trump After “You Are So Lucky” Reminder



TPN Correspondent | UN

After months of public disagreements, former US President Don-

ald Trump and billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk appear to have mended fences.

The two reunited at a White House dinner attended by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman, signalling a renewed camaraderie between the influential figures. During his

business-centered address at the event, Trump referenced Musk three times, even jokingly questioning whether the Tesla chief had ever “properly” thanked him.

“You are so lucky I am with you, Elon,” Trump said while highlighting new tax incentives designed to boost domestic car manufacturing. Musk later responded with appreciation, writing on X that he would like to “thank President Trump for all he has done for America and the world,” sharing images from the US-Saudi Investment Forum in Washington, DC, where the two were photographed alongside the Saudi Crown Prince and NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang.

Musk’s presence at the event comes months after his stint as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a role he held from January until the end of May. His departure

from the post had been followed by a sharp public critique of Trump’s spending plans, particularly the administration’s massive “Big Beautiful Bill.”

Despite that tension, signs of reconciliation have grown increasingly visible. According to a report by The New York Times, Musk’s allies are organising a large reunion party in Austin to celebrate his time with the DOGE team. Dozens of former staffers are expected to attend the two-day gathering at a luxury hotel, a location Musk frequents. Though Musk is anticipated to join the event, the report notes his plans may still change.

The renewed warmth between Trump and Musk suggests their political and business interests may again be aligning as both continue to wield significant influence across technology, policy and global investment circles.



# Sensex Jumps Over 700 Points, Nifty Regains 26,000 Level in Early Trade

Mumbai: The Indian stock markets opened strong on Thursday, with the benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty posting significant gains in early trade. The Sensex surged over 700 points, while the Nifty reclaimed the psychologically important 26,000 mark, reflecting renewed investor optimism.

The upbeat sentiment was largely driven by positive developments around the U.S.-India trade negotiations, which have sparked hopes of a potential deal that could boost bilateral economic ties. This optimism encouraged fresh foreign fund inflows into the Indian markets, providing additional momentum.

Information Technology (IT) stocks led the rally, with robust buying interest propelling gains in the sector. Investors are optimistic about the growth prospects of IT companies amid improving global demand and increasing digital transformation



initiatives worldwide. Market analysts noted that foreign institutional investors (FIIs) played a crucial role in the early surge, channeling funds into Indian equities, which helped boost liquidity and confidence. The renewed foreign inflows

come at a time when global markets are cautiously watching geopolitical and economic developments. Broader indices also followed the positive trend, with mid-cap and small-cap stocks witnessing buying interest. Market partici-

pants remained hopeful that the trade deal and strong corporate earnings could sustain the upward momentum in the near term. The early session gains reflected a shift in market sentiment after recent volatility, with investors focusing

on favorable policy cues and potential easing of trade tensions. The move above the 26,000 level on the Nifty is seen as a key technical milestone that could pave the way for further upside. Overall, Thursday's early trade suggested a

bullish start for Indian equities, supported by strong foreign participation and sectoral buying, particularly in IT stocks. Investors will be closely watching developments on the trade front and upcoming economic data for further direction.

# Reliance Industries Recalibrates Russian Oil Imports to Follow India's Guidelines



Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), one of India's largest importers of crude oil from Russia, has announced that it will recalibrate its Russian oil imports to comply with the Government of India's latest guidelines. This move comes in the wake of fresh sanctions imposed by the United States and European

countries targeting Russian oil firms amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. A company official confirmed that Reliance is adjusting its procurement strategy to align with the directives issued by Indian authorities, ensuring compliance with evolving international and domestic regula-

tory frameworks. The recalibration aims to balance Reliance's operational requirements with India's broader geopolitical and economic considerations. The U.S. and European sanctions, which target Russia's major oil producers, including Rosneft and Lukoil, have led to increased scruti-

ny and pressure on companies globally to reduce their exposure to Russian oil. India, being one of the largest buyers of discounted Russian crude since the onset of the Ukraine conflict in 2022, has faced significant diplomatic and economic challenges due to these sanctions. Reliance Industries' deci-

sion to adjust its imports reflects the broader impact of these international sanctions on India's energy sector and highlights the government's efforts to navigate the complex geopolitical landscape while ensuring energy security. The recalibration also indicates India's intent to maintain a balanced approach in its trade relations amid the intensifying global focus on Russia's energy exports. Industry sources suggest that while India continues to rely on Russian oil due to cost advantages, companies like Reliance are taking measured steps to align with international expectations and avoid secondary sanctions risks. The recalibration is expected to be a phased process, with companies closely monitoring the evolving situation to adapt their import strategies accordingly. Reliance's move underscores the dynamic nature of the global oil market and the challenges faced by major importers in managing geopolitical risks while securing their energy needs.

# Rupee Strengthens by 13 Paise to 87.80 Against US Dollar in Early Trade



The Indian rupee appreciated by 13 paise to trade at 87.80 against the U.S. dollar in early trade on Thursday, October 23, 2025. Market participants attributed the gain to positive developments surrounding the U.S.-India trade deal, coupled with strong for-

oreign fund inflows and upbeat domestic equity markets. Forex traders highlighted that increased foreign investment inflows into Indian markets, alongside a broader risk-on sentiment globally, helped boost investor confidence and

supported the rupee's upward momentum. The ongoing optimism around trade relations between the U.S. and India has played a key role in improving market sentiment and strengthening the local currency. In addition to the

trade deal, domestic equities saw positive trends during the initial trade session, with benchmark indices like Sensex and Nifty rising sharply, further encouraging foreign portfolio investors to pour money into Indian assets. This inflow of foreign capital

is a critical factor that has underpinned the rupee's gains in recent sessions. The rupee's appreciation is also seen as part of a global risk-on environment, where investors are willing to take on more risk amid hopes for easing geopolitical

tensions and improved economic prospects. This positive risk appetite has benefited emerging market currencies, including the Indian rupee. Currency analysts note that while the rupee remains influenced by multiple external factors such as crude oil prices, U.S. dollar strength, and global economic conditions, the current positive trajectory reflects growing confidence in India's economic outlook and trade diplomacy. Overall, the early trade session's gain in the rupee marks a continuation of cautious optimism in the financial markets, supported by improving bilateral ties and steady foreign investments. Traders will continue to watch global cues and domestic developments closely to gauge the rupee's trajectory in the coming days.

# HUL Q2 Profit Rises 3.8% to ₹2,694 Crore



FMCG giant Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) reported a 3.8% rise in its consolidated net profit for the second quarter ending September 2025. The company's net profit climbed to ₹2,694 crore, up from ₹2,595 crore during the same quarter last year, according to a regulatory filing released on October 23. HUL's revenue for the quarter also saw growth, increasing by 2.1% to ₹16,034 crore compared to the year-ago period. The modest rise in revenue and profit reflects steady performance amid a competitive and inflationary market environment.

The company continues to focus on innovation and market expansion to drive sustainable growth. HUL's performance in Q2 also signals confidence in navigating macroeconomic challenges, maintaining market share, and tapping into evolving consumer trends. Industry experts view HUL's steady profit and revenue growth as a positive sign for the FMCG sector, indicating underlying demand strength despite economic uncertainties. With its robust portfolio and strategic initiatives, HUL remains well-positioned to capitalize on long-term growth opportunities in India's vast consumer market. The company is expected to maintain focus on cost efficiencies and digital transformation as it gears up for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The company's board approved an interim dividend of ₹19 per share for the fiscal year 2025-26, underscoring HUL's commitment to rewarding shareholders amid consistent earnings growth. HUL, one of India's leading fast-moving consumer goods companies, operates across diverse product categories including personal care, home care, and foods. Its steady quarterly results suggest resilience in the face of fluctuating raw material costs and changing consumer demand.

HUL's second-quarter results come at a time when FMCG companies are adapting to shifting consumer preferences and inflationary pressures, making these figures a closely watched indicator for the sector.

# Infosys Promoters to Skip ₹18,000 Crore Share Buyback



Infosys Ltd announced that its promoters and promoter group will not participate in the company's ₹18,000 crore share buyback program, the largest buyback the tech giant has undertaken to date. The company revealed this in a stock market filing on Wednesday, October 22, 2025. Infosys plans to buy back 10 crore shares at an average price of ₹1,800 per share, marking its fifth buyback in the last decade. This significant move reflects the company's strong cash position and confidence in its long-term prospects.

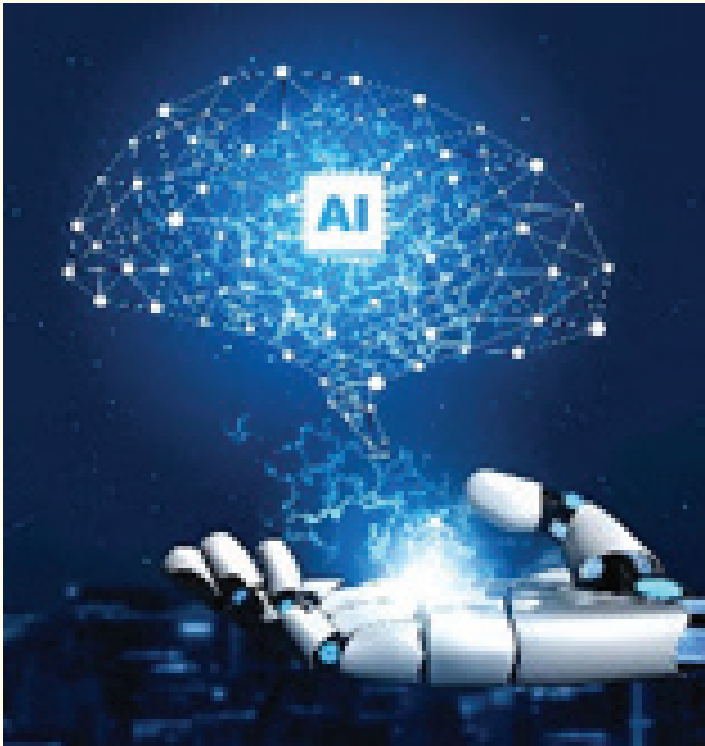
potentially increasing the percentage of shares bought back from the public and institutional investors. Share buybacks are a common way for companies to return capital to shareholders, often signaling confidence in the firm's future performance and improving key financial metrics like earnings per share (EPS). Infosys' buyback comes amid a phase of robust business performance and growth in the IT sector, with the company continuously expanding its global client base and digital services portfolio.

However, the promoters — including Sudha Gopalakrishnan, wife of co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan, who holds the largest promoter stake with 9,53,57,000 shares — have chosen not to participate in this buyback exercise. The company clarified that promoter-held shares were excluded when calculating the entitlement ratio for the buyback. This decision means that only non-promoter shareholders are eligible to tender their shares in the buyback, potentially increasing the percentage of shares bought back from the public and institutional investors. Share buybacks are a common way for companies to return capital to shareholders, often signaling confidence in the firm's future performance and improving key financial metrics like earnings per share (EPS). Infosys' buyback comes amid a phase of robust business performance and growth in the IT sector, with the company continuously expanding its global client base and digital services portfolio.

Market analysts view the buyback positively, suggesting it could provide support to Infosys' stock price while delivering direct returns to shareholders. Investors will closely watch the buyback process and its impact on the stock, as well as any further corporate actions from Infosys in the near term. The company's announcement underscores its commitment to prudent capital management while maintaining flexibility for future investments.



# Google Launches \$15-Billion AI Hub in Visakhapatnam



In a major boost to India's growing tech ecosystem, Google has announced the launch of a \$15-billion Artificial Intelligence (AI) hub in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The initiative aims to drive AI-led innovation, research, and economic growth across the country.

The announcement was made by Google CEO Sundar Pichai during a virtual address, where he emphasized the importance of inclusive AI development and India's role in shaping the future of technology. "India has always been a global talent hub. With this new AI centre in Visakhapatnam, we aim to empower local talent, collaborate with academic institutions, and create scalable AI solutions for real-world challenges," said Pichai.

The AI hub will focus on several key sectors, including healthcare, agriculture, education, and climate tech. Google plans to partner with Indian startups, researchers, and government bodies to build tools

that are socially impactful and accessible to diverse communities.

According to early reports, the facility will also house advanced research labs, training centers, and incubation programs for AI startups. Thousands of jobs are expected to be created, both directly and indirectly, through this long-term investment.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy welcomed the move, calling it a historic milestone for the state. "This will put Andhra Pradesh on the global AI map and provide our youth with access to world-class opportunities," he said.

This strategic investment reflects Google's larger vision of making AI helpful for everyone, especially in emerging markets like India. With Visakhapatnam now set to become a major AI innovation hub, the project is seen as a pivotal step in advancing India's digital transformation on a global stage.

# Own iPhone 17 Pro Max for ₹7,670/Month, Upgrade to iPhone 18 Next Year



Apple enthusiasts in India can now own the latest iPhone 17 Pro Max at just ₹7,670 per month, thanks to a new upgrade program introduced in partnership with select retailers and finance partners. The offer makes it easier for users to experience Apple's flagship device without bearing the full upfront cost.

The iPhone 17 Pro Max, launched in September 2025, features the powerful A19 Pro chipset, a stunning Super Retina XDR display, and a 48MP triple rear camera setup designed for pro-grade photography and video recording. With this EMI plan, customers can enjoy the premium smartphone with minimal initial payment.

What makes the deal even more attractive is the guaranteed upgrade option. Customers enrolled in the program will have the opportunity to upgrade to the upcoming iPhone 18 in 12 months by simply trading in their iPhone 17 Pro Max,

provided the device is in good working condition.

The financing scheme is available through major retailers, Apple Authorised Resellers, and select online platforms. The ₹7,670 monthly EMI typically spans 12 to 24 months depending on the plan chosen, with the upgrade window kicking in after the first year. No-cost EMI options and bundled device protection plans are also being offered.

This move is expected to boost Apple's market penetration in India, where high upfront costs often discourage users from buying flagship devices. By offering a subscription-style model, Apple is making its premium smartphones more accessible while also locking in customer loyalty with yearly upgrades.

For those seeking the best of both worlds, Apple offers a trade-in program. Customers can receive a credit towards their new iPhone 18 by trading in their old iPhone 17 Pro Max. The credit amount varies based on the condition of the old device and the chosen iPhone 18 model.

# From Ashes to Wine: Canary Islanders Turn Volcano Ruins into Liquid Gold

In the Canary Islands of Spain, where volcanic eruptions once scorched the earth and left vast stretches covered in black ash, locals have accomplished something extraordinary. What was once a symbol of destruction has now become the foundation of one of the world's most unique wine cultures.

On the islands of Lanzarote and Tenerife, grapevines grow in soil enriched by volcanic minerals, producing wines renowned for their distinct flavour and rarity. This transformation didn't happen overnight. Islanders have cultivated this harsh terrain for centuries, digging pits into the volcanic ash to plant grapevines, shielding them from strong Atlantic winds while allowing them to absorb the rich nutrients hidden beneath the surface.



This method of viticulture is as practical as it is poetic. The ash retains moisture and regulates temperature, creating ideal conditions for grape growing in an otherwise unforgiving climate. The result? Wines with unmatched minerality, complexity, and a story as deep as the lava fields themselves.

In 2024 alone, the Canary Islands produced around 3.5 million litres of wine, much of which was exported to Europe and the Americas. These wines, often described as earthy, vibrant, and full of character, are increasingly sought after by connoisseurs and collectors alike.

Locals take immense pride in this legacy—turning devastation into opportunity. What once buried their homes and farmlands now sustains their economy and preserves their culture.

The vineyards of the Canary Islands are a testament to human resilience and ingenuity. They remind the world that even in the wake of natural disasters, there is room for rebirth—sometimes, even in a bottle of volcanic wine.

# British Vlogger's Viral Video Slams Trash Crisis at Indian Tourist Spot

A British travel vlogger has sparked a heated conversation online after posting a candid video exposing the severe littering problem at a tourist hotspot in India. The video, shared on Instagram by content creator Alex, has gone viral with nearly 80,000 views and hundreds of comments, many supporting his frustration over the country's growing waste issue.

While travelling between Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal, Alex visited the scenic Lover's Viewpoint—a location known for its breathtaking river confluence and natural beauty. However, what greeted him was a familiar sight: heaps of trash scattered by careless tourists.

"It just frustrates the shit out of me," he said in the video. "I keep hearing people say, 'Come to the mountains in India, that's where the true beauty is.' But it's the same here—the same treatment of the land. Maybe there's no hope."



In the now-viral clip, Alex points out the contradiction between the natural beauty of the location and the irresponsible behavior of visitors. "There's always going to be trash where there are people. And I guarantee you, there's a bin super close. You are only trashing your own country," he added.

The video, captioned "Indian viewpoint spoiled by... you guessed it", has resonated with many viewers who praised Alex for calling out the issue so bluntly. "Thanks for raising awareness," commented one user. Others echoed his sentiments, calling for stricter enforcement and public responsibility.

As India continues to promote tourism both domestically and globally, Alex's video is a stark reminder that preserving the country's natural beauty must be a shared responsibility—not just for locals but for all who travel through it.

# Microsoft Unveils MAI-Image-1, Its First In-House AI Image Generator



Microsoft has introduced its first natively developed image generation model, MAI-Image-1, marking a significant milestone in its generative AI journey. The announcement was made via the company's official newsroom post on Monday.

MAI-Image-1 is part of Microsoft's MAI (Microsoft AI) initiative, which focuses on building purpose-built models for enhanced integration within its products. The model debuted on the public AI leaderboard LMArena, where it ranked 9th among

top-performing text-to-image models. Although still in pre-release testing, the model's performance has already attracted attention.

This release follows a string of in-house AI developments by Microsoft this year. In July, the company

unveiled MAI Diagnostic Orchestrator (MAI-DxO), designed for medical diagnosis, and in August, it launched MAI-Voice-1, a voice generation model praised for its natural and expressive speech output.

While Microsoft hasn't re-

leased technical specifications for MAI-Image-1, it emphasized the model's ability to generate high-quality photorealistic images—including lighting effects, landscapes, and dynamic visuals. The company claims the model is faster than many existing large-scale models, making it more efficient for everyday use.

Microsoft says its goal is not to compete in the race for general-purpose megamodels, but to build AI tailored for real-world applications. MAI-Image-1 is expected to be integrated soon into Microsoft's Copilot and Bing Image Creator, bringing advanced creative tools to a broader audience.

The model was trained using carefully selected datasets and underwent rigorous evaluations, focusing on real-world use cases. Microsoft also incorporated feedback from professionals in the creative industries to refine its performance.

As competition in generative AI intensifies, MAI-Image-1 represents Microsoft's growing independence in AI innovation, moving beyond partnerships and into proprietary development that aligns with its product ecosystem.



# England Aim to End Long Ashes Drought in Australia

As the 2025 Ashes series prepares to kick off on Friday, November 21, in Perth, anticipation is building around whether England can finally break their long-standing drought on Australian soil. The last time England won an Ashes Test series in Australia was during the 2010-11 tour, and since then, Australia has maintained a dominant unbeaten run at home.

Ahead of the first Test, captains Steve Smith and Ben Stokes posed with the Waterford Crystal Ashes Trophy in Perth, marking the beginning of what promises to be a fiercely contested series. The rivalry has been simmering since the dramatic and contentious 2023 Ashes in England, which was marred by heated exchanges, controversial dismissals and intense scrutiny of both teams' tactics.

England, led by Stokes, capped off the 2023 series with a victory at The Oval. However, the win was not enough to reclaim the urn, as Australia had already secured the advantage by win-



ning the first two Tests and drawing the fourth. That series left England with renewed belief in their aggressive "Bazball" approach but also exposed vulnerabilities they must address in Australian conditions.

The 2025 challenge looks even steeper. Australia entering the first two Tests with a squad that many have labelled ageing and somewhat under-strength, but their home record remains formidable. With experienced campaigners like Smith, Marcus Labuschagne and Pat Cummins still forming the backbone of the team, Australia aims to extend its dominance and silence concerns about its depth.

England, on the other hand, arrive with a clear mission: to end a 14-year drought and prove their attacking brand of cricket can succeed on the fastest, bounciest pitches in the world. With Stokes at the helm and a motivated squad behind him, the visitors believe this could finally be the year they rewrite history.

The stage is set in Perth as cricket's most storied rivalry resumes with high expectations and renewed fire.

# South Africa A Defeat India A by 73 Runs in Final Unofficial ODI



South Africa A ended their three-match unofficial ODI series on a high by defeating India A by 73 runs in the third and final game at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot on Wednesday. Despite India A having already sealed the series 2-1, the visitors delivered a dominant performance to avoid a whitewash.

Opting to bat first, South Africa A got off to a dream start as openers Lhuan-dre Pretorius and Rivaldo Moonsamy stitched together a massive 241-run opening partnership. Pretorius was the star performer, smashing a brilliant 123 off 98 deliveries with nine fours and six sixes, earning him the Player of the Match award. Moonsamy complemented him with a composed 107 off 130 balls, striking 13 boundaries and two sixes.

After the dismissal of the openers, India A bowlers managed to pull things back and restricted South Africa A to 325/6 in 50 overs. Khaleel Ahmed (2/82), Prasidh Krishna (2/52) and Harshit Rana (2/47) were among the wickets for the hosts.

Chasing a challenging target, India A faltered early as openers Ruturaj Gaikwad (25) and Abhishek Sharma (11) failed to provide stability at the top. Captain Tilak Varma (11) and Riyan Parag (17) also fell cheaply, leaving India A struggling at 82/4 within the first 17 overs.

A resilient fifth-wicket partnership between Ishan Kishan and Ayush Badoni revived hopes. Kishan scored a gritty 53 off 67 balls, while Badoni added an equally impressive 66 off 66 deliveries. Their 88-run stand kept India A in the hunt, but South Africa A struck back with crucial breakthroughs.

South Africa A's disciplined bowling attack proved decisive, bundling out India A for 252 in 49.1 overs. Ngqabayomzi Peter led the attack with figures of 4/48, while Tshepo Moreki (3/58), Bjorn Fortuin (2/48) and Delano Potgieter (1/23) contributed effectively to secure a convincing victory.

# Italy Storm Into Davis Cup Semi-Finals After Dominant Win Over Austria

Italy advanced to the semi-finals of the Davis Cup with a commanding performance against Austria, winning both singles matches on Wednesday in front of an energetic home crowd at the Super Tennis Arena in Bologna. Despite missing top stars Jannik Sinner and Lorenzo Musetti—both ranked inside the world's top 10—the defending champions showcased depth and determination to secure a 2-0 lead, rendering the doubles match unnecessary.

Matteo Berrettini, returning to form after recurring injury setbacks, delivered a strong opening win against Jurij Rodionov. The former Wimbledon finalist triumphed 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) in one hour and 35 minutes. Berrettini briefly trailed 2-5 in the second set, a period that also saw play halted for 30 minutes due to a lighting malfunction. However, the Italian star regained momentum, saving three set points and forcing a tie-break, which he won convincingly to put Italy ahead.

Flavio Cobolli followed Berrettini's lead with an



equally dominant display, defeating Austria's top-ranked player Filip Misolic 6-1, 6-3. Cobolli, ranked 22nd in the world, controlled the match from the outset with aggressive baseline play and sharp movement, ensuring Italy sealed the tie without needing the doubles encounter.

As a result, Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori were not required to take the court against Austria's Alexander Erler and Lucas Miedler.

Italy will now face Belgium in the semi-finals as they continue their campaign to defend the Davis Cup title. The remaining semi-final spots will be decided when Argentina meet Germany and Spain face the Czech Republic. Spain will be without world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz, who withdrew on Tuesday due to a hamstring injury, adding further intrigue to the upcoming clashes.

# Hakimi Creates History with African Footballer of the Year Win



Paris Saint-Germain star Achraf Hakimi etched his name into African football history after being crowned the African Footballer of the Year at the 2025 CAF Awards held in Rabat on Wednesday. The Moroccan full-back achieved a remarkable milestone, becoming the first defender in 52 years to win the prestigious honour, finishing ahead of Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and Nigerian striker Victor Osimhen in the final voting.

Hakimi enjoyed a sensational 2025 season with PSG, lifting four major titles — the UEFA Champions League, Ligue 1, Coupe de France and the UEFA Super Cup. His consistent brilliance on both ends of the pitch made him one of the standout players in world football. He is the first Moroccan to win the award since Mustapha Hadji claimed it in 1998, and the first defender to do so since Zaire's Bwanga Tshimen in 1973.

Speaking after receiving the award, an emotional Hakimi said it was a proud moment not just for him but for all aspiring African footballers. "This trophy is not just for me, but for all the strong men and women dreaming of becoming footballers in Africa," he said. He also expressed gratitude to those who supported him throughout his journey from childhood to the world stage.

Morocco shone brightly at the awards ceremony, securing multiple honours across categories. Saudi-based striker Ghizlane Chebbak was named Women's Footballer of the Year, while Al-Hilal goalkeeper Yassine Bounou clinched the Men's Goalkeeper of the Year award. Nigeria's Chiamaka Nnadozie continued her dominance by winning the Women's Goalkeeper of the Year honour for the third consecutive time, following her move to Brighton & Hove Albion.

Cape Verde coach Bubista was recognised as Coach of the Year for leading the nation to its first-ever FIFA World Cup qualification, marking a historic moment for the island country.

# Jaismine, Nikhat Advance to World Boxing Cup Finals



Greater Noida: India's boxing stars Jaismine Lamboria and Nikhat Zareen booked their spots in the finals of the World Boxing Cup 2025 with dominant performances in their respective semifinal bouts at the Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Indoor Stadium on Wednesday.

Jaismine, the reigning world champion in the 57kg category, faced Kazakhstan's Ulzhan Sarsenbek, a former Asian youth gold medalist. Despite starting her campaign later than most, Jaismine showcased her class and experience, defeating Sarsenbek convincingly with a 5-0 scoreline. Her precise combinations, swift footwork, and tactical control of the ring left little room for her opponent to mount a challenge.

In the 51kg category, former world champion Nikhat Zareen also advanced with a commanding 5-0 victory over Gulsevar Ganjeva, the 2022 World youth champion. Nikhat, known for her aggressive style and sharp counterpunching, dominated all rounds, demonstrating her readiness to reclaim the top spot in her weight division.

With these wins, India now has a strong presence in the title rounds, with a total of 15 Indian boxers still in contention for medals across different categories. Alongside Jaismine and Nikhat, six more Indian pugilists progressed to the finals on Wednesday, highlighting the country's growing strength in international women's boxing.

The World Boxing Cup Finals have attracted top talent from around the globe, but India's performance so far reflects a blend of skill, preparation, and determination. Both Jaismine and Nikhat will now focus on their final bouts, aiming to bring home gold for the host nation.

The championship promises exciting showdowns in the coming days, with Indian boxers looking to capitalize on home advantage and continue the country's impressive run in the tournament. Fans are eagerly anticipating the finals, where the nation's top fighters will battle for the coveted World Cup titles.



Upendra Says He Joined AKT for Fans' Love



The upcoming Ram Pothineni-Bhagyashri Borse starrer Andhra King Taluka continues to build strong momentum as its promotional campaign intensifies. Following an impressive trailer launch in Kurnool—highlighted by a grand drone show—the makers have now unveiled the Kannada version of the trailer. Kannada star Upendra, who plays a key role in the film, graced the event and shared his thoughts with the media.

Ram Pothineni, speaking at the launch, described Andhra King Taluka as a film driven entirely by emotion. He said the team poured their heart into crafting a story that blends various emotions into a heartfelt narrative. Ram also expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share the screen with Upendra, noting that he connected with him not just as a co-star but as a person. He praised Upendra's support and the warmth he brought to the set.

Upendra, in return, revealed that he accepted the film primarily out of love for his fans, who have always shown him immense affection. He applauded Ram Pothineni for his boundless energy and remarkable ability to carry intense emotional scenes. Sharing his experience after watching the film, Upendra said he was deeply moved by Ram's portrayal of Sagar's character and admitted he did not expect such a wholesome and heart-felt film. He even remarked that he became a fan of Ram after witnessing his performance.

Expressing confidence in the film's theatrical prospects, Upendra praised director Mahesh Babu P for crafting a warm, engaging screenplay rooted in a novel concept. He also thanked Mythri Movie Makers for backing a project with such emotional depth.

With high expectations and widespread buzz, Andhra King Taluka is all set for its grand release on November 27.

Keerthy Suresh Speaks Out Against AI-Morphed Images



Chennai: Popular actress Keerthy Suresh has raised her voice against the misuse of artificial intelligence, following the circulation of AI-morphed images of her on social media. The actress described the situation as both “hurting” and “irritating” during a press conference in Chennai on Wednesday.

“AI has become a huge issue. It has turned into both a boon and a bane,” Keerthy said. “Humans created technology, but we are gradually losing control over it. On social media, I am often shocked to see my photos in suggestive outfits and wonder if I ever wore them because they look that real.”

The actress recounted a recent incident where an image of her, taken during a movie puja, was altered using AI to appear vulgar from a different angle. “For a moment, I was confused and then realized I never posed like that. It is definitely irritating and deeply hurting,” she added.

Keerthy’s statement comes amid growing concerns over AI-powered deepfake content, which has increasingly targeted celebrities. Leading actors, including Katrina Kaif, Alia Bhatt, and Priyanka Chopra Jonas, have previously fallen victim to similar misuse, with morphed images and videos spreading rapidly online.

In a notable case in November 2023, a deepfake video of Rashmika Mandanna went viral. The actor called the incident “extremely scary,” and authorities later arrested the individual responsible in January 2024. Experts have warned that as AI tools become more sophisticated, the creation of hyper-realistic manipulated content poses serious risks to privacy, reputation, and mental health.

Keerthy’s candid remarks highlight the urgent need for stronger regulations and awareness around AI-generated content. Celebrities and ordinary users alike face the challenge of navigating a digital space where technology can distort reality with alarming ease, making legal and social safeguards increasingly critical.

Kodama Simham Re-Release Turns Special for Chiranjeevi

Megastar Chiranjeevi is reliving a wave of nostalgia as his iconic cowboy-action entertainer Kodama Simham gears up for its grand re-release on November 21. Originally released in 1990, the film holds a unique place in Telugu cinema for its adventurous Western setting, and fans are looking forward to experiencing it once again on the big screen.

Ahead of the re-release, the film has undergone a complete, high-quality restoration. The team has upgraded Kodama Simham to pristine 4K resolution, paired with enhanced 5.1 surround sound to offer an immersive theatrical experience. Each frame has been carefully cleaned, sharpened and color-graded to revive the film's original visual richness while ensuring it meets modern cinematic standards. The restored version promises sharper imagery, vibrant colors



and powerful audio, giving both long-time fans and new audiences a chance to enjoy the film like never before.

Chiranjeevi expressed heartfelt joy as he revisited memories associated with the film. He shared that Kodama Simham remains one of his personal favourites, not only because of its distinctive genre but also because it was a film his son Ram Charan loved during childhood. The Megastar fondly remembered working with the film's strong ensemble cast, which included Radha, Sonam, Kalki Satyanarayana and several other notable actors who contributed to the film's enduring charm.

He also recalled his on-screen collaboration with Mohan Babu, whose antagonist role added both intensity and entertainment to the narrative. According to Chiranjeevi, Mohan Babu's balanced portrayal brought a perfect mix of villainy and fun, elevating the film's dramatic impact.

With fans eagerly awaiting the release, Kodama Simham is set to gallop back into cinemas with renewed grandeur, promising a nostalgic celebration of the beloved Mega Cowboy era.

Homebound to Stream on Netflix from November 21



Homebound, India's official entry for the 98th Academy Awards in the Best International Feature Film category, is set to make its digital debut on Netflix tomorrow, November 21. Produced by Karan Johar and directed by acclaimed filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan, the film features Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa and Janhvi Kapoor in lead roles. Despite strong critical acclaim, the movie struggled to perform at the box office, leaving its theatrical run short-lived.

Netflix officially announced the film's streaming date earlier today, much to the excitement of cinephiles who have been waiting to catch the Oscar-trending drama. The OTT release is expected to give the film the visibility it missed during its theatrical outing, especially among global audiences.

Karan Johar, speaking about the film's underwhelming box-office performance, expressed disappointment and admitted that he might reconsider producing films like Homebound in the future. The filmmaker also faced criticism from the public, who felt the movie did not receive adequate marketing or a strategic release, which may have affected its commercial fate.

Homebound earned international recognition long before its theatrical release in India. The film premiered in the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival 2025, where it received a remarkable nine-minute standing ovation. It later went on to become the second runner-up for the International People's Choice Award. The momentum continued at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) 2025, where the film received yet another standing ovation for its powerful storytelling.

The narrative delves into caste and religious prejudices that shape the lives of many in India. Through the journey of two friends, the film explores their struggles, resilience and determination to rise above societal barriers. With its timely themes and critical acclaim, Homebound is poised to attract significant viewership on Netflix, potentially reaching a much wider audience worldwide.

Upasana Konidela Sparks Debate Over Egg Freezing Advice at IIT Hyderabad

Upasana Kamineni Konidela, entrepreneur and wife of actor Ram Charan, has sparked a nationwide debate after advising women students at IIT Hyderabad to “freeze eggs” to prioritize careers and plan motherhood on their terms.

Her remarks, shared in a video on X, quickly went viral, attracting criticism from doctors, influencers, and social media users. Critics argued that her advice ignored biological limits, the emotional stress of fertility treatments, and the high costs of procedures like IVF and egg freezing. Obstetrician Rajesh Parikh noted, “IVF costs lakhs per cycle. Egg freezing costs lakhs upfront plus annual storage charges. Most young women can't afford even one attempt.” Dr. Sunita Sayammagaru also highlighted that egg freezing does not guarantee a successful pregnancy.

In response, Upasana took to X, calling the backlash a “healthy debate” and clarifying her intentions. “I’m happy to have sparked a healthy debate & thank you for your respectful responses. Stay tuned as I voice my opinions on the pleasures/pressures of privilege,” she wrote, encouraging followers to review the factual information she shared.

Upasana also shared her personal experience, stating she married at 27, froze her eggs at 29, welcomed her first child at 36, and is now expecting twins at 39. “For me, marriage and career are not competing priorities—they are equally meaningful parts of a



fulfilled life. But I decide the timeline! That's not privilege, it's my right!” she added.

Her initial statement during the session—“The biggest insurance for women is to freeze their eggs... when you are financially independent”—drew mixed reactions. Some lauded it as empowering, while others criticized it as impractical for most women. Entrepreneurs like Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu encouraged earlier marriage and parenthood, citing social responsibility.

The debate underscores ongoing discussions around women's career choices, fertility, and the balance between privilege and practical realities in India's evolving workplace.