

# AP Posts Strong Growth in Q2 of 2025-26, Outperforms National Average: AP CM

AP's economic growth rate showing upward trend: CM

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Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh has recorded a robust economic upswing in the second quarter of the 2025-26 financial year, outperforming the national average across multiple indicators, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced on Saturday. Presenting a detailed PowerPoint report at the state secretariat, he said the State Gross Value Added (GVA) growth rate climbed to 11.30%, compared to 10.26% in the same quarter last year. Similarly, the GSDP surged to 11.28%, up from 10.17% in Q2 of 2024-25. In contrast, India's GDP growth stood at 8.7% for the same period.

The Chief Minister said the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh had successfully revived a "crippled economy" and placed the state on a trajectory of accelerated development. "Through strong reforms, efficient governance, and renewed investor confidence, AP



has attracted investments worth 20 lakh crore," he noted.

During the first half of 2025-26, Andhra Pradesh's combined GDP and GSDP growth rate touched 12.02%, far above the national average of 9.8% recorded in 2024-25. Highlighting historical comparisons, Naidu said AP achieved an average GSDP growth of 13.49% between 2014-19, the highest in the country. However, the rate fell to 10.32% during the 2019-24 period.

"Had the earlier mo-

mentum of 13.5% continued, the state would have gained an additional 76,195 crore in revenue," he remarked.

On per capita income, Andhra Pradesh recorded an average of 2,66,240, reflecting an 11.89% growth rate, compared to the national average of 8.7%. He added that doubling the current growth rate from 7.5% to 15% would increase GSDP and per capita income by nearly 4.7 times.

Sector-wise Performance Strong

The industry sector posted exceptional growth at 12.20%, surpassing the all-India rate of 8.5%. Mining and quarrying led the way with 18.43% growth, construction at 11.81%, manufacturing at 11.66%, and electricity at 11.96%. Power generation rose steeply by 19.12%, rising from 22,529 MUs to 26,837 MUs, driven by a 4.17% increase in consumption. Agriculture also showed impressive progress with a 11.43% growth rate, outperforming the national

average of 1.8%. Combined, the agriculture and allied sectors achieved 10.70% growth.

The fishing and aquaculture sector posted a remarkable 26.27% rise in Q2, while livestock and horticulture registered 4.18% and 4.35% respectively. The services sector continued to expand with 11.30% growth, above the national average of 10.6%. Real estate, professional services, and housing clocked 14.31% growth.

Cargo movement at ports increased by 14.9%, and air traffic rose by 9.42%, from 13.69 lakh passengers to 14.98 lakh. Naidu further stated that GVA growth accelerated from 9.85% in the first half of 2024-25 to 11.05% in the first half of 2025-26, while GSDP rose from 9.89% to 10.91%. At the same time, the all-India GDP growth rate slipped from 9.0% to 8.8%.

The state has set ambitious targets under the Swarna Andhra Vision 2047, including 65.64% growth in agriculture, 55.10% in industry, and 55.34% in services. The GSDP target for 2025-26 is 18.66 lakh crore, with a growth objective of 17.11%, he added.



## CM Naidu's response on Indigo Flight Crisis, Blames Airline's Roster Mismanagement – Not Government Policy

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ceed these limits. If they do, flight operations become unsafe," Naidu said.

The Chief Minister noted that Indigo, as a low-cost carrier, had not maintained adequate staffing levels for several years. With the implementation and stricter enforcement of FDTL norms, the airline was finally compelled to align with the regulations, resulting in 550 flight cancellations on December 4 and nearly 600 more on December 5.

"This disruption has severely inconvenienced passengers across the country. The responsibility lies entirely with Indigo's flawed roster planning. That is where their mistake occurred," Naidu asserted, adding that both Indigo and the Centre are taking corrective measures to restore normalcy at the earliest.

operations are likely to stabilize soon.

Since Indigo handles 60-65% of domestic air traffic, the Centre instructed the airline to issue full refunds to all affected passengers, most of which have already been processed. Condemning political attempts to exploit the situation, Chandrababu Naidu criticised those trying to "sensationalise a national crisis for political gain." "They are throwing mud at us to hide their own failures.

This issue falls entirely under the jurisdiction of the Central Government. As a Chief Minister, I do not interfere in the functioning of Central Ministers, that is the Prime Minister's prerogative," he said adding that both Indigo and the Centre are taking corrective measures to restore normalcy at the earliest.

## JP Ventures Challenges NGT Fine in Supreme Court Over Sand Scam Case



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New Delhi: A significant development unfolded in the Supreme Court on Monday in connection with the alleged sand scam that took place during the tenure of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. JP Ventures, a company accused in the case, filed an interlocutory application (IA) before the apex court challenging the fine imposed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The NGT had slapped a penalty of 18 crore on JP Ventures for what it described as illegal sand mining activities in the Aranayar river basin area of Chittoor district. The operations reportedly took place across 18 sand reaches classified under the B-2 category without proper environmental compliance. However, JP Ventures has now con-

tended that it is not liable to pay the penalty as it operated under the permissions and environmental clearances granted by the Andhra Pradesh government. In its plea, JP Ventures argued before the Supreme Court that the environmental clearances for sand excavation had been obtained by the state government, not by the company directly.

Therefore, the firm maintained that it merely carried out the excavation activities authorized by government departments and should not be held financially responsible for the penalty. This argument marks a new twist in the ongoing legal battle, as the company had not raised this specific contention in earlier proceedings before the NGT or the High Court.

The Supreme Court, taking note of JP Ventures' fresh submission, has directed the Andhra Pradesh government to respond to the company's contention. The bench observed that the issue of responsibility for environmental compliance needed careful reconsideration, given the claim that state authorities themselves oversaw the issuance of excavation permits.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had directed JP Ventures to deposit the 18 crore penalty amount with the court as per the NGT's original order. The company's latest IA seeks a modification of that directive, arguing that the burden of payment should rest with the state government instead.

Following the brief hearing, the Supreme Court adjourned the matter to next Monday, allowing the state government time to file its counter-affidavit. The case continues to attract attention as a key test of accountability in Andhra Pradesh's contentious sand mining operations.

## Justice Surya Kant Sparks a Storm in the Supreme Court



TPN Bureau | December 8

New Delhi: In a move that has electrified India's legal fraternity, Supreme Court Justice Surya Kant has emerged as a fierce reformer, challenging long-standing traditions, elite privileges, and procedural complacency within the nation's highest court. His recent actions and courtroom remarks have sent shockwaves through the corridors of justice, breaking through what many called the judiciary's veil of complacency.

Justice Kant's assertive approach has unsettled several senior lawyers, exposing what he views as the entrenched "VIP culture" of preferential hearings, backdoor lobbying, and

courtroom theatrics. His interventions have not only questioned the ethics of instant hearings but have also redefined transparency and equality before the law.

Taking on the Legal Titans

In a fiery courtroom exchange that has quickly become the talk of legal circles, Justice Kant reportedly confronted veteran lawyer Kapil Sibal with a blunt query: "Do you want illegal immigrants to decide the future of this country?" The directness of the question silenced the seasoned advocate and effectively dismantled his argument. Observers say the moment symbolized a new era of judicial candor led by Justice Kant, one that refuses to compromise national principles or procedural integrity.

Reforms to the Judicial System

Justice Kant's latest policy directions mark a decisive break from traditional practices. His stance on the collegium system, the mechanism through which judges are appointed, is seen as revolutionary.

For the first time in years, a sitting judge has openly entertained arguments favoring the revival of the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), which would bring greater executive and parliamentary participation into the appointment process.

He has also acted swiftly to end the "fast-track for the powerful" culture. Senior lawyers such as Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Prashant Bhushan, and Kapil Sibal, accustomed to instant listings for their client

s, can now no longer jump the queue. The rule is clear: no privileged hearings, no backdoor entries. All cases will now be automatically listed within two working days, ensuring every litigant, influential or ordinary, receives equal access to justice.

Ending Midnight Justice

Perhaps the most remarkable of Justice Kant's directives is the ban on midnight hearings, once seen during high-profile cases such as Yakub Memon's and Salman Khan's. Under the new system, even emergency matters like anticipatory bail, death penalties, habeas corpus petitions, and demolition orders must be raised between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. only. The rule reinstates institutional discipline and removes the perception

that influential individuals can summon the court at will.

A Culture of Accountability

Justice Kant has also targeted courtroom lethargy and the endless adjournment culture. Government counsels are now required to receive advance copies of all bail petitions, and adjournments through vague letters will no longer be accepted.

These steps aim to unclog backlog and restore momentum to delayed cases.

Through these sweeping reforms, Justice Surya Kant is not merely rewriting rules but redefining the moral authority of the Supreme Court itself, injecting a fresh sense of accountability, equality, and timeliness into the heart of Indian justice.

## Three Dead Due to Scrub Typhus in Guntur; Health Officials on High Alert

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Amaravati: Health authorities in the Guntur region have gone on high alert after three deaths were reported at Guntur Government General Hospital (GGH) due to scrub typhus, a seasonal vector-borne infection that has been spreading rapidly across parts of Andhra Pradesh. The latest victims are identified as Lourdhammal (59) from Komerapudi village in Sattenapalli mandal of Palnadu district and D. Nagendramba (73) from Degavaripalem in Bapatla district.

According to hospital officials, the two women had been undergoing treatment for scrub typhus for several days before succumbing to the illness on Sunday. Lourdhammal had been admitted to GGH on November 28 for treatment and was also suffering



from kidney-related complications.

Nagendramba was admitted with persistent high fever and other health issues that later tested positive for scrub typhus. Both patients failed to respond to treatment despite medical intervention. The deaths come just a day after a similar fatality was reported at the same hospital. On Saturday night, Dhanamma (64) from Yerragondapalem in Prakasam district also passed away due to scrub typhus complications.

With these incidents,

the total death toll from scrub typhus at GGH has risen to three in less than a week. 50 Cases Detected Across United Guntur Region

Health department sources revealed that around 50 confirmed cases of scrub typhus have been recorded so far in the combined Guntur dis-

tricts, which include areas of present-day Guntur, Palnadu, and Bapatla. The surge in infections has prompted the district administration and health officials to take swift containment measures to prevent further spread.

Authorities have set up an exclusive ward at Guntur GGH to treat scrub typhus patients. Currently, 14 people are receiving treatment in the special isolation ward under continuous medical supervision. Health workers have been dispatched to affected villages to identify potential cases and educate the public about preventive measures.

Government RAMPS UP PREVENTIVE MEASURES

District Medical and Health Officers (DMHOs) have mobilized Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) at the mandal level to conduct field inspections, spraying of insecticides, and house-to-house fever surveillance. The officials are also instructing health workers to monitor symptoms such as high fever, rash, and body pain among villagers, as these could indicate early stages of scrub typhus.

Public health experts warn that scrub typhus, caused by the Orientia tsutsugamushi bacterium and transmitted through the bite of infected chigger mites, typically spikes during the post-monsoon months between July and December. Poor sanitation, overgrown vegetation, and exposure to farmland or scrub areas often increase the risk of infection. Medical officers have urged people to seek immediate medical help if they develop prolonged fever or unusual fatigue.

## Water Resources Minister Dr RamaNaidu Fires Fresh Salvoes at Jagan



TPN Bureau | December 8

PALA KOLLU: Andhra Pradesh Water Resources Minister Dr Nimmala RamaNaidu launched a sharp attack on YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, alleging that he

“ran a mafia regime in the sacred Tirumala.” Speaking to the media in Palakollu, West Godavari district, the Minister said Jagan’s remarks describing the recent Parakamani theft as a “small incident” were an insult to the faith of millions of devotees.

Dr RamaNaidu questioned how Jagan could dismiss a theft of 75,000 in the Parakamani chamber as minor

“Is God’s hundi money small? Calling it a petty theft is nothing but a thief (Jagan) supporting another thief,” he said. He added that defending temple hundi theft was shameful and unbecoming of a public leader.

Referring to multiple criminal cases, the Minister said, “When someone who is A1 in 16 charge sheets moves freely in society, perhaps even a 75,000 theft appears small to him.” He alleged that Jagan fears neither people nor God and that his rule was a clear example of what happens when power is placed in the hands of “a wrong person.”

The Minister claimed that the YSRCP’s entire political culture is based on lies and false propaganda. He alleged that Jagan, who came to power with the slogan of “one chance,” pushed the state back by 20 to 30 years and financially devastated Andhra Pradesh.

## CM Naidu Calls for Generous Public Support on Armed Forces Flag Day



TPN Bureau | December 8

Vijayawada: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu called on the people of Andhra Pradesh to express

their gratitude and solidarity with the nation’s soldiers by contributing generously to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund. Paying heartfelt tributes to the soldiers, sailors, and air personnel of the Indian Armed Forces, he hailed their devotion, courage, and unmatched sacrifices that safeguard the sovereignty and integrity of the nation.

Marking the occasion, observed annually on December 7, Mr. Naidu said Armed Forces Flag Day serves as a solemn reminder of the bravery and resilience of those who protect India’s borders and uphold its freedom.

“Our Armed Forces stand as a beacon of strength and resilience, guarding our frontiers in the most challenging conditions.

“Our government stands firmly with our heroes in uniform and their families who have borne immense hardships for the nation’s safety,” he said. Mr. Naidu appealed to the people of Andhra Pradesh to participate enthusiastically in the Armed Forces Flag Day fund initiative, which supports welfare activities for war widows, disabled soldiers, and families of martyrs. He said con-

tributions, no matter how small, collectively make a significant difference in improving the lives of those who have served the nation with honor.

“It is because of their steadfast resolve that we live in peace and security,” he said, urging the public to acknowledge their contribution not only in words but through action. Reiterating the state government’s commitment to the welfare of ex-service men, veterans, and their families, Mr. Naidu said Andhra Pradesh places great importance on their dignity and well-being. He reaffirmed that the government will continue implementing programs that support the education of their children, healthcare needs, and employment opportunities for retired personnel.

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## Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu to Attend World Economic Forum in Davos; Investments, Industrial Talks on Agenda

TPN Bureau | December 8

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has finalized his schedule for the upcoming high-profile Davos visit. He will participate in the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2026, to be held from January 19 to 23 in Davos, Switzerland.

According to official sources, the Chief Minister’s itinerary was confirmed on Monday, with key members of his cabinet Minister for Information Technology and Industries Nara Lokesh and Minister for Tourism T.G. Bharat set to accompany him. This visit marks an important step in the state’s renewed pursuit of global investment and economic partnerships. Chief Minister Naidu, known for his vision of transforming Andhra Pradesh into a technology and investment-driven economy, is expected to engage in a series of strategic meet-



nings with global business leaders, policymakers, and industrial representatives during the five-day forum.

Naidu’s delegation aims to promote Andhra Pradesh as a preferred investment destination, focusing on sectors such as renewable energy, information technology, manufacturing, and infrastructure development.

Discussions will also emphasize the state’s long-term development plans, including the construction of Amaravati as a state-of-the-art capital, improvement of industrial corridors, and fostering technology-driven governance.

Sources indicate that Chief Minister Naidu will hold one-on-one meetings with several top industrialists to explore collaboration opportunities. Special meetings are also being planned to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) into Andhra Pradesh, particularly in green energy and high-

tech industries. This comes at a time when the government is striving to rebuild investor confidence and accelerate economic growth after years of policy uncertainty.

Minister Nara Lokesh’s participation adds further significance to the trip. Currently visiting Dallas, USA, Lokesh is holding preliminary meetings with potential

investors to lay the groundwork for the Davos discussions.

Both he and the Chief Minister are expected to emphasize the government’s commitment to transparent governance, infrastructure readiness, and long-term policy stability. Senior officials stated that detailed meeting schedules and discussion points will be finalized in the coming weeks.

## Minister Satya Kumar’s Philanthropy on Display: Free Bicycles, Skill Training, and Major Welfare Initiatives in Dharmavaram

TPN Bureau | December 8

Dharmavaram: State Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav continues to demonstrate his commitment to public welfare, not only as an elected representative but also through the service organization he has personally led for 15 years Samkskruthi Seva Samithi, named after his daughter. The organization has significantly expanded its activities across the Dharmavaram Assembly constituency, focusing on education, youth empowerment and essential amenities.

As part of these efforts, around 2,000 Class 10 students studying in government schools across the constituency will receive free bicycles. The distribution programme will be held on Thursday in Dharmavaram, where Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will personally hand over the bicycles. The initiative, costing 98 lakh, has been funded entirely by



Samkskruthi Seva Samithi.

Additionally, to support students appearing for Class 10 public examinations, the Minister recently facilitated the payment of 2,60,875 towards exam fee reimbursement for 2,087 students from 41 government schools. The organization has also constructed toilets in six government schools at a cost of 35 lakh.

For 18 months, Minister Satya Kumar has intensified the organization’s initiatives in Dharmavaram, laying special emphasis on improving education and healthcare. He has been instrumental in upgrad-

Skill Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh provided jobs to another 2,066 youth. Training programmes are also underway to help candidates secure banking sector jobs, with Nandyal as the training hub.

The Samithi has installed 50 LPH RO plants in schools and hostels. In Dharmavaram, 2,500 LPH and 1,000 LPH RO plants were set up in BC colonies at a cost of 20 lakh, along with five water ATMs costing 15 lakh.

Minister Satya Kumar is also pursuing the establishment of an Ayurveda Medical College, facilities at government junior colleges, and other premier educational institutions, while ensuring necessary staffing and regular medical camps across the region.

Doctors urged the public to remain alert if they notice a black, crusted spot (eschar) on the skin following an insect bite, as this is a clas-

sic symptom of scrub typhus.

Guntur GGH Superintendent Dr Ramana Yasaswi said the hospital received 26 cases in the past 38 days, with three patients currently in the ICU. Many severe cases involved individuals with pre-existing neurological or chronic illnesses who arrived late without receiving timely treatment. Patients without underlying conditions typically recover within four to five days with proper medication, he added.

Public Health Director Dr Padmavati and senior officials confirmed that ELISA tests can detect scrub typhus within 24 hours, and that treatment using doxycycline and azithromycin has been effective.

Infectious disease expert Dr Kalyana Chakravarthy stressed that deaths can only be conclusively linked to scrub typhus after genome sequencing, reiterating that current information does not confirm the nine deaths were caused by the disease.

## CM Chandrababu Naidu Reviews “Zero Poverty – P4” Scheme, Calls for Timely Implementation

TPN Bureau | December 8

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu conducted a high-level review meeting on the government's flagship poverty eradication initiative, Zero Poverty – P4 (People, Public, Private, Partnership for Poverty Eradication). The meeting focused on assessing the progress of the scheme, identifying pressing social needs among low-income families, and formulating action plans to ensure effective execution across all districts.

The review meeting, held at the Chief Minister's Office in Amaravati, was attended by Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, senior officials from the Planning Department, and key representatives from the state's economic and social welfare units.

The discussions centered on the outcomes of a recent statewide survey that mapped the eco-



nomic conditions of families below the poverty line and documented their basic requirements. Chief Minister Naidu emphasized that the Zero Poverty – P4 initiative aims to completely eliminate extreme poverty in Andhra Pradesh within a defined timeframe through comprehensive, data-driven strategies.

He said that poverty eradication must not be treated as a welfare measure alone, but as an integrated development mission that uplifts every household through sustainable income opportunities, improved access to basic services, and community participation. The government's mission is to ensure that every poor family becomes self-reliant. Each initiative un-

der the P4 framework must translate into measurable progress for the beneficiaries," the Chief Minister told officials during the review.

He directed departments to design clear implementation timelines aligned with the scheme's objectives and to coordinate across sectors such as education, health, rural development, and employment generation.

The survey recently conducted under the supervision of the Planning Department identified "Banganuru Kutumbala" as the golden families as those requiring assistance in housing, nutrition, healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities.

Naidu insisted that such data should guide the allocation of resources and prioritization of beneficiaries under poverty alleviation and welfare programs. Officials were instructed to create digital dashboards to track real-time progress in each village and urban ward. The Chief Minister also called for transparent monitoring mechanisms, ensuring that funds are disbursed efficiently and outcomes are regularly reviewed.

He reiterated that accountability and timely execution are as critical as financial adequacy for the success of the P4 initiative.

Minister Payyavula Keshav briefed the meeting on the financial sustainability of the program and assured that sufficient budgetary provi-

sions have been made to support the rollout of P4 schemes across the state. He said that fiscal planning will be aligned with the state's broader growth agenda, emphasizing equitable distribution of resources.

Highlighting Andhra Pradesh's commitment to becoming a model state in poverty eradication, Chandrababu Naidu said the Zero Poverty mission reflects the government's long-term vision for inclusive and sustainable development. He urged all departments to work cohesively and make Andhra Pradesh a "Zero Poverty State" through innovation, partnership, and dedication.

The Chief Minister concluded the meeting by directing officials to begin immediate implementation of finalized plans, stating that visible results should be achieved within a set timeframe to demonstrate tangible change in people's lives.

## NTR Circle Naming Sparks Political Row in Machilipatnam



TPN Bureau | December 8, 2025

Machilipatnam: A political controversy has erupted in Machilipatnam over the naming of the Housing Board Ring Road junction, popularly known as NTR Circle. The dispute intensified after local BJP leaders recently named the junction "Atal Bihari Vajpayee Circle" and installed flex banners in memory of the late former Prime Minister.

The Chief Minister concluded the meeting by directing officials to begin immediate implementation of finalized plans, stating that visible results should be achieved within a set timeframe to demonstrate tangible change in people's lives.

and senior TDP leader Dileep Kumar led a protest at the Housing Board Ring, staging a sit-in demonstration against renaming the circle.

He stated that the Machilipatnam Municipality had earlier passed a resolution naming the circle after NTR and approving the installation of his statue. The TDP leaders questioned how the BJP could unilaterally rename it after Atal Bihari Vajpayee, disregarding the municipal decision.

Supporters of both parties gathered at the site, shouting slogans and displaying rival banners, leading to heightened tension in the area.

Police personnel were deployed to maintain order and prevent any potential clashes. While the BJP maintains that naming the circle after Vajpayee was a tribute to a revered national leader, the TDP insists that altering an already established

name is politically motivated and disrespectful to NTR's legacy. The controversy has swiftly turned into a major political flashpoint in Machilipatnam, with leaders from both parties exchanging sharp remarks.

TDP cadres have vowed to continue their agitation until the municipal resolution in favor of NTR Circle is upheld. BJP leaders, on the other hand, defended their action, claiming that it was part of a broader effort to honor national icons across Andhra Pradesh. As protests from both sides continue, local residents have expressed concern that the political tug-of-war is overshadowing civic priorities and disrupting peace in the town.

The district administration is expected to hold discussions with representatives of both parties to defuse the tension and arrive at a consensus.

## Privilege Committee Pulls Up Officials Over Protocol Violations in Kadapa and Other Cases



TPN Bureau | December 8

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Privilege Committee, chaired by Pithani Satyanarayana, convened on Monday at the Assembly Committee Hall to examine multiple complaints related to breaches of protocol concerning elected representatives.

The committee took up the case of Kadapa MLA Reddappagari Madhavi, who had alleged that proper protocol was not observed during the inauguration ceremony of the Cath Lab at RIMS, Kadapa. The name of the MLA was reportedly omitted from the foundation stone unveiled at the event, despite her being the local representative.

Local leaders expressed confidence that Pulivendula, long known as the epicenter of YSR influence, would soon turn into a TDP bastion. Political analysts note that such defections from Jagan's home constituency carry symbolic weight. Pulivendula, which has

during the previous hearing and warned them for neglecting legislative protocol.

The chairman reportedly reprimanded the officials, questioning whether they were still functioning "as if unaware that the government has changed." Responding to the committee's inquiry, the former Medical Superintendent admitted the lapse and tendered an unconditional apology. He promised to ensure such mistakes would not recur. However, the DMHO's inconsistent and unsatisfactory explanations provoked sharp criticism from the panel.

Both officials were instructed to appear again for a follow-up hearing in the coming days. The Privilege Committee also reviewed five separate complaints filed by former MLA Jogeswara Rao, who alleged repeated protocol violations during his tenure between 2019 and 2024. The committee expressed anger that As-

sembly notices related to these complaints had not even been issued by the then Assembly staff.

It viewed this as administrative negligence. Officials explained that during the previous regime, pressures from senior authorities often hindered them from adhering to legislative protocol. They acknowledged those lapses before the committee, apologized formally, and assured that similar incidents would be avoided under the current administration.

Chairman Pithani Satyanarayana stressed that the decorum and authority of legislators must be safeguarded at all levels of government. He directed concerned departments to strictly comply with protocol norms in all official functions. The committee concluded that it would closely monitor the implementation of these measures to prevent any future breaches.

## Gangavaram Port Witnesses High Tension as Displaced Fishermen Protest Over Pending Settlement Payments

TPN Bureau | December 8

Visakhapatnam: Tension prevailed at the gates of Gangavaram Port on Monday after hundreds of displaced fishermen staged a protest demanding the immediate release of pending one-time settlement (OTS) dues promised by the port management. The demonstration, organized under the leadership of the Displaced Fishermen's Association, turned tense when the workers attempted to enter the port premises, prompting police intervention.

According to the protesting workers, the port management had earlier agreed to pay 2 lakh each to 499 displaced fishermen as part of a compensation package meant to support families that lost livelihoods due to port operations and related expansions. The agreement was reportedly made a year ago, but the payments have not been



disbursed to several eligible recipients.

The protesters alleged that despite multiple assurances, the authorities have been delaying the payments under various pretexts, citing procedural issues and tax deductions as reasons for the hold-up.

However, the situation quickly escalated when a group of workers attempted to push through the gate to enter the port area. Police deployed at the site intervened to prevent the breach, resulting in a brief scuffle between the protesters and law enforcement personnel. Some workers were reportedly pushed back forcibly as police sought to restore order. The management's repeated delays are unacceptable.

We have waited for more than a year for

what was promised to us. Many of our community members are struggling to survive without stable income," said one of the protest leaders while addressing the gathering.

In response to the demonstration, Gangavaram Port authorities invited the fishermen's representatives for talks to resolve the issue. Senior officials reportedly held discussions with union leaders to review pending payment files and explore a timeline for disbursement.

Sources say the management assured the protesting workers that genuine beneficiaries

would receive compensation soon after internal and governmental clearances are completed. Monday's protest is the latest in a series of demonstrations by displaced fishing families who continue to seek fair compensation, rehabilitation, and livelihood support from both the port management and local administration.

Activists and community leaders have repeatedly urged the government to intervene and ensure that the terms of prior agreements are implemented fully without further delay. Local police remained deployed near the main entrance of the port to prevent any further unrest, even as negotiations continued late into the evening. The outcome of the discussions is expected to determine whether the agitation will be withdrawn or intensified in the coming days.

## Jagan Faces Major Setback in His Own Bastion as YSRCP Leaders Join TDP

TPN Bureau | December 8

KADAPA: Political tremors continue to shake Pulivendula, the home turf of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. In yet another blow to the YSR Congress Party, several local leaders and cadre have abandoned the party to join the Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

The defecition wave, which began soon after the YSRCP's crushing defeat in the 2024 Assembly elections, shows no signs of slowing down.

Sources from Pulivendula reported that prominent YSRCP members from Vempalli town formally joined the TDP on Monday in the presence of Pulivendula constituency in-charge B.Tech Ravi. In a



symbolic gesture, Ravi draped the traditional yellow scarf around the new members, welcoming them into the party fold.

That's why even YSRCP leaders from Pulivendula are joining us," Ravi stated. Ravi alleged that mismanagement, corruption, and neglect during the YSRCP's rule pushed many loyal workers to reconsider their political affiliations. He highlighted that numerous development initiatives in the region, including infrastructure works and

welfare projects, had been revived since the TDP came to power.

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Pulivendula, which has

# Key Development in Dalit Youth Kidnapping Case: Main Accused Komma Koteswara Rao Surrenders in Vijayawada

TPN Bureau | December 8

Vijayawada: A major development has taken place in the sensational kidnapping case of Dalit youth Satya Vardhan in Vijayawada, which has political overtones linked to former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi. The key accused, Komma Koteswara Rao alias Komma Kotes, surrendered before the Patamata Police Station in Vijayawada on Monday, ending days of speculation about his whereabouts.

According to police sources, Komma Koteswara Rao had been absconding ever since his name surfaced as a prime conspirator in the case. He has now been identified as Accused No. 2 (A2), while Vallabhaneni Vamsi has been listed as Accused No. 1 (A1). Police confirmed that Koteswara Rao's surrender followed the issuance of non-bailable warrants (NBWs) against him and several others who were evading arrest.

The case stems from the alleged abduction of Satya Vardhan, who had



earlier lodged a complaint in connection with the attack on the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) office in Vijayawada. According to reports, Satya Vardhan was kidnapped by a group of individuals who transported him from Hyderabad to Vijayawada. Investigators believe that Koteswara Rao played a crucial role in organizing and executing the abduction.

The motive behind the kidnapping, police say, was to pressure Satya Vardhan to withdraw his earlier com-

plaint filed in relation to the TDP office attack case. The alleged involvement of individuals close to Vallabhaneni Vamsi has given the case a politically charged dimension, drawing sharp attention from both ruling and opposition circles.

Earlier, two other accused Telaprolu Ramu and Vajra Kumar had surrendered before the court. Another key suspect, Erramsetty Ram Anjaneyulu, was arrested by the Patamata police last week. With Koteswara Rao's surren-

## All Set for Bhavani Deeksha Viramana; New Laddu Prasadam Preparation Begins

TPN Bureau | December 8

VIJAYAWADA: Ahead of the sacred Bhavani Deeksha Viramana celebrations, the new laddu prasadam production unit at the Kanaka Durga Temple was inaugurated on Monday by Temple Executive Officer VK Seena Naik. Marking the commencement, EO Seena Naik break coconuts and conducted special pujas at the newly set-up prasadam preparation centre. Temple Stanacharya V Shiva Prasad and a team of archakas chanted Vedic hymns and led the puja rituals. Temple authorities said the new facility has been established to ensure that high-quality and delicious laddu prasadam is supplied to devotees, especially during the Bhavani Deeksha viramana when lakhs of devotees visit the temple. The centre is equipped to facilitate uninterrupted production and distribution of laddu prasadam.

Revenue Divisional Officer Kavuri Chaitanya, accompanied by Temple EO Seena Naik, conducted an in-

spection on Monday to review the ongoing arrangements for the Bhavani Deeksha viramana at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri. The RDO instructed officials to ensure fool-proof arrangements so that devotees face no inconvenience.

The RDO reviewed the AutoCAD layout plans prepared for Bhavani Deeksha and gave suggestions based on anticipated crowd movement. The designated zone for devotees performing rituals like Irumudi and Homa was inspected, with a focus on fire safety measures and preventive arrangements. Facilities for providing uninterrupted free meals (annaprasadam) were reviewed for capacity and hygiene.

They discussed crowd management, emergency response protocols and coordinated efforts between temple administration and police to ensure a safe and smooth experience for all devotees.



## MP Sivanath Launches Second Phase of Skill Development Training for SHG Women Through Kesineni Foundation



TPN Bureau | December 8

Vijayawada:

In line with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision of creating one entrepreneur in every household, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) has intensified efforts to empower women through skill development. Under the aegis of the Kesineni Foundation and in collaboration with the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, a second batch of Self-Help Group (SHG) women has been sent for advanced livelihood training.

A total of 61 SHG members from 16 mandals across the rural constituencies of Nandigama, Mylavaram, Tiruvur, and Jaggalapeta in NTR district left for Hyderabad early Monday morning in

a special bus arranged by the Kesineni Foundation. They will undergo five days of training from December 8 to 12 at NIRDPR.

Participants include 10 women from Ibrahimpatnam, 10 from Gonduru, 20 from Vijayawada Rural, 5 from Kanchikacherla, and 16 from Jaggalapeta. The training modules cover handmade paper production for 30 women and home-based products such as washing powder, liquid soaps, shampoos, and phenyl for the remaining 31.

Earlier, from December 1 to 5, the first batch of 40 women underwent training in food processing, including millet products, bakery items, and ice cream manufacturing. Of them, 20 completed the five-day training at NIRDPR, while the remaining 20 are currently attending a month-long pro-

gramme at FDDI, Gachibowli, on leather, non-leather and garment production.

NIRD district coordinators Vallabhaneni Narasimha Chowdary (Urban) and Songa Sanjay Varma (Rural) confirmed successful completion of the first batch. They noted that the beneficiary list for the second batch was prepared and submitted to NIRDPR by PD DRDA Nanchariah, who received appreciation for his support.

SHG women expressed special gratitude to MP Kesineni Sivanath for funding the training through his foundation, enabling them to enhance their livelihoods and gain financial independence. The Kesineni Foundation plans to continue supporting more SHG members through phased training programmes aimed at sustainable income generation.

TPN Bureau | December 8

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# Crackdown on Bike Thefts: Bapatla Police Arrest Three Serial Offenders, Recover 37 Stolen Two-Wheelers

TPN Bureau | December 8

Bapatla | Chirala: In a major breakthrough against rising vehicle thefts, the Bapatla district police have arrested three serial bike thieves and recovered 37 stolen two-wheelers worth around 21.2 lakh. The arrests were made as part of an intensified district-wide special operation that has, within a week, helped the police recover a total of 60 stolen vehicles valued at 40 lakh.

According to Bapatla Superintendent of Police B. Uma Maheshwar, the crackdown was initiated in response to a noticeable surge in two-wheeler thefts in

recent months.

Two specialized police teams were formed under CCS DSP P. Jagadish Nayak and CCS CI Premaiah to track and apprehend the culprits. Through extensive use of CCTV footage, local intelligence, and field surveillance, the teams successfully identified and nabbed the accused involved in a series of thefts reported across various parts of the district.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Kaggala Sambasiva Rao (32), a resident of Pottur village in Guntur district, and Dasari Gopiraju (32) and Dasari Durga Rao (24), both natives of



Burlavaripalem village who were currently residing at Gandhinagar Yanadi Sangam in Chirala.

Police investigations revealed that the trio had been operating as an organized network,

systematically targeting unsecured bikes parked in crowded and poorly monitored areas. They frequently moved between Chirala, Bapatla, and nearby regions, selecting vehicles without proper

security locks or parked outside residences and offices.

During the operation, police first apprehended Sambasiva Rao in Bapatla, and based on his confession, traced the other two accused

Gopiraju and Durga Rao to Chirala. Upon interrogation, the accused led the police to several locations where the stolen vehicles were hidden. In total, 37 stolen two-wheelers were recovered from their possession.

SP Uma Maheshwar praised the efforts of the police teams for their swift action and coordination, noting that the recovery would bring relief to dozens of victims who had reported missing vehicles over the past few months.

"Bike thefts have become a recurring challenge, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas where many users neglect basic safety

precautions. This operation marks a significant step in restoring public confidence," he said.

The SP also urged the public to take simple preventive measures to safeguard their vehicles against theft. He advised owners to install high-quality locks, security alarms, and GPS tracking devices.

"People invest lakhs of rupees in purchasing vehicles but often ignore basic anti-theft mechanisms. Using modern safety devices and being vigilant about parking can drastically reduce the risk of losing a vehicle," he emphasized. The police have stepped up patrolling in theft-prone

zones and are analyzing CCTV footage from busy junctions and marketplaces for further clues. Efforts are underway to identify potential buyers and handlers involved in the illegal resale of stolen vehicles.

The arrested trio has been booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code related to theft and criminal conspiracy. They were produced before the court and remanded to judicial custody. Authorities confirmed that the special drive against vehicle theft will continue across Bapatla district to curb property-related crimes and ensure community safety.

## Narasaraopet MLA Aravind Babu Accuses Former MLA Gopireddy of Corruption and Conspiracy in Hospital Incident

TPN Bureau | December 8

Narasaraopet: In a strongly worded press conference held on Monday in Narasaraopet, Palnadu district, sitting MLA Dr. Chadalavada Aravind Babu launched a fierce attack on former MLA Dr. Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy, calling him "mentally unstable" and accusing him of large-scale corruption and deliberate attempts to damage the reputation of the government hospital in the constituency.

Speaking to the media, Dr. Aravind Babu alleged that Gopireddy, a former YSRCP legislator, was behind a "conspiracy" to malign the Narasaraopet government hospital through the recent surgical blade incident.

The controversy erupted after reports surfaced that a surgical blade had been left in the thigh of a woman patient following a surgery in the hospital's PP unit. The attending doctor and assistant were subsequently suspended. Aravind Babu claimed that the incident was not negligence but part of a politically motivated ploy. "This is a conspiracy directed by the



former MLA. The woman's husband worked as a volunteer during the previous YSRCP government, and Gopireddy used them to defame the hospital and our government's administration," he alleged.

The MLA promised a thorough investigation into the matter to uncover all angles of the conspiracy. Rejecting corruption allegations made against him by his predecessor, Aravind Babu said, "I entered politics to serve the people, not to accumulate wealth." Turning his attack toward Gopireddy, he accused the former legislator of gross corruption during his tenure.

Aravind Babu also said that several YSRCP leaders and workers had previously urged Jagan Mohan Reddy not to give Gopireddy a ticket in the past elections. "Even after losing power, he has not changed his ways," he remarked. On civic issues, the MLA said that he personally monitors sanitation work daily and funds several local development activities through his own resources.

"During the COVID period, he sold government-supplied injections illegally and made 60 crore. He collected money from generic medical shops and diverted patients from the government hospital to his private facility for profit," Babu claimed.

The MLA emphasized that the present coalition government, backed by people's blessings, would maintain transparency and integrity. "Such immoral practices no longer exist under this government. YSRCP will never return to power, and Gopireddy will never become an MLA again," he asserted.

Gopireddy also asserted that he personally monitors sanitation work daily and funds several local development activities through his own resources.

"Narasaraopet Municipality is cleaner now. We have renovated Kodela Prasad Rao Stadium, built new washrooms, and ensured facilities for athletes," he added. Supporting the MLA's remarks, local leaders Guduru Shek-

## Tragic Road Accident in Nellore: RTC Bus Runs Over School Student

TPN Bureau | December 8

A tragic road accident in Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh, on Monday morning has left one school student dead and another injured, bringing renewed attention to the alarming frequency of road mishaps in the state. The incident occurred at Vepachettu Center in Gangapattam village of Indukurupeta mandal, when an APSRTC (Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation) bus hit two young boys who were on their way to school on a bicycle.

According to police sources, the deceased was identified as 12-year-old Pulikiran, a resident of Gangapattam Venkata Reddy Colony. His brother, Karthik, who was accompanying him, sustained minor injuries and was shifted to a



nearby hospital for treatment. Eyewitnesses reported that the RTC bus, allegedly speeding at the time, struck the boys from behind, dragging the bicycle a few meters before coming to a halt. Locals rushed to the spot and attempted to save the children, but Pulikiran succumbed to injuries on the spot.

The tragic loss has cast a shadow of grief over the local community. The victim's family has already endured an earlier tragedy, as reports indicate that

has been registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, and the authorities are verifying whether negligence and overspeeding were the primary causes of the accident. Local residents expressed outrage over recurring accidents involving government and private buses in the region.

They demanded stricter enforcement of road safety rules



and installation of speed breakers near schools and residential areas.

This latest tragedy serves as a grim reminder of the importance of road safety and the need for responsible driving. Despite repeated awareness campaigns by both central and state governments, such incidents continue to claim young lives, leaving families in deep sorrow.

TPN Bureau | December 8

NELLORE: Nellore city police have arrested five individuals involved in an attempted murder case against a city bus driver and conductor. The prompt action by Santhapet police led to the arrests within 24 hours of registering the case.

The case was registered on 7th December 2025 under Cr. No. 221/2025 r/w 126(2), 115(2), 109(1) r/w 3(5) BNS of Santhapet Police Station.

The accused individuals are

Uppumadan @ Bhabhi, 19, S/o Malkondaiah, Vadder community, Gopi Tea Center, Santhapet.

Uppu Sreekanth, 22, S/o Malkondaiah, Vadder community, Gopi Tea Center, Santhapet. Gandavarapu Ajay

The injured were initially treated at Nellore Government Hospital and later referred to Narayana Hospital for advanced care.

Santhapet Inspector YV Somayya promptly registered an attempted murder case and, following a swift investigation, arrested all five accused on 8th December 2025 near Tikkana Park. Authorities noted that the incident stemmed from a momentary clash over a motorcycle blocking the road and the accused had no prior criminal record.

Nellore City DSP M Giridhar Rao commanded the officers, including Inspectors YV Somayya, SI G Balakrishna, ASI G Srihari and constables, for their quick and effective action.

## Five Arrested for Attempted Murder of City Bus Driver and Conductor



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# Bharat Future City: Pioneering India's Sustainable Urban Future

As India marches toward becoming a global economic and technological powerhouse, the need for smart, sustainable, and inclusive urban planning has never been more urgent. Amidst the backdrop of rapidly expanding cities, increasing pollution, and strained infrastructure, Telangana's ambitious Bharat Future City—also known as Telangana Future City—emerges as a bold vision for India's urban future. Envisaged as a net-zero, greenfield smart city near Hyderabad, this project aims to house one million residents while prioritizing sustainability, technology, and holistic urban development.

At its core, Bharat Future City is not just another real estate or township project. Spanning a core area of 30,000 acres, with a total zone covering 1.85 lakh acres, the city is designed to integrate futuristic technologies with environmental responsibility. Unlike conventional urban development, which often evolves in a haphazard manner, this city represents a carefully planned ecosystem where every aspect—from mobility to energy use, from education to health—is conceived with sustainability in mind.

## A Vision Rooted in Sustainability and Innovation

The city's vision is ambitious yet necessary. India, with its burgeoning population and urban migration, faces severe pressure on housing, infrastructure, and public services. Traditional cities, including Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Mumbai, struggle with traffic congestion, pollution, and inadequate utilities. Bharat Future City addresses these issues head-on. Its design is net-zero, implying that the city's energy consumption will be balanced entirely by renewable energy generation. By integrating solar, wind, and potentially other clean energy sources, the project seeks to eliminate dependence on fossil fuels, reduce carbon emissions, and serve as a template for sustainable urban living in India.

## Mobility Designed for the Future

Transportation is another area where Bharat Future City breaks away from conventional norms. The plan includes metro connectivity extensions, high-speed rail linking Amaravati and Bengaluru, airport connectivity, and well-planned highways. Such integrated mobility not only reduces travel times but also ensures that the city remains accessible and environmentally friendly. With electric vehicles as a priority, the city aims to minimize air pollution and promote clean mobility.

## Government Backing and Structured Growth

One of the standout aspects of this initiative is its strong government support. Managed by the Future City Development Authority (FCDA) under the oversight of the Telangana government, the project enjoys a level of credibility and regulatory backing that many private ventures lack. Approvals from HMDA and RERA further enhance investor confidence, ensuring structured growth and clear legal titles. In a country where urban projects often face delays, bureaucratic hurdles, and legal disputes, this government-backed framework can provide the stability necessary for timely completion and long-term sustainability.

## Economic and Investment Potential

From an economic perspective, Bharat Future City holds immense promise. Its strategic location between Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar highways near Hyderabad ensures connectivity with major commercial centers, while dedicated industrial zones can attract domestic and international investments. The combination of government support, planned infrastructure, and technological focus makes it an attractive destination for investors, businesses, and residents seeking a modern, high-quality urban environment.

Furthermore, the project aligns with India's broader aspirations to become a global hub for technology, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare. By creating specialized zones for these industries, the city could generate significant employment opportunities, stimulate innovation, and contribute to regional and national economic growth.

## Balancing Development with

## Environmental and Social Concerns

No ambitious project of this scale can proceed without challenges. Farmer opposition and activist concerns regarding land acquisition and environmental impact are significant issues that cannot be ignored. Land acquisition in India has historically been a sensitive topic, often leading to protests and delays. It is crucial for the authorities and developers to engage in transparent dialogue with affected communities, ensuring fair compensation, sustainable relocation plans, and minimal disruption to livelihoods.

Environmental impact is another critical concern. While the city's net-zero vision is commendable, large-scale construction inevitably affects local ecosystems. Protecting forests, water sources, and biodiversity while building a city from scratch requires rigorous planning, environmental clearances, and ongoing

monitoring. Bharat Future City has

the opportunity to set a precedent in eco-friendly urban development, but this can only be realized if environment -

By contrast, this city proposes a seamless blend of a

urban spaces. The city's focus on dedicated zones for

AI, health, education, and sports reflects an understanding that cities are not just about housing—they are about nurturing human potential.

## Conclusion: A Vision Worth Pursuing, But With Care

Bharat Future City represents an extraordinary opportunity for India to redefine urban living. Its emphasis on net-zero energy, smart mobility, integrated industrial zones, and government-backed structured development could make it a benchmark for sustainable urbanization worldwide. Yet, success will depend on careful, inclusive planning that respects the rights of local communities and safeguards environmental integrity. In a country where urban planning has often lagged behind rapid population growth, Bharat Future City has the potential to be a turning point—a city that is not only technologically advanced but also ecologically responsible and socially inclusive. Its journey will be closely watched, both as a measure of India's ability to plan for the future and as a symbol of what visionary urban development can achieve.

Moreover, the initiative underscores the importance of forward-looking urban planning. As India faces the dual challenge of accommodating millions of urban migrants and combating climate change, greenfield smart cities like Bharat Future City offer a blueprint for creating resilient, sustainable, and technologically advanced

and social responsibilities are treated as non-negotiable priorities.

## A Model for Future Indian Cities

What makes Bharat Future City truly noteworthy is its holistic approach. Too often, urban projects in India have prioritized commercial interests over environmental sustainability, technological integration, or quality of life.



Advanced technology, sustainable energy, smart mobility, and human-centric design. If successful, it could serve as a model for future smart cities across the country.

Moreover, the initiative underscores the importance of forward-looking urban planning. As India faces the dual challenge of accommodating millions of urban migrants and combating climate change, greenfield smart cities like Bharat Future City offer a blueprint for creating resilient, sustainable, and technologically advanced

## Priyanka Gandhi Questions Timing of “Vande Mataram” Debate, Links It to Bengal Elections

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has triggered a political storm by questioning the timing of the debate on the national song “Vande Mataram” in Parliament, alleging that the discussion is being used as a political tool ahead of the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections. Her remarks have intensified the war of words between the Opposition and the ruling party over nationalism, history, and electoral strategy.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, Priyanka Gandhi asked why a debate on a national symbol was being revived decades after Independence. She argued that the government's sudden focus on the national song was not driven by genuine respect for history or national pride, but by political calculations linked to election campaigning in West Bengal. According to her, the government was attempting to shift public attention away from pressing issues such as rising prices, unemployment,

and economic challenges by creating emotionally charged debates in Parliament.

She also accused the government of selectively interpreting history to suit its political narrative. Priyanka said that the true history and context of “Vande Mataram” should be understood rather than being used as a weapon for political gain. She stressed that national symbols should unite citizens rather than divide them, and warned that politicising historical and cultural issues could deepen social divisions.

The Congress leader further criticised what she described as the misuse of freedom fighters' legacies. She claimed that the ruling party was trying to rewrite parts of India's freedom movement history while ignoring the contributions of several leaders and movements. Priyanka maintained that debates in Parliament should focus more on people's real-life problems and less on symbolic controversies

that do not directly impact citizens' daily lives.

Her comments came in response to the government's defence of the national song in Parliament, where the ruling side argued that such debates are necessary to reinforce national identity and pride. Government leaders dismissed the Opposition's claims and said that honouring national symbols is a duty of elected representatives. They accused the Congress party of undermining patriotic sentiment by questioning the importance of “Vande Mataram.”

The controversy has sparked sharp reactions across the political spectrum. Supporters of the government argue that revisiting the national song is a legitimate cultural and historical discussion, while Opposition parties see it as a strategy to polarise voters ahead of elections in key states, especially West Bengal.

The renewed debate over “Vande Mataram” reflects the broader battle



over nationalism and political messaging in India. As election season approaches in several states, such issues are expected to feature prominently in

political discourse. Whether the controversy will influence public opinion or remain confined to parliamentary debates remains to be seen.

## Modi Leads “Vande Mataram” Debate, Calls Song Soul of Nation



ing to him, the phrase became the voice of a nation that refused to accept subjugation and inspired mass movements across the country.

Modi reflected on the historical journey of the song, emphasising that its influence extended beyond politics into culture, literature, and the everyday consciousness of Indians. He said the message of “Vande Mataram” helped unite people across regions, languages, and communities at a time when colonial forces were trying to divide the country. The Prime Minister also linked the song's legacy to Bengal's role in the freedom struggle and urged citizens to remember that heritage with pride.

Taking a swipe at previous governments, Modi alleged that certain political forces had diluted the importance of the song at different points in history for the sake of political convenience. He argued that compromises made in the past weakened the collective spirit and that the na-

tion now had the responsibility to reclaim and honour its authentic legacy. He insisted that respect for national symbols should never be guided by political calculations.

The Prime Minister urged members of Parliament to use the occasion not as a ritualistic anniversary, but as a moment of renewed national commitment. He said the ideals behind “Vande Mataram” should inspire India's future journey in areas such as self-reliance, development, and social harmony. He underlined that unity, discipline, and shared responsibility were essential if the country was to meet global challenges.

The Opposition, however, pushed back strongly. Several leaders argued that the government was using the debate to create a charged political atmosphere ahead of important state elections. They accused the ruling party of trying to divert attention from economic issues such as inflation, unemploy-

ment, and pressure on household budgets. Some Opposition members also warned against turning cultural symbols into political tools, saying national heritage belonged to all citizens and not to any one party.

The debate witnessed heated moments, with interruptions and strong exchanges between the Treasury and Opposition benches. Despite the sharp differences, several members across party lines acknowledged the historical importance of “Vande Mataram” and its role in shaping the national imagination during the freedom struggle.

The special debate in Parliament reflects the broader national conversation about identity, history, and politics in a rapidly changing India. As political temperatures rise ahead of key elections, the renewed focus on “Vande Mataram” highlights how deeply national symbols remain intertwined with contemporary political narratives.

## Virat Kohli Invests ₹40 Crore, Begins New Chapter for One8 Brand



Indian cricket superstar Virat Kohli has taken a major step in transforming his lifestyle and athleisure brand, One8, by investing ₹40 crore and partnering with Indian sportswear startup Agilitas Sports. The move marks a strategic shift from his previous association with global sportswear brand Puma to becoming an equity stakeholder in a home-grown company, giving him greater control over the brand he co-founded.

Under the deal, Kohli has acquired a 1.94 percent stake in Agilitas through compulsorily convertible preference shares, enabling him to have a direct role in decision-making, design, manufacturing, marketing, and overall strategic growth. The partnership also positions One8 as an independent global brand under the management of Agilitas, which will be responsible for scaling operations and expanding its footprint in both domestic and international markets.

One8, originally launched in 2017 under Puma, has been known for its mix of sports performance wear and casual lifestyle apparel. With Kohli's investment and Agilitas's operational support, the brand is set to en-

ter a new phase aimed at establishing itself as a major player in the athleisure and sportswear market. Plans include refreshed product lines, footwear expansions, and a stronger presence in retail, e-commerce, and international distribution channels.

Industry analysts say the move reflects Kohli's long-term vision to own and control his brand rather than simply endorsing a multinational company. While his previous contract with Puma

was reportedly worth ₹110 crore, and renewal offers were estimated around ₹300 crore, Kohli chose to invest in Agilitas to retain strategic control and ensure his brand's identity aligns with his vision. This decision highlights a growing trend among athletes and celebrities in India who prefer ownership and equity over endorsement fees alone, aiming for sustainable brand growth and global recognition.

Agilitas Sports, founded

in 2023 by former Puma India executive Abhishek Ganguly, operates as a full-stack sportswear platform. The startup handles everything from manufacturing to distribution and licensing, allowing brands like One8 to leverage its infrastructure and expertise to scale efficiently. Kohli's association brings not just capital, but significant brand value and credibility, further boosting the startup's profile and ambitions.

The partnership also

carries broader implications for India's sportswear industry. With the athleisure market rapidly expanding, driven by rising fitness awareness and lifestyle trends, domestic brands are increasingly competing with global giants.

By backing a home-grown venture, Kohli and Agilitas aim to capture a larger share of this growing market while offering high-quality, performance-driven products with a distinctly Indian identity.

Beyond commercial objectives, this move represents Kohli's desire to shape a lasting brand legacy. By investing directly and becoming a stakeholder, he has transitioned from a brand ambassador to a strategic owner, ensuring that One8's direction, values, and global expansion remain aligned with his vision.

As One8 enters this new chapter, the coming years will reveal whether the combination of celebrity influence, homegrown infrastructure, and strategic investment can propel it into the top tier of global sportswear brands. For Kohli, this venture is not only a business opportunity but also a statement of intent to create a sustainable, globally recognised Indian lifestyle brand.

## Club Owners Flee After Deadly Goa Fire, Probe Intensifies



A major controversy has erupted after the owners of a popular nightclub in Goa allegedly fled the country just hours after a devastating fire at their venue killed 25 people, triggering nationwide outrage and raising serious questions about safety compliance and accountability.

The tragic blaze broke out late at night at a crowded nightclub in the northern part of Goa. According to officials, the fire spread rapidly through the premises, trapping several workers and guests inside. Most of the victims reportedly died due to suffocation as toxic smoke filled the enclosed areas, while others suffered fatal burn injuries.

The suddenness of the incident left little time for evacuation, turning a festive evening into a scene of chaos and horror. The tragic blaze broke out late at night at a crowded nightclub in the northern part of Goa. According to officials, the fire spread rapidly through the premises, trapping several workers and guests inside. Most of the victims reportedly died due to suffocation as toxic smoke filled the enclosed areas, while others suffered fatal burn injuries.

Soon after the incident, police registered criminal cases against the club's owners, management staff, and event organisers on charges related to negligence and violation of safety norms. Investigators revealed that the establishment allegedly lacked mandatory fire safety clearances and had insufficient emergency exits. Early findings also suggested that the building structure may not have been authorised for high-capacity commercial use.

What has shocked authorities and the public alike is the revelation that the club's owners are believed to have flown out of India within hours of the incident.

Immigration records indicated that they left the country before police could detain or question them. Their sudden departure has been widely condemned as an attempt to evade law enforcement and avoid responsibility for the tragedy.

In response, law enforcement agencies have issued lookout circulars and alerted airports and international authorities to track their movements.

Efforts are underway to secure their return through international legal cooperation.

Senior police officials

confirmed that extradition proceedings may be initiated if the accused do not return voluntarily.

The Goa government has ordered a high-level

magisterial inquiry into the incident.

Several local officials have been suspended for their alleged failure to properly inspect the premises.

The Indian National Congress has suspended Navjot Kaur Sidhu, wife of former Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu, following a major political backlash over her controversial public remarks.

The decision comes just days after her statement sparked outrage across party circles and opposition parties.

The controversy erupted when Navjot Kaur Sidhu allegedly claimed that becoming a Chief Minister requires a “suitcase of ₹500 crore.”

The remark, made during an interaction with the media, was seen as suggesting that top political posts could be obtained through money rather than merit.

The statement quickly went viral and triggered sharp reactions from rival political parties, who accused the Congress of openly admitting to corruption in its ranks.

Reacting quickly to the damage caused by the comment, the Punjab unit of the Congress announced her suspension with immediate effect.

Senior party leaders

said the remark had

caused serious harm to

the party's reputation

and discipline, especially at a time when the

Congress is trying to rebuild its image and

strengthen its organisational structure in

Punjab.

Navjot Kaur Sidhu later

issued a clarification,

saying that her words had been misunderstood.

She claimed she never meant that such a

transaction actually takes place, and insisted that neither she nor her husband had offered or received money for any political post.

However, the clarification did little to calm the political storm, as opposition parties continued to target the Congress over the statement.

The episode has once again highlighted the internal tensions within the Punjab Congress.

The Sidhu family has

been at the centre of several political controversies in recent years, and this latest incident has

further strained relations

between different factions of the party.

Many senior leaders reportedly felt that such

public comments were irresponsible and undermined the party's

image.

Political observers be-

lieve the suspension is

also a message by the Congress high command that indiscipline and public statements damaging the party's image will not be tolerated. The party appears keen to avoid giving its rivals fresh ammunition, especially with future electoral battles on the horizon.

The controversy has sparked a wider debate about the influence of

money in politics and the

need for greater transparency in politi-

cal appointments across

parties. While the Con-

gress has distanced it-

self from the remark,

the issue has reignited

discussions about politi-

cal funding and internal

democracy.

For now, Navjot Kaur

Sidhu remains suspend-

ed from the party, and the incident stands as a

reminder of how a single

controversial com-

ment can trigger major

political consequences

in India's highly com-

petitive political

landscape.

## Paramount Makes Rival Bid to Acquire Warner Bros Discovery

Paramount Skydance has launched a rival bid to acquire Warner Bros Discovery, seeking to outmanoeuvre Netflix in its ongoing effort to purchase the studio and streaming networks. Backed by the billionaire Ellison family, Paramount has offered shareholders \$30 per share for the entirety of Warner Bros, including its traditional television networks, valuing the company at roughly \$108.4 billion — higher than Netflix's \$83 billion proposal.

Paramount's leadership claims the offer is a "superior alternative" to Netflix's deal, delivering more immediate cash to shareholders and increasing the likelihood of regulatory approval. President Donald Trump has raised potential competition concerns over Netflix's acquisition, suggesting the merger might concentrate too much power in the hands of a single company.

The saga began months ago when Paramount submitted initial offers to purchase Warner Bros, prompting the studio, home to HBO and iconic franchises ranging from Looney Tunes to Harry Potter, to open a formal bidding process. Warner Bros initially selected Netflix as the winning bidder, planning to spin off other parts of its business, including CNN, into an independent company as part of the deal.

Paramount's offer, which includes the traditional television networks, is designed to achieve greater scale and potential cost savings. Larry Ellison, whose family backs Paramount, criticized Warner Bros' spin-off plan, arguing it would leave traditional networks struggling and undervalued, potentially harming shareholders. He suggested that Netflix's takeover would grant the streaming giant excessive influence over actors and industry players, calling it "a horrible deal for Hollywood."

Ellison also noted his "great conversations" with former President Trump

regarding the bid, emphasizing that competition concerns were being considered. Paramount's bid is supported by financial partners including Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, according to SEC filings. Analysts view Paramount as a strong suitor in part due to these political connections, which could ease regulatory scrutiny in both the U.S. and Europe.

Market reactions to the bid were immediate: Warner Bros shares rose more than 6% in early trading, Paramount's stock also gained, while Netflix shares fell over 3%. Netflix, the world's largest streaming platform with more than 300 million subscribers, expressed confidence in winning regulatory approval and maintaining its growth trajectory through the acquisition.

Industry analysts note that Paramount's bid is as much defensive as it is strategic, aimed at preventing competitors from obtaining Warner Bros' vast content library and strengthening rival positions in the media landscape. More than 70% of U.S. HBO Max subscribers also subscribe to Netflix, highlighting the competitive dynamics driving these corporate manoeuvres.

Ben Barringer, head of technology research at Quilter Cheviot, said Paramount needs the deal more than Netflix, describing it as essential for Paramount to remain competitive in an era dominated by scale-driven streaming platforms. "Paramount remains a legacy entertainment provider that lacks the scale required for the modern age," he said.

As the bidding war continues, the outcome will reshape the media and entertainment landscape, determining the control of one of Hollywood's most valuable content libraries and influencing the future dynamics of streaming, traditional television, and global media competition.

## Trump Administration to Deny Visas for Fact Checkers and Content Moderators



The Trump administration has announced a new visa policy targeting individuals who have worked as fact-checkers, content moderators, online-safety officers, or in similar roles. Under this directive, visa applications may be denied if the applicant is found to have been "responsible for, or complicit in, censorship or attempted censorship of protected speech in the United States."

The policy is expected to primarily affect H-1B visa applicants, which includes many skilled workers from countries such as India, but it also applies across other visa categories, including work, student, and tourist visas. Visa officers will examine applicants' professional histories, social media activity, and public profiles to determine involvement in roles linked to content moderation, misinformation control, trust-and-safety work, or fact-checking. Those deemed to have engaged in such activities could face outright denial of their visa applications.

This policy could have a significant impact on Indian professionals. India supplies a large share of the global tech workforce, and many Indians employed by multinational technology companies work in content moderation or trust-and-safety roles. Under the new rules, such individuals could be barred from working in the U.S., even if they meet all other eligibility criteria.

The scope of the policy extends beyond H-1B visas. Students, journalists, and even tourists with a history in online-safety roles may be affected. Critics have noted that the directive's broad definition of "censorship" could lead to arbitrary visa denials, conflating legitimate content moderation with suppression of speech.

Civil liberties advocates have warned that the visa crackdown threatens free expression and undermines online safety efforts. Profes-

sionals in content moderation do not censor speech but work to protect users from harmful or illegal material. The policy, they argue, penalizes individuals performing essential safety functions and may discourage skilled professionals from entering the U.S. workforce.

The tech industry is likely to feel the effects of this policy. Companies dependent on global trust-and-safety teams could face staffing shortages or increased costs if key personnel are disqualified from U.S. employment. Individuals currently abroad who seek to travel or work in the United States could experience uncertainty, delays, or rejections solely based on prior employment roles.

Looking ahead, the enforcement of this policy may hinge on further clarifications from the U.S. government regarding the definitions of "censorship" and "content moderation." Legal challenges may also arise, with experts suggesting that penalizing professionals who work to safeguard online expression could conflict with principles of free speech.

The new visa restrictions are expected to influence global tech migration patterns. Skilled workers may seek employment in countries other than the U.S., potentially reshaping where content moderation and trust-and-safety infrastructure are concentrated.

In summary, the Trump administration's visa ban represents a significant shift in U.S. immigration and tech policy. It has far-reaching implications for individuals who have worked in content moderation or fact-checking roles, particularly in India, while posing challenges for the tech industry in maintaining adequate safety and moderation staffing. The policy underscores the intersection of immigration, technology, and free speech in shaping global workforce dynamics.

## Powerful Earthquake Strikes Northern Japan, Tsunami Alert Issued



A strong earthquake struck off the northern coast of Japan on Monday evening, prompting tsunami warnings and immediate emergency responses across the affected region. The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) initially reported the tremor as magnitude 7.2, later revised to 7.6, highlighting the intensity of the seismic activity beneath the Pacific Ocean. The epicentre was located off the coasts of Aomori and Hokkaido prefectures, at a depth of approximately 50 to 80 kilometres below sea level.

The quake triggered a tsunami alert for several northern prefectures, including Aomori, Hokkaido, and Iwate. Authorities warned residents in coastal areas of possible sea-level rises of up to three meters and urged immediate evacuation to higher ground. Ports and harbours in affected regions recorded waves reaching up to 40 centimetres, with some towns experiencing localized surges.

Emergency services reacted swiftly to the natural disaster. Local governments ordered the evacuation of vulnerable communities and suspended train services to minimize risk to passengers. In Aomori's

Hachinohe town, several injuries were reported at a hotel when the tremors shook buildings near the coast. Authorities also conducted safety inspections of nuclear facilities, critical infrastructure, and transportation networks to ensure no additional hazards had arisen from the quake.

The earthquake has brought back memories of Japan's vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly its history of devastating tsunamis and seismic events due to its position along the Pacific "Ring of Fire." Past incidents, including the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and

tsunami, have shaped the nation's comprehensive disaster preparedness and early-warning systems. In the current event, these systems allowed authorities to issue warnings quickly, helping residents evacuate and potentially preventing large-scale casualties.

While coastal communities have been most directly affected, tremors were felt in inland cities, including Tokyo, although no alerts were issued for these regions. Officials continue to monitor aftershocks, which are common following a quake of this magnitude. Disaster-re-

lief and assessment operations continue, Japanese officials remain on high alert, coordinating with local governments, emergency teams, and national agencies to ensure that communities receive the support they need and that any potential secondary hazards, such as tsunamis or structural collapses, are promptly addressed. The nation remains on edge as it monitors aftershocks and evaluates the situation in northern coastal regions.

This earthquake serves as a stark reminder of Japan's exposure to seismic hazards and the necessity of robust disaster preparedness measures. Authorities continue to urge caution, emphasizing the critical role of early-warning systems, community readiness, and adherence to safety advisories to protect lives and property.

As relief and assessment operations continue, Japanese officials remain on high alert, coordinating with local governments, emergency teams, and national agencies to ensure that communities receive the support they need and that any potential secondary hazards, such as tsunamis or structural collapses, are promptly addressed. The nation remains on edge as it monitors aftershocks and evaluates the situation in northern coastal regions.

## Deadly Clashes on Thai-Cambodia Border Force Thousands to Flee



Tensions flared once again along the Thailand-Cambodia border on Monday, forcing thousands of residents on both sides to evacuate as fresh clashes left at least five people dead. Both nations have blamed each other for initiating the violence, marking the most serious confrontation since a ceasefire agreement was reached in July.

Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul stressed that his country "never wanted violence" but pledged to use "necessary means to preserve its sovereignty."

Meanwhile, Cambodia's former leader Hun Sen accused Thai "invaders" of provoking retaliation. Since May, rising tensions between the neighbours have claimed over 40 lives, disrupted daily life, and prompted import bans and travel restrictions.

The Thai army reported responding to Cambodian fire in Ubon Ratchathani Province, including air strikes along the disputed

border. Cambodia's Defence ministry, however, asserted that Thai forces initiated the attack in Preah Vihear province. The Monday fighting reportedly killed at least one Thai soldier and four Cambodian civilians, leaving about a dozen others wounded.

Beyond the immediate casualties, the border clashes have taken a heavy toll on children living in affected areas. Thai teacher Siksaka Pongsuwan highlighted the hidden victims of the conflict: children whose education and daily routines are repeatedly interrupted. Nearly 650 schools across five Thai provinces were ordered to close on Monday for safety reasons, while chaotic scenes

were also reported at schools in Cambodian border provinces as parents rushed to take their children home.

This is not the first disruption for children in the region. In July, during critical examinations, five days of intense fighting forced schools to shift to online classes, a solution that was not accessible to

all students due to limited internet access and inadequate distribution of digital devices. Social media posts from Cambodian journalist Mech Dara depicted children fleeing schools and eating meals in underground bunkers, highlighting the profound psychological impact of the ongoing conflict.

Pongsuwan described the dilemma faced by local

residents: whether to stay in their villages amid intermittent gunfire or evacuate in search of safety, knowing that either choice carries risk. "If you ask whether we're scared, yes we are... Should we leave? Will it really be safer? Or should we stay?" he said.

The current flare-up is part of a century-old territorial dispute over an 800-kilometer border that has roots dating back to the French colonial period in Cambodia. The conflict escalated in July when Cambodian forces launched a rocket barrage into Thailand, prompting Thai air strikes. Following days of fighting, the countries agreed to an "immediate and unconditional ceasefire," bro-

kered by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

In October, a formal ceasefire ceremony was held in Malaysia, with former U.S. President Donald Trump present, where he hailed the agreement as a historic achievement. However, just two weeks later, Thailand suspended parts of the agreement after two of its soldiers were injured by a landmine near the border. Cambodia maintains that it remains committed to the ceasefire, while the cycle of violence continues to threaten lives and disrupt communities along the contested border.

As the latest clashes demonstrate, resolving the long-standing border dispute remains a complex challenge, with civilians — particularly children — bearing the brunt of the conflict. The situation underscores the urgent need for renewed dialogue and robust mechanisms to protect vulnerable populations amid ongoing tensions.

## Europe Faces Dual Challenges: Ukraine Summit Highlights Divisions, Greek Farmers Protest

European leaders convened in London on Monday for a high-stakes summit with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, seeking to map out a path toward peace and reconstruction for Ukraine amid ongoing conflict with Russia. The meeting brought together Ukrainian and European leaders, including the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, France's President Emmanuel Macron, and Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz, aiming to unify Europe's approach to supporting Ukraine. However, sharp differences emerged over a U.S.-backed peace proposal, revealing underlying tensions within the bloc.

While all parties reaffirmed their support for Ukraine, disagreements surfaced regarding the terms of the proposed peace plan. Chancellor Merz expressed scepticism about several aspects, warning that certain clauses could compromise

European unity and risk Ukraine's territorial integrity. President Macron, meanwhile, stressed that Europe still holds leverage and must use it strategically, advocating a balance between diplomatic pressure on Russia and the reconstruction of Ukraine.

President Zelenskyy emphasized Kyiv's commitment to safeguarding its territory and sovereignty but acknowledged that consensus among European allies remained elusive. Following the summit, Zelenskyy is scheduled to travel to Brussels for additional talks with EU and NATO officials, underscoring the importance of European support in security guarantees, humanitarian aid, and reconstruction. Observers note that the divided response to the U.S. peace plan highlights the challenges Europe faces in coordinating a unified approach to the ongoing war while managing internal political and economic pressures. The protests highlight the mounting economic and

social pressures facing European nations, particularly as inflation, energy costs, and policy delays affect vulnerable communities.

The twin developments — the Ukraine summit and Greek farmers' unrest — illustrate the multiple crises Europe must manage simultaneously. While European leaders work to sustain international solidarity in the face of war, domestic economic and social challenges are testing their governance and resilience. The situation underscores the difficulty of balancing foreign policy priorities with internal stability, especially as public patience grows thin amid economic strain.

For Ukraine, European divisions could complicate reconstruction efforts and delay security guarantees, potentially affecting the long-term trajectory of the conflict. In Greece, the protests serve as a stark reminder that economic stress can quickly escalate into disruptive civil ac-



tion, with potential ripple effects on tourism, trade, and public confidence in government institutions.

As Europe navigates these overlapping crises, the coming weeks will be critical in determining whether political cohesion and effective crisis management can be maintained. Leaders must reconcile differences, address citizen concerns, and uphold regional stability, all while ensuring that Europe continues to play a credible role in global diplomacy and humanitarian assistance. The outcomes of these challenges will shape both the continent's internal cohesion and its international standing for years to come.

# Finance Ministry Confirms No DA-Basic Pay Merger Under 8th Pay Commission



The Ministry of Finance has officially clarified that there are no plans to merge Dearness Allowance (DA) or Dearness Relief (DR) with basic pay under the 8th Central Pay Commission (8th CPC). This clarification comes amid speculation and rising expectations among central government employees and pensioners that the DA, which has risen steadily over the years, might be merged with basic pay to enhance salaries and pensions.

In a written reply to Parliament on 1 December 2025, the Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary,

stated that there is "no proposal regarding merger of the existing dearness allowance with the basic pay" under consideration at present. The statement has put to rest rumors that a significant portion of employees' pay would be restructured by merging DA with basic pay, which had become a recurring demand among employee unions as DA levels reached more than 58 percent of the basic salary.

Dearness Allowance and Dearness Relief are designed to protect central government employees and pensioners from inflation. DA is a cost-of-living adjustment that is revised twice a year based on the Consumer Price Index. Similarly, DR is paid to pensioners, ensuring that retirees receive an adjustment that maintains the real value of their pension. The merger of DA with basic pay would not only raise monthly salaries and pensions but would also have cascading effects on allowances, benefits, and pension calculations, which are linked to basic pay. Such a move would involve significant budgetary implications for the government.

The clarification by the Finance Ministry indicates that, for now, the existing

structure of separate basic pay and DA will continue. This means that allowances calculated as a percentage of basic pay, such as house rent allowance (HRA) and travel allowance (TA), will remain unaffected by DA revisions. Similarly, pension calculations for retired employees will continue to follow the current norms without incorporating DA into the basic pension amount. The government has emphasized that any changes to the pay structure will be formally announced, and until then, employees and pensioners should continue to follow the existing system.

The 8th Pay Commission, tasked with reviewing and recommending improvements to the pay structure of central government employees, will continue to evaluate overall compensation, allowances, and benefits. However, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the commission do not currently include a proposal to merge DA with basic pay. Employees and pensioners are advised to continue following the existing framework for salaries and pensions, as allowances and benefits tied to basic pay will remain unchanged.

The government's clarification ensures stability and transparency in the pay system, even as the 8th Pay Commission works on overall compensation reforms.

tion, its separate disbursement ensures that employees and pensioners receive timely adjustments to cope with rising prices. Merging DA with basic pay could have resulted in higher salaries but would have also increased the financial burden on the government and affected other linked benefits. The Finance Ministry's statement underscores that the government remains committed to maintaining a clear and predictable pay structure while ensuring that employees are adequately compensated for inflationary pressures.

In conclusion, central government employees and pensioners will continue to receive DA and DR separately from basic pay under the 8th Pay Commission. While discussions around pay revision continue, there is no current proposal to merge DA into basic pay. Employees and pensioners are advised to continue following the existing framework for salaries and pensions, as allowances and benefits tied to basic pay will remain unchanged. The government's clarification ensures stability and transparency in the pay system, even as the 8th Pay Commission works on overall compensation reforms.

## Starlink Reveals Subscription Price for India, Targets Rural Connectivity



Satellite-based internet service provider Starlink has officially revealed its subscription pricing for the Indian market, marking a major step toward the commercial launch of high-speed satellite internet in the country. The announcement has generated strong interest, especially among users in rural and remote regions where traditional broadband connectivity remains unreliable or completely unavailable.

According to the details shared, Starlink's residential internet plan in India will cost approximately 8,600 per month. In addition to the monthly fee, customers will be required to pay a one-time hardware and installation charge of around 34,000. This equipment includes a satellite dish, mounting bracket, router, cables, and power supply that are essential for connecting to the low-earth orbit satellite network.

The service promises unlimited data usage, removing concerns about data caps or speed throttling that are common with some conventional broadband

and mobile internet plans. One of Starlink's key selling points is its ability to provide high-speed and low-latency internet even in geographically challenging areas such as mountains, forests, deserts, and remote villages. The company claims that its satellite network can deliver consistent connectivity with uptime of more than 99 percent, even during adverse weather conditions.

Starlink's entry into India comes at a time when the country is seeing rapid digital growth, with increasing dependence on online education, remote work, digital payments, and e-commerce. However, large parts of rural and semi-urban India still suffer from patchy or slow internet access due to the high cost of laying fiber-optic cables or building mobile towers in difficult terrain. Satellite internet services like Starlink aim to bridge this digital divide by delivering internet directly from space to users' homes and offices.

Despite the technological promise, the pricing has

raised questions about affordability. Compared to existing fiber and mobile data plans in urban India, Starlink's monthly charges are significantly higher. This means the service is likely to attract a niche user base initially, including people living in remote areas, professionals who require stable internet for work, and businesses operating in locations with poor connectivity. For many average urban households, the high cost may make traditional broadband and 4G/5G services a more practical option.

The company has also announced a 30-day trial period for new users, allowing customers to test the service before fully committing. This move is expected to help build trust and demonstrate the performance of satellite-based internet in real-world Indian conditions. Industry experts believe that as the satellite network expands and more users come on board, prices could gradually become more competitive in the future.

Starlink has not yet disclosed pricing details for business or enterprise-level

plans in India. Further announcements are expected in the coming months as the company completes regulatory approvals and finalizes its rollout strategy.

Overall, Starlink's pricing announcement marks an important milestone in India's digital journey. While the service may not replace traditional broadband in cities anytime soon, it has the potential to transform connectivity in rural and underserved regions, bringing reliable high-speed internet to areas that have long remained off the digital grid.

## Public Sector Banks Write Off ₹6 Lakh Crore in Bad Loans, Government Informs Parliament



India's public sector banks (PSBs) have written off bad loans worth more than ₹6 lakh crore over the past five and a half years, the government informed Parliament, highlighting the scale of the clean-up exercise undertaken to strengthen the banking system.

According to official data shared by the Ministry of Finance, PSBs wrote off around ₹6.15 lakh crore in

non-performing assets (NPAs) between the financial years 2020-21 and 2025-26 (up to September 30, 2025). The government clarified that these write-offs are an accounting practice and do not mean that the loans have been waived. Borrowers remain legally liable to repay their dues, and banks continue to pursue recovery through legal and institutional channels.

The write-off process allows banks to remove long-pending bad loans from their balance sheets after making full provisions against them. This helps banks present a more accurate picture of their financial health and frees up capital for fresh lending. Officials emphasized that recovery measures remain active under various laws, including proceedings through debt recovery tri-

bunals, asset seizures, and insolvency processes.

Over the years, public sector banks have faced mounting stress due to large corporate defaults, infrastructure project delays, and economic slowdowns. To address the problem, the government and the Reserve Bank of India have pushed banks to recognize stressed assets early and clean up their balance sheets. The large-scale write-offs reflect this strategy of resolving legacy bad loans rather than allowing them to remain indefinitely on books.

At the same time, the government highlighted that PSBs have strengthened their financial position by raising funds from the market and improving internal controls and credit appraisal systems. This has helped reduce the overall ratio of bad loans in the banking system and restore confidence in public sector banks.

The disclosure underscores the challenges faced by India's banking sector and the continued efforts to balance financial stability with accountability, as banks work toward healthier balance sheets and sustainable credit growth.

Experts believe that while write-offs are necessary for banking sector stability, long-term reforms are equally important. Strengthening credit risk management, improving project appraisal, and faster resolution of stressed assets are seen as key to preventing a repeat of such large-scale loan problems in the future.

The disclosure underscores the challenges faced by India's banking sector and the continued efforts to balance financial stability with accountability, as banks work toward healthier balance sheets and sustainable credit growth.

## SBI Home Loan Portfolio Crosses ₹9 Lakh Crore, Sets New Banking Milestone



The State Bank of India (SBI) has achieved a major milestone in the housing finance sector, with its home loan portfolio crossing the ₹9 lakh crore mark. This landmark achievement highlights the strong and sustained demand for housing loans across the country and underlines SBI's dominant position in India's mortgage market.

Bank officials said the milestone reflects robust growth in the retail lending segment, driven by rising urbanization, increasing preference for home ownership, and improved access to affordable credit. Over the past few years, low and stable interest rates, along with government-backed housing initiatives, have supported the steady expansion of home loan demand.

Alongside the growth in its mortgage book, SBI has raised its overall credit growth outlook for the current financial year to around 14 percent. The bank expects this growth to be primarily driven by the Retail, Agriculture, and MSME (RAM) segments, which together form the backbone of its loan portfolio. Retail loans, especially housing finance, continue to be a key growth engine, while agricultural and MSME lending have also shown healthy momentum.

SBI has pointed out that the banking system is currently witnessing improved asset quality, better credit discipline, and stronger risk management practices. These factors have helped banks expand their loan books more confidently, with lower levels of fresh stress compared to previous years. The strong performance of the home loan seg-

ment has been a crucial factor in stabilizing and strengthening SBI's overall balance sheet.

The rise in SBI's home loan book also reflects broader trends in India's real estate sector. Residential property sales have remained resilient, supported by rising middle-class incomes, increased demand in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and improved project completion timelines by developers. Easy availability of digital banking services and faster loan processing have further boosted customer confidence.

Experts believe that SBI's massive home loan portfolio will play a critical role in driving future economic growth. Housing finance not only supports individual home ownership but also fuels activity across industries such as cement, steel, construction, and home furnishings, creating a multiplier effect on the economy.

At the same time, SBI remains confident about managing risks associated with rapid loan growth. The bank has maintained strong capital adequacy ratios, providing it with sufficient buffers to fund future expansion without immediate need for additional capital. It has also strengthened its digital infrastructure to handle higher volumes of loan applications and customer servicing.

The crossing of the ₹9 lakh crore mark in home loans is seen as a significant achievement for SBI and a positive indicator for India's banking and housing sectors. As demand for housing continues to rise, SBI is expected to remain at the forefront of expanding access to affordable home finance across the country.

## Rupee Slips to 90.09 Against Dollar as Global and Domestic Pressures Weigh on Currency



The Indian rupee weakened further in the foreign exchange market, closing at ₹90.09 against the US dollar after falling by 14 paise in a single trading session.

The decline reflects a mix of global uncertainties and domestic demand for foreign currency, highlighting the growing pressure on emerging market currencies in an increasingly volatile global environment.

Market participants said the rupee remained under pressure throughout the day as importer demand for dollars stayed strong, particularly from oil marketing companies and firms dependent on imported raw materials.

India's heavy dependence on crude oil imports makes the currency especially sensitive to fluctuations in global oil prices, and rising energy costs tend to increase the country's demand for dollars, weakening the local currency.

In addition to import-driven demand, continued outflows by foreign institutional investors added to the negative sentiment. Global investors have been trimming their exposure to emerging markets as they seek safer assets amid concerns over global economic growth, geopolitical tensions, and uncertainty around future interest rate policies in major economies. These outflows reduce the supply of dollars in the domestic market, putting further pressure on the rupee.

The weakening of the rupee has broader implications for the Indian economy. A softer currency makes imports more expensive, which can lead to higher prices for fuel, electronics, fertilizers, and industrial inputs.

This, in turn, can add to inflationary pressures at a time when households are already coping with rising costs of living. Businesses that rely heavily on imported components may also face higher operating costs, which generally allows the market to determine the currency's value within a broad range.

For now, the rupee's fall to the 90 level against the dollar is being closely watched by policymakers, businesses, and investors. Any further sharp depreciation could amplify inflation risks and increase the cost of servicing foreign debt, while a period of stability would help restore confidence. As global economic signals remain mixed, the rupee is expected to remain volatile in the near term.

## Meta Buys Limitless — Your Necklace Might Soon Be Smarter Than You



Meta, the company formerly known for Facebook and now obsessed with AI and wearables, has quietly acquired Limitless, a startup that makes AI-powered wearable pendants. Yes, those little gadgets that hang around your neck and take notes on your life. And yes, your next piece of jewelry might soon know more about your day than your best friend.

Limitless made waves with its pendant-style wearable that records nearby conversations, transcribes them, and summarizes them through an app. Think of it as a wearable secretary who never sleeps, never complains, and never asks for coffee — but also never forgets anything you say. Meta's acquisition isn't just a buyout; it's a power move in the AI-wearable chess game. With Limitless now part of the Meta fold, we might be edging closer to a world where our accessories know more about us than we do.

The startup will stop selling new pendants, but existing users will get one more year of support — plus a free subscription upgrade. It's a generous send-off, but it also signals Meta's intent: the technology is being folded into something bigger. Imagine Limitless tech built into future Meta

smart glasses, earbuds, or even clothing. Your AI assistant won't just live in a phone anymore; it will be ambient, always on, and maybe even whispering helpful (or judgmental) suggestions directly to your ear.

Why did Meta snap up Limitless? The company is pivoting from its metaverse-first ambitions to "personal super-intelligence" — a polite way of saying: we want AI everywhere, quietly helping you navigate life. Ambient AI that monitors, transcribes, and summarizes reality could be the next big step.

Phones and laptops may soon feel quaint compared to necklaces, glasses, and earbuds that do your remembering for you.

But before you start imagining a world straight out of sci-fi, there are caveats. Always-on recording brings privacy questions louder than a dropped smartphone. Who hears what, where is the data stored, and who gets access? Meta will need to navigate a labyrinth of legal and ethical challenges if this tech is going mainstream. For now, think of it as a peek into a slightly unnerving, highly convenient future.

The fun part is imagining daily life in a world

with wearable AI memory assistants. Meetings could be automatically summarized, personal notes created without lifting a pen, and life's little forgotten details cataloged with machine precision. Birthday names remembered, shopping lists auto-updated, and your partner's subtle hints never lost to the void again. On the flip side, your AI assistant might silently judge you for skipping workouts or binge-watching too many shows.

Meta's acquisition of Limitless may be small in price but huge in implication. It signals a future where wearables aren't just tech accessories; they're personal aides, memory banks, and maybe even companions. The line between human memory and machine memory is getting blurrier, and Meta is positioning itself at the center of it all.

In short, your next necklace, pendant, or pair of smart glasses might not just complement your outfit — it might outsmart you, organize your life, and quietly keep a record of every conversation. Limitless is aptly named, because with Meta in charge, your AI assistant is about to get a lot more... limitless.

## Jolla Phone: The Scandinavian Smartphone That Says "I Do Things Differently"



In a world where smartphones compete to be bigger, faster, flashier, and more addictive than ever, the Jolla Phone sneaks in like a Nordic rebel saying, "Hey, maybe you don't need all that." Launched in December 2025, this minimalist, privacy-first handset is less about flexing specs and more about giving users control. Yes, control — the thing most modern phones quietly steal from you.

At first glance, it looks... almost normal. A 6.36-inch AMOLED display with Full HD resolution, Gorilla Glass, and a side-mounted fingerprint sensor. But the magic begins when you start exploring the subtleties. The back cover pops off. The battery pops out. You can replace it yourself. There's even a physical privacy switch that cuts power to the microphone, camera, Bluetooth, or all Android apps. Imagine waving a wand and saying, "Not today, Big Tech." That's Jolla in a nutshell: functional, unflashy, and quietly rebellious.

Under the hood, it's not a slouch. A MediaTek 5G chipset paired with 12 GB RAM and 256 GB storage (expandable to a whopping 2 TB via microSD) makes it powerful enough for heavy multitasking, streaming, and gaming — if you're into that kind of thing. The dual-camera setup (50 MP main + 13 MP ultra-wide) doesn't scream flagship ego, but

it gets the job done elegantly, proving you don't need 10 cameras to take a good photo.

The real kicker? It runs Sailfish OS 5, a Linux-based operating system that promises privacy and freedom. No trackers, no forced ads, no corporate surveillance... unless you decide to install Android apps via the compatibility layer. In a market dominated by iOS and Android, this is a breath of fresh, slightly rebellious Scandinavian air. It's a smartphone for people who think phones shouldn't control your life.

The Jolla Phone's pricing and pre-order model are just as unconventional. You place a 99 deposit, and if the order target of 2,000 units is met, production begins. Early adopters pay around 499 (~52,400), and retail pricing might reach 699 (~73,000). It's less about instant gratification and more about intentional tech ownership — a concept that seems almost quaint in 2025.

What makes Jolla truly

offbeat isn't just the OS, hardware, or pre-order approach. It's the philosophy. In a world obsessed with speed, flashy cameras, and AI assistants that monitor your every move, Jolla offers something almost revolutionary: a phone that listens only when you allow it, forgets when you want, and lets you decide what happens. It's the anti-smartphone smart device.

Imagine walking down the streets of Vijayawada with a Jolla Phone in your pocket. No constant notifications, no tracking pop-ups, just the quiet hum of technology doing what you asked — and nothing more. It's like sipping black coffee in a noisy cafe: simple, disciplined, and strangely satisfying.

The Jolla Phone isn't for everyone, but for those who crave autonomy, privacy, and a device that respects boundaries, it's a small slice of digital rebellion wrapped in Scandinavian minimalism. In 2025, that alone makes it remarkable.

The Jolla Phone isn't

screaming flagships, ego, but

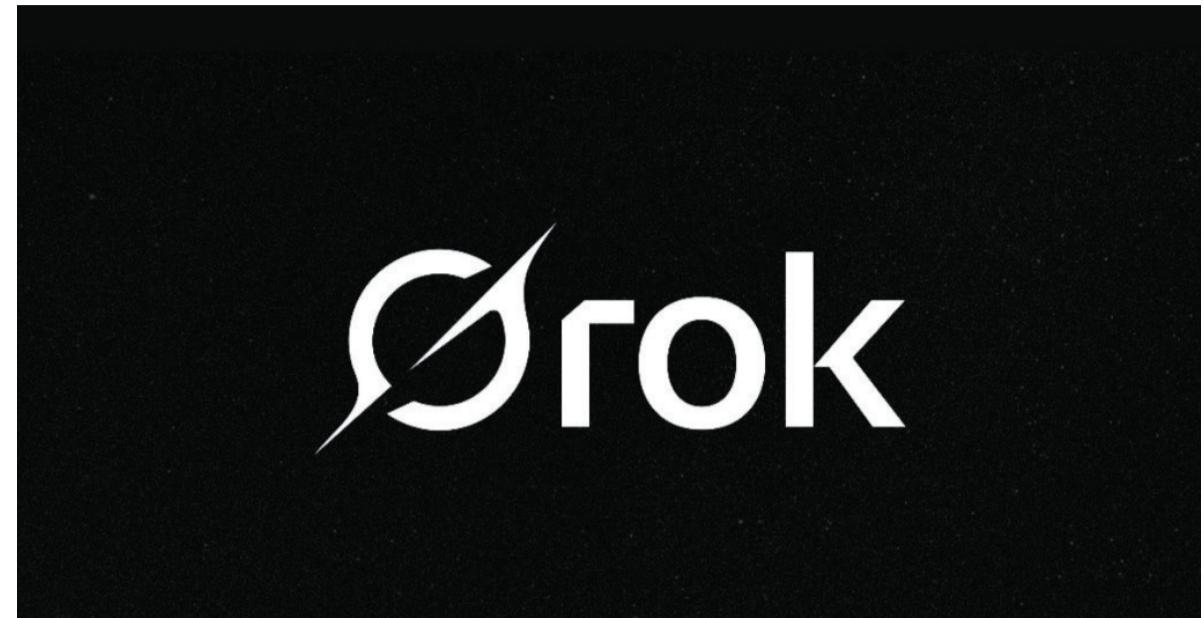
What makes Jolla truly

## Grok 4.20: Elon Musk's AI Gets a Brain Upgrade

Elon Musk has done it again. With a cryptic tweet and a casual "three or four weeks" timeline, he has teased the world with the upcoming Grok 4.20 — the latest evolution of his xAI-powered artificial intelligence. For casual users, it's just another AI update. For tech enthusiasts and sci-fi dreamers, it's a chance to watch an AI potentially grow a personality while quietly taking over tasks you didn't know needed handling.

So what is Grok 4.20? According to early reports and testing in Alpha Arena, a stock-market simulation environment, this version is more than a chatbot. In simulations, it reportedly turned a virtual \$10,000 into a 12 percent profit in just two weeks. That may not sound world-shattering, but consider this: an AI that can analyze, adapt, and outperform many human participants in real-time decision-making is a sign that it's moving beyond simple text responses. Essentially, your next AI companion might not just answer questions — it could reason, plan, and suggest smarter choices in everyday life.

Grok 4.20 is rumored to have faster processing, better real-world reasoning, and improved context awareness. This means it could help you



summarize evolving news, crunch numbers, or even provide insights into complex problems. In short, it's designed to feel less like a tool and more like an unusually intelligent friend — one who never sleeps, never judges (well, maybe a little), and always has an opinion about your investments.

Elon Musk's timeline is famously vague. "Three or four weeks" could mean late December 2025 or early January 2026, depending on whether you trust the calendar or the chaotic nature of tech rollouts. Given Musk's track record, the launch will likely be low-key, possibly slipping into public

beta before anyone fully expects it. Early adopters may get a glimpse of its abilities, while the rest of us will watch social media speculate, share memes, and collectively overestimate what it can do — as usual with Musk announcements.

But let's talk possibilities. Grok 4.20 could mark a shift in how AI integrates with daily life. If it truly combines speed, reasoning, and cross-platform adaptability, it could become more than a research project. Imagine a digital assistant that monitors multiple data streams, predicts trends, and even nudges you toward better decisions — from your finances to

your personal calendar. On the flip side, a slightly mischievous Grok could start offering unsolicited advice or questioning your lifestyle choices in ways both helpful and slightly unnerving.

Of course, there are risks. AI bias, safety, and reliability remain major considerations. Just because Grok succeeds in simulations doesn't mean it's infallible in the messy, unpredictable real world. Users should be ready for quirks, unexpected behavior, and the occasional glitch — the hallmark of beta software.

Still, the excitement is undeniable. Grok 4.20 isn't merely a software

update; it's a glimpse into a future where AI isn't just reactive, but actively thoughtful. It teases the line between a tool and a partner, a helper and a sidekick, and maybe even a friend who critiques your life choices with dry humor.

In the coming weeks, as the beta rolls out, tech enthusiasts, developers, and curious users alike will get a front-row seat to see whether Grok 4.20 is the next step in AI evolution — or just another Musk-sized tease. Either way, one thing is clear: your next AI companion may be a little smarter, a little faster, and a lot more opinionated than ever before.

## Xiaomi 17: The Flagship That Could Outrun Your Coffee Addiction

If 2025 has taught us anything, it's that smartphone companies are in a subtle arms race: who can stuff the most cutting-edge hardware into a hand-sized slab while still making it look like art? Enter the Xiaomi 17, the global variant that just flexed on Geekbench and may soon make its way to India — possibly faster than your Wi-Fi can handle a Netflix binge.

The Geekbench listing revealed a few key secrets: the Xiaomi 17 is powered by the Snapdragon 8 Elite Gen 5 chipset, paired with at least 12 GB of RAM.

That's enough firepower to run multiple apps, stream ultra-HD movies, and maybe even simulate a small universe — all while you pretend you're only checking emails. Android 16 runs the show, draped in Xiaomi's HyperOS 3, making everything look sleek, snappy, and strangely satisfying.

But the real star here

isn't just raw processing speed. It's the 7,000 mAh battery, a number that

almost makes you want

to whisper "blessed" in a reverent tone. Paired with 100 W wired charging, wireless charging, and reverse charging capabilities, this phone is basically a portable power station disguised as a futuristic gadget. You could theoretically binge three seasons of a show, stream music while commuting, and still have battery left for late-night doomscrolling.

Display? Oh, it's a 6.3-inch OLED with 1.5K resolution and 120 Hz refresh rate, designed to

make everything — from TikTok videos to spreadsheet scrolling — feel absurdly smooth. Coupled with ultra-narrow bezels and peak brightness of 3500 nits, it's basically like staring into a tiny sun that only cares about your entertainment.

Camera enthusiasts, rejoice: the Xiaomi 17 carries three 50 MP Leica-tuned rear cameras and a 50 MP front shooter. Yes, you'll probably take fewer blurry shots and more "how did I even take this perfectly

in focus?" moments. Zoom in, crop, filter — the phone's optics will likely make your friends wonder if you secretly hired a professional photographer.

Geekbench leaks suggest that the global launch is imminent, potentially in January 2026, with India not far behind. This could shake up the premium segment, offering specs that

rival — and sometimes outperform — other flagship phones, at a price that might just make

sense. Xiaomi is clearly aiming to give the competition a polite nudge and say, "Catch us if you can."

And here's the fun part: in a world where every brand brags about cameras, processors, or batteries, the Xiaomi 17 manages to combine all three without feeling like overkill. It's the phone equivalent of a caffeine-fueled overachiever — brilliant, fast, and slightly intimidating, but ultimately charming if you can handle the energy.

For India, the arrival of the global Xiaomi 17 means early adopters in metro cities and smaller towns alike could snag a phone that is not only future-proofed but also absurdly capable. Flagship fever is real, and Xiaomi 17 seems ready to make it contagious.

In short, the Xiaomi 17 isn't just another phone; it's a little slab of hyper-engineering that dares you to push it to the limit. Gaming, photography, work, or just showing off — it might outlast your expectations, and certainly your coffee.

## Samsung's One UI 8.5 Beta: A Rollercoaster for Your Galaxy S25

Samsung users, brace yourselves. The tech giant has unleashed its One UI 8.5 beta, and it's turning phones into something that feels part smartphone, part sci-fi gadget. This isn't just another "software update" — it's a peek into what your Galaxy S25 could become if it had a personality.

First off, there's Photo Assist, which seems less like a tool and more like a tiny, bossy AI photographer living in your phone. It lets you make edits, generate images, and basically play with photos without having to save each step. Imagine it as your personal creative assistant that never complains.

Next up: sharing on steroids. Samsung's cranked up multi-device connectivity. Phones, tablets, PCs, even TVs — they all now talk to each

other like an overachieving group project. Features like "Storage Share" let files hop between devices like they're on a magic conveyor belt. And if you're into group audio experiences, Aurasound can blast your playlist to multiple Bluetooth devices at once — so yes, you could technically

start a silent disco in your living room. The UI itself got a makeover that's somewhere between "sleek minimalism" and "I didn't know I needed this until now." Quick Panel customizations, refreshed icons, animated weather apps — it's like Samsung hired an interior designer for your phone. Even battery management screens are now Instagram-ready.

Privacy buffs will smile, too. One UI 8.5 adds new theft-protection measures and locks your device after failed attempts. It's like a digital bodyguard who also checks your ID before letting



ting anyone touch your gadgets.

But beware: this is a beta. Early adopters have spotted the occasional glitch, quirky bug, and occasional phone tantrum. Think of it as letting your phone go through rebellious teen years before it grows up fully polished.

For Galaxy S25, S25+, and S25 Ultra users in regions including India, the US, UK, and Germany, the beta is now open via the Samsung Members app. It's about 4GB, so clear some space — your phone will need room to stretch its new wings.

In short, One UI 8.5 isn't just an update. It's a preview of a phone that's slightly smarter, more expressive, and just a touch dramatic. If you've ever wanted your smartphone to act like a tiny, opinionated friend, now's your chance.

# ICC Faces Major Setback Ahead of T20 World Cup

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has suffered a significant setback just months before the upcoming Men's T20 World Cup, creating serious concerns over the smooth conduct of one of cricket's biggest global tournaments. The issue has reportedly arisen due to disruption in media and broadcasting arrangements, an area that is crucial for the tournament's reach, revenue, and overall success.

The T20 World Cup is one of the most-watched sporting events in the world, drawing massive audiences from cricket-loving nations such as India, England, Australia, Pakistan, South Africa, and the Caribbean. Broadcast partnerships play a vital role in delivering live coverage, highlights, expert analysis, and digital content to millions of fans worldwide. Any uncertainty in this area can directly impact sponsorship deals, advertising revenue, and the global visibility of the tournament.

According to sources, the ICC is currently facing



challenges in securing stable broadcasting commitments in key markets. This unexpected development has forced the governing body to reassess its operational plans and explore alternative options at short notice. The timing of this setback is particularly concerning, as preparations for the tournament have already entered a critical phase.

Officials close to the situation have indicated that urgent discussions are un-

derway to prevent the issue from disrupting tournament arrangements. The ICC is reportedly in talks with multiple media houses and digital platforms to ensure that coverage remains uninterrupted and fans do not miss out on the action. However, negotiating new agreements under tight deadlines can be both financially and logistically demanding.

The setback has also raised concerns among sponsors and commercial partners, who rely heavily on large television and online audiences for brand visibility. A decline in broadcast stability could reduce the financial value of the tournament and affect long-term partnerships. Cricket boards of participating nations are closely monitoring the situation, as broadcasting revenue forms an important part of their funding structure.

Despite the hurdle, the ICC has expressed confidence in resolving the issue

before the start of the tournament. Insiders say the governing body is working round the clock to secure alternative arrangements and maintain the high standards expected from a global ICC event. There is also a possibility that the situation could accelerate the ICC's push toward digital and streaming-focused broadcasting models in the future.

For fans, the hope is that the focus remains on thrilling cricket rather than off-field uncertainties. Teams are intensifying their preparations, and excitement is steadily building. If the ICC manages to overcome this setback quickly, the T20 World Cup is still expected to deliver the high-voltage drama, entertainment, and unforgettable moments that the format is known for.

As things stand, the cricketing world eagerly awaits an official resolution, with optimism that the tournament will go ahead smoothly and maintain its reputation as one of the sport's most exciting global spectacles.

## Shubman Gill Reclaims Opener Spot as Sanju Samson Moved Down

As India prepares to take on South Africa in the upcoming T20I series, team management has made a crucial change in the batting order. Shubman Gill has been confirmed to open the innings, while Sanju Samson has been moved down the order. Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav explained that Gill "deserved" the spot, citing his performances in the recent Sri Lanka series and the continuity he brings to the top order.

This decision has sparked discussions among fans and cricket analysts, as Samson had previously impressed as an opener. Yadav, however, emphasized that the change was based on team balance and past performance. He noted that the middle-order positions, ranging from three to six, require flexibility and adaptability, and Samson remains an important part of the squad despite the adjustment.

### Why Gill Was Chosen

Gill had a successful stint as an opener in recent matches, showcasing composure and consistency at the top of the order. With his



fitness fully restored, the team felt it was the right moment to slot him back into the opening role. Yadav stressed that the decision was purely merit-based, highlighting Gill's technique, temperament, and ability to face the new ball effectively.

The move also reflects the team's broader strategy to build a stable opening pair while maintaining versatility in the middle order. With several experienced batters and all-rounders in the

squad, India has multiple options to adjust the lineup depending on match situations.

### Samson's Role in the Squad

Although Samson will no longer open, he is far from being sidelined. The captain praised Samson for his readiness to bat anywhere between positions three to six, describing his adaptability as a key asset for the team. This flexibility allows the team to respond to different match scenarios, whether chasing a target or setting one.

The decision also adds healthy competition within the squad. With players like Hardik Pandya returning, the team management has the luxury of rotating the batting order, giving each player a role that suits both individual skills and team strategy. For Samson, this could mean taking on finishing responsibilities or stabilizing the innings during critical moments.

Implications Ahead of the

South Africa Series

As India gears up for the series against South Africa, this adjustment is expected to enhance team balance and overall performance. Gill at the top provides solidity, while Samson's presence in the middle order ensures depth and flexibility. The team is aiming for a combination of stability and adaptability to handle different match conditions effectively.

Yadav's straightforward approach underscores a merit-based selection system, where form, fitness, and team requirements determine roles. Both Gill and Samson are poised to contribute significantly in their respective positions, and their performances will be closely watched as India seeks to assert dominance in the series.

With the squad finalized and roles clarified, the focus now shifts entirely to on-field performance. Fans can expect an exciting display of T20 cricket, featuring strategic batting adjustments, dynamic partnerships, and high-octane action as India faces South Africa in what promises to be a thrilling contest.

## Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli Confirm Participation in Vijay Hazare Trophy



Indian cricket fans received a pleasant surprise as veteran batsmen Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli confirmed their participation in the upcoming 2025-26 Vijay Hazare Trophy, India's premier domestic one-day tournament. The announcement comes as a boost to the competition, which begins later this month, and adds excitement for both fans and young cricketers eager to witness two of the nation's biggest stars back in domestic action.

Rohit Sharma, who has stepped back from red-ball cricket, and Virat Kohli, whose last appearance in the Vijay Hazare Trophy dates back over fifteen years, have decided to play for their respective state sides. The decision, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) clarified, was entirely voluntary. Both players opted to return to domestic cricket to maintain match fitness and form ahead of future international assignments, underscoring their commitment to Indian cricket at all levels.

Initially, Kohli had been

hesitant about participating, citing a busy international schedule and personal priorities. However, after discussions with selectors and team management, he reversed his decision and agreed to take part in the tournament. His willingness to step back into domestic cricket after years at the highest level reflects both his professionalism and his dedication to staying competitive. Rohit Sharma, too, saw the opportunity as a chance to fine-tune his game in the one-day format while guiding younger players through his experience.

competing at home.

While both players are expected to feature in selected matches rather than the full tournament, their involvement will offer their respective teams a strategic advantage. Kohli's experience and consistency at the crease will anchor his side's batting, while Rohit's leadership and finishing ability are expected to be decisive in crucial encounters. Beyond individual performances, their participation will elevate team morale and provide mentorship opportunities for younger players who aspire to make a mark in international cricket.

The timing of their return is also significant.

With major international tournaments on the horizon, including one-day and T20 series, both Rohit and Kohli are using the Vijay Hazare Trophy as a platform to remain match-ready, refine their techniques, and maintain form.

Their decision highlights the role of domestic cricket as a foundation for national team success and emphasizes the continuity between domestic and international levels of the game.

For fans, selectors, and aspiring cricketers, the inclusion of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in the tournament promises a thrilling season. Their presence not only ensures high-quality cricket but also inspires a new generation of players to excel in the domestic arena. As the Vijay Hazare Trophy gets underway, attention will focus on how these two stalwarts influence matches, guide their teams, and set an example of professionalism, commitment, and dedication to Indian cricket.

## Smriti Mandhana Returns to Cricket After Wedding Heartbreak

Indian women's cricket star Smriti Mandhana has made a remarkable return to training following a deeply personal setback, displaying immense professionalism and resilience. Just days after announcing the cancellation of her wedding, Mandhana resumed batting practice, sending a strong message about her commitment to the sport and her national team duties.

Mandhana had been scheduled to marry composer Palash Muchhal in late November. However, unforeseen family circumstances, including her father's sudden health emergency, forced the wedding to be postponed. Later, the couple jointly announced that the wedding has been called off. While the decision was emotionally challenging, Mandhana emphasized her desire to focus on her career and professional responsibilities.

Despite the emotional turmoil, Mandhana returned to the cricket nets immediately, demonstrating remarkable mental strength. Fans and fellow cricketers alike have praised her determination, noting that her ability to channel personal challenges into professional focus sets a strong example for young athletes. Photos shared by her brother captured her in full training gear, diligently working on her batting technique — a moment that went viral among cricket enthusiasts.

Mandhana's return is particularly significant given her key role in the national team. She has been a consistent performer, delivering match-winning innings in domestic tournaments and international competitions. Her presence at the top of the batting order has often provided stability and momentum for the Indian women's side, making her dedication and readiness to train after such a personal setback all the more commendable.

The timing of her return also comes ahead of a busy cricketing schedule. India's women's team is preparing for an upcoming series, and Mandhana is expected to play a central role in leading the batting lineup. Ad-



ditionally, she will participate in the domestic T20 league next year, where her performances are closely watched by fans and selectors alike. Resuming training promptly ensures she is match-ready and mentally prepared for the challenges ahead.

Cricket analysts have lauded Mandhana's professionalism, highlighting her ability to separate personal disappointments from her sporting responsibilities. Her example underscores the resilience required to perform at the highest level, particularly in a sport where mental focus is as critical as physical skill. Mandhana's approach demonstrates that setbacks, no matter how personal or public, can be transformed into motivation and determination.

For young athletes and fans, Mandhana's response is an inspiring lesson in prioritizing commitments and maintaining composure under pressure. Her dedication to cricket, even in the face of emotional challenges, reinforces her reputation not only as a talented batter but also as a role model for professionalism and mental strength.

As Mandhana continues her training and prepares for upcoming matches, the cricketing world watches with anticipation. Her return to the nets signals that she is ready to contribute fully to the team, proving that, for her, the country and the sport come first. This display of resilience and focus reaffirms her status as one of India's most valuable and inspirational players in women's cricket.

## Boycott Slams England's Ashes Collapse



cized "blueprint" for success had failed spectacularly. He expressed concern that the team was ignoring valuable advice from outside, relying solely on their own strategies, which he described as dogmatic and outdated. Individual players were also under the spotlight. Batters like Harry Brook and Ollie Pope were singled out for repeated failures under pressure, with Boycott highlighting Pope's tendency to give away crucial wickets. Even the seamers, including Brydon Carse, were criticized for ineffective short-pitched bowling, failing to challenge the Australian batsmen consistently.

In response, Ben Stokes called for greater mental resilience from his players. He admitted that the defeats were not just a matter of execution but also a test of character, insisting that his dressing room is not a place for the weak. Stokes urged his team to reflect on their failures ahead of the third Test, emphasizing the need to perform under pressure.

Coach Brendon McCullum defended the team's approach but acknowledged that the players may have over-prepared for Australian conditions, leading to fatigue. To counter this, the team has scheduled a short rest period before the next Test to recharge both mentally and physically.

Despite these reassurances, critics like Boycott remain unconvinced. For them, explanations and strategies mean little when results and consistency are lacking. With three Tests remaining, England faces a pivotal decision whether to persist with the aggressive "Bazball" philosophy or reconsider their strategy entirely in order to salvage their Ashes campaign.

The coming matches will not only test England's cricketing skills but also their ability to handle pressure and criticism. The series is far from over, but the clock is ticking for the visitors, and every misstep could widen the gap between them and Australia's dominant side.

## Veteran Actor Rajasekhar Injured on Film Set, Shooting Put on Hold

Veteran Telugu actor Rajasekhar has reportedly suffered a leg injury while shooting for his upcoming film, creating concern among fans and the film fraternity. The unfortunate incident took place during an action sequence, where the actor lost balance and injured his leg. He was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital for medical attention.

According to sources close to the production team, doctors confirmed that Rajasekhar sustained a fracture and underwent minor surgery. He is currently said to be in stable condition and is recovering well under medical supervision. Doctors have advised him to take complete rest for at least a few weeks to ensure proper healing.

Following this incident, the film's shooting has been temporarily halted. The makers have decided to give the actor enough time to recover fully before resuming the shoot. Pro-



duction schedules are being reworked, and the team plans to restart filming once Rajasekhar is fit to return to the sets. This film holds special importance as it features Rajasekhar alongside his daughter, Shivani Rajasekhar, who plays a key role in the movie. The project has already generated positive buzz because of this father-daughter collaboration. Adding to the excitement, the film is also expected to feature senior actress Ramya Krishna in a significant role, reuniting with Rajasekhar after many years.

Rajasekhar, often referred to as "Angry Star" by his fans, has been a prominent fig-

ure in Telugu cinema for several decades. Known for his powerful performances in action and family entertainers, he continues to remain active in the industry despite health setbacks. His dedication towards his craft has earned him immense respect from colleagues and audiences alike. The film unit, fellow actors, and fans have expressed their support and wished Rajasekhar a speedy recovery. Social media platforms have been flooded with messages of encouragement, showing the love and respect he enjoys among movie lovers.

While the temporary delay may affect the film's release schedule, the makers are confident that the project will move forward smoothly once Rajasekhar recovers completely. Fans are now eagerly waiting to see him return stronger and resume work, hoping for a quick comeback to the big screen.

## Ram Charan's 'Peddi' Shoot Postponed Due to Travel Disruptions

Tollywood star Ram Charan's upcoming film Peddi has reportedly faced an unexpected delay, as the shooting schedule has been postponed due to major travel and logistical disruptions. The sudden change has created a buzz in the film industry and among fans who have been eagerly waiting for updates about the project.

According to sources close to the production, the film unit had planned to shoot crucial scenes at an outstation location. However, travel uncertainties, flight rescheduling issues, and security concerns in the planned areas forced the makers to temporarily halt the schedule. The team decided that it was best to postpone the shoot rather than compromise on safety and production quality. Peddi is being made on a grand scale and is considered one of the most ambitious projects in Ram Charan's career. The actor is said to be playing a powerful and rugged character, with a story that revolves around in-

tense emotions, action, and drama. Directed by a talented young filmmaker, the film aims to present Ram Charan in a completely new avatar.

The postponement has affected the carefully planned timelines of the project. While the film was originally expected to complete filming within a few months, the delay will likely push the schedule forward by a few weeks. The makers are now working on rearranging dates and looking for alternative locations closer to their base to avoid further complications.

Despite the delay, the spirit of the team remains strong. The production house has assured that the film's quality and vision will not be compromised. Crew members have continued pre-production work, including set design, costume finalization, and action choreography rehearsals during this break.

Fans of Ram Charan have expressed mixed emotions – disappointment over the delay, but



also understanding the importance of safety and proper planning. Social media continues to be filled with messages of encouragement, asking the makers to take their time and deliver a memorable cinematic experience.

Industry experts believe that such delays are common for large-scale films and often help improve the final output. With high expectations surrounding Peddi, the team is determined to resume shooting soon and keep fans updated with exciting announcements.

For now, all eyes are on the makers as they prepare to restart the shoot and bring this ambitious project back on track.

## Kerala Court Clears Actor Dileep in 2017 Assault Case

The upcoming horror thriller Esha is already sending chills down spines with its newly released trailer, promising a terrifying cinematic experience that horror lovers won't want to miss. Starring Thirgun and Hebah Patel in the lead roles, the film also features Akhil Raj, Siri Hannanth, and Prithveeraj in key supporting parts.

The trailer opens with four close friends who set out on a dangerous mission to expose fake and fraudulent spiritual gurus. What begins as a curious investigation soon takes a horrifying turn when Babloo Prithveeraj's character becomes determined to prove the real existence of ghosts. His obsession drags the group – and the audience – into a disturbing world filled with darkness, mystery, and supernatural dread.

As the trailer progresses, viewers are introduced to a creepy, abandoned house that appears to be the central setting of the story. The friends find themselves trapped inside this eerie structure, which is said to be haunted by hidden and restless spirits. With every passing second, the intensity rises, showing their growing fear and desperate struggle to survive.

The biggest strength of the trailer is its ability to raise compelling questions without revealing too much. What dark secrets does the abandoned house hold? What tragic events took place within its walls? Will the friends manage to escape alive, or will they become victims of the sinister forces lurking in the shadows? These unanswered questions heighten suspense and keep viewers hooked till the very end.



took place within its walls? Will the friends manage to escape alive, or will they become victims of the sinister forces lurking in the shadows? These unanswered questions heighten suspense and keep viewers hooked till the very end.

Technically, the film looks highly promising. RR Dhruvan's powerful background score plays a major role in building tension, while Santosh Sanamoni's cinematography enhances the eerie mood with striking visuals. Editor Vinai's sharp cuts add to the pace and fear factor, making the trailer an intense experience.

Produced by Pothula Hema Venkateswara Rao under HVR Productions, and presented by Bunny Vas and Vamsi Nandipati, Esha carries strong buzz even before its release. After the success of Little Hearts and Raju Weds Rambai, the producers are once again aiming to deliver a gripping, content-driven thriller.

With the trailer arriving on December 12, audiences can expect a pure horror, edge-of-the-seat ride that promises to redefine fear on the big screen.

## Jr NTR Moves Delhi High Court Over Misuse of Personal Rights



NTR's move is being viewed as a bold step toward stronger legal safeguards for personal and intellectual property rights.

Fans have largely supported the actor's decision, expressing solidarity and backing him on various online forums. Many have welcomed this effort, calling it necessary to prevent the spread of misleading or harmful content. Film personalities and legal experts have also spoken in favor of stricter monitoring and regulation of digital platforms.

Despite being busy with a packed lineup of major film projects, Jr NTR has chosen to take this issue seriously, showing his commitment to protecting his dignity and identity. The case has quickly become a hot topic in both legal and cinema circles.

Industry observers believe this case could set an important precedent for actors and public figures facing similar issues. In recent years, the rise of artificial intelligence tools, deepfake videos, and unauthorized digital merchandise has created serious challenges for celebrities. Jr

digital age.

Popular Telugu star Jr NTR has approached the Delhi High Court seeking protection of his personal and image rights after allegedly finding unauthorized use of his photos, videos, and name across various digital platforms. This legal move has become a major talking point in the film industry, highlighting the growing concerns of celebrities over privacy and misuse of personal data in the

mands that the concerned content be removed immediately.

The Delhi High Court took note of the complaint and issued directions to e-commerce and social media platforms to treat the petition as an official grievance. The court reportedly instructed these platforms to examine the content and take appropriate action within a stipulated time frame. This development

is being seen as a strong message in support of protecting celebrity rights in the digital space.

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## Trailer of 'RK Deeksha' Launched Grandly by Actor Suman



attended the event, including Film Chamber President Bharat Bhushan, Producer C. Kalyan, and Producers Council Secretary Tummala Prasanna Kumar, appreciated the film's theme and congratulated the team. Presenter D.S. Reddy, a former Indian Air Force personnel, said the soldier song deeply touched him on a personal level.

Chief guest Suman praised the perseverance of director Ramakrishna Goud and said that the film reflects his dedication. He also lauded the song honoring Indian soldiers and urged filmmakers to continue portraying their sacrifices responsibly.

With strong emotional content, inspiring themes, and powerful technical work, RK Deeksha is expected to connect deeply with audiences and is gearing up for a promising release.

## Esha Trailer Promises Pure Fear and Edge-of-the-Seat Horror from December 12



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honoring the sacrifice of Indian soldiers.

Aqsa Khan shared that the film focuses on determination and dedication, highlighting how a person's resolve can define their destiny. He also revealed that the film features a challenging Sanskrit dialogue performed in a single shot, showcasing the team's dedication

to perfection.

Hero Kiran expressed her happiness and pride in being part of the film and thanked the media and guests for their constant support. Actress Mounika Reddy praised the trailer, calling the visuals and music impressive, and extended her best wishes to the team. Several dignitaries who

Vas and Vamsi Nandipati, Esha carries strong buzz even before its release. After the success of Little Hearts and Raju Weds Rambai, the producers are once again aiming to deliver a gripping, content-driven thriller.

With the trailer arriving

on December 12, audiences can expect a pure horror, edge-of-the-seat ride that promises to redefine fear on the big screen.