

**BUZZ POINTS**

Minister Seethakka Offers Prayers at Vemulawada Temple, Calls for Grand Success of Sammakka Saralamma Gaddela Reopening

PAGE 02

Former Minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav Calls for Secunderabad Identity and Self-Respect Rally'

PAGE 03

CM Revanth Reddy Pays Tribute to Former Union Minister Jaipal Reddy on His 84th Birth Anniversary

PAGE 04

Dharampuri Arvind Alleges Rising Attacks on Hindu Temples in Telangana

PAGE 05

Brother Kills Sibling in Drunken Fight During Sankranti in Hyderabad

PAGE 05

CM Revanth Reddy Appeals for Development-Oriented Voting in Municipal Elections

TPN Bureau |

January 17:

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday appealed to the people of Telangana to vote for development in the forthcoming Municipal elections, expressing confidence that the Congress party would secure a decisive victory in the civic polls and also retain power in the next Assembly elections. He asserted that the government's sole agenda is the welfare of the people and the overall development of the state, without political or personal considerations.

Addressing a large public meeting titled 'Praja Palana - Pragati Baata' in Nirmal, the Chief Minister said that politics has a place only during elections and should not interfere with governance. "When it comes to the development of Telangana, there is no politics and no personal agenda. Our focus is only on taking the state forward and ensuring the welfare of every citizen," he said.

Earlier in the day, CM Revanth Reddy inaugu-



rated the Chanaka-Korata Pump House and the Sadharmat Barrage, marking important milestones in strengthening irrigation infrastructure in the region. He later announced that the Chanaka-Korata project would be named after C. Ramachandra Reddy and the Sadharmat Barrage after Narsa Reddy, in recognition of their contributions.

Reiterating his commitment to securing resources for the state, the Chief Minister said he would meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi as many times as necessary for Telangana's development. He appealed to BJP MPs from the state to support the government in obtaining pend-

ing funds from the Centre and resolving long-standing issues. "Development should rise above party politics. Telangana's progress requires collective effort," he said.

Launching a scathing attack on the opposition BRS, Revanth Reddy said the present Congress government had inherited a massive debt burden due to the policies of the previous regime. He alleged that BRS leaders were intolerant of the development initiatives being implemented for public welfare. "Those who ruled the state for ten years cannot tolerate seeing good things happening for the people," he remarked, adding that his government would

focus on positive governance rather than dwelling on past failures.

The Chief Minister laid special emphasis on irrigation development in the erstwhile Adilabad district. He announced that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the long-pending Tummidihatti Barrage would be prepared and submitted before the start of the upcoming budget session of the State Assembly. He directed Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy to expedite the process, stating that the project would ensure optimal utilization of water resources and transform agriculture in the region, which he said

was neglected during the BRS rule.

Announcing a series of development initiatives for Adilabad district, Revanth Reddy said a mega industrial park spread across 10,000 acres would be established to promote industrial growth and employment. He also spoke about plans for setting up an airport in the region to improve connectivity. Emphasizing his emotional attachment to Adilabad, he said the district, known for the slogan "Jal, Jangal, Zameen," would be developed on par with Palamuru.

Highlighting welfare initiatives, the Chief Minister said his government has launched schemes such as Indiramma houses for the poor, fine rice distribution to all white ration card holders, cooking gas cylinders at Rs.500, 200 units of free electricity to poor households, free RTC bus travel for women, and interest-free loans to women self-help groups. He added that empowering women as entrepreneurs remains a key focus of the government.



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to Visit Paleru on January 18, Launch Development Works Worth Rs. 362 Crore

TPN Bureau | Hyd-
January 09

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will visit the Paleru Assembly constituency in the erstwhile Khammam district on January 18 as part of his tour of former unified districts. Revenue, Housing and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy announced on Friday



Addressing a media conference at Maddulapalli village under Edulapuram Municipality limits, the minister said the Chief Minister will lay foundation stones and inaugurate several key development projects with a total outlay of Rs. 362 crore.

Describing the visit as a "development festival on Paleru soil," Ponguleti said the Chief Minister will lay the foundation stone for a JNTU engineering college at Maddulapalli and inaugurate a nursing college. Revanth Reddy will also inaugurate the long-awaited Munneru-Paleru link canal works, a major irrigation project expected to benefit farmers in the region. Additionally, the Chief Minister will inaugurate the Maddulapalli agricultural market yard and lay the foundation

TGSRTC Deploys Over 1,000 Special Buses for Sankranti Return Traffic

TPN Bureau |
Jan 17

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has deployed more than 1,000 special buses to manage the heavy flow of passengers returning to Hyderabad after the Sankranti festival celebrations.



The initiative aims to ensure smooth travel as residents head back to the city ahead of the reopening of schools, colleges, and offices from January 17. Officials said that around 1,200 special buses have been planned to operate on key routes across Telangana to accommodate the surge in return travel.

Typically, the RTC operates about 300 buses daily from Hyderabad to major destinations like Vijayawada, Guntur, Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Kakinada, and Eluru, to cater to the seasonal travel peaks during major festivals.

The implementation of the 1.02 crore insurance scheme is expected to strengthen the morale of employees, ensuring their continued commitment to delivering effective governance and public service.

With this initiative, Telangana joins a growing number of states providing robust insurance cover-

commitment to decentralised governance and remaining close to the people. "The Congress government does not believe in symbolic gestures during elections. We are continuously working among the people with transparency and accountability," the minister asserted.

Highlighting preparations for the Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara, Ponguleti said the government is making arrangements on a scale bigger than the Kumbh Mela. Stone structures reflecting the grandeur of the Kakatiya era have been constructed at Medaram, and these will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister on January 19. He also reiterated that elections to municipalities and corporations whose terms have expired will be conducted soon, reaffirming the government's commitment to democratic processes and local self-governance.

professionals returning to Hyderabad, a significant rush is anticipated at major bus stations and transport hubs. Reservations for several popular routes, especially those connecting Khammam, Bhadrachalam, Visakhapatnam, and Rajahmundry, are already near full capacity.

The deployment is part of the transport corporation's broader efforts to manage seasonal travel peaks during major festivals.

Officials assured that schedules will be closely monitored and adjusted as necessary to keep services smooth and passenger-friendly, ensuring that commuters can return to Hyderabad efficiently and safely.

The implementation of the 1.02 crore insurance scheme is expected to strengthen the morale of employees, ensuring their continued commitment to delivering effective governance and public service.

With this initiative, Telangana joins a growing number of states providing robust insurance cover-

Minister Seethakka Offers Prayers at Vemulawada Temple, Calls for Grand Success of Sammakka Saralamma Gaddela Reopening

TPN Bureau
Vemulawada, January 16, 2026

Telangana Minister Seethakka visited the renowned Sri Rajarajeshwara Swamy Temple at Vemulawada on Thursday along with her family members, offering special prayers and participating in traditional rituals. The minister fulfilled her vows by performing the customary Kode Mokku (offering of a bull), a practice deeply rooted in the faith and beliefs of devotees visiting the historic shrine.

The minister's visit attracted the attention of devotees and temple au-

thorities alike, as she took part in various religious ceremonies and sought divine blessings for the welfare and prosperity of the state. Temple priests performed special poojas and accorded traditional honours to Minister Seethakka in accordance with established customs.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Seethakka underlined the spiritual, cultural, and historical significance of temples in Telangana, stating that such sacred traditions reflect the collective faith, values, and heritage of the people. She reiterated the state government's commit-



ment to preserving religious institutions and improving facilities for

devotees, ensuring a comfortable and orderly darshan experience.

During her interaction with officials and the media, the minister made a strong appeal to ensure the grand success of the Sammakka Saralamma Gaddela re-inauguration programme scheduled to be held on the 19th at Medaram. She announced that the event will be inaugurated by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, describing it as a landmark moment ahead of the globally renowned Sammakka Saralamma Jatara.

Minister Seethakka said the reopening of the Gaddelas carries im-

arrangements being made both at Vemulawada and Medaram, including crowd regulation, security measures, sanitation, and essential amenities for devotees.

Expressing satisfaction over the ongoing preparations, Minister Seethakka instructed officials to remain alert and ensure seamless coordination among departments. She reaffirmed that the government's top priority is to provide a safe, smooth, and spiritually enriching experience for devotees while upholding Telangana's rich religious traditions.

Telangana Begins MSP Procurement of Red Gram for Vanakalam 2025–26 Season



TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, January 16, 2026:
The Telangana government has initiated procurement of red gram (kandulu) under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism for

the Vanakalam 2025–26 season, the Agriculture Minister announced on Thursday. He said the primary objective of the MSP procurement is to ensure remunerative prices for farmers and protect them from losses

arising from fluctuations in market prices.

The minister stated that the procurement process is being implemented by the Telangana State Government in coordination with the Telangana State Cooperative Marketing Federation (TG Markfed). He emphasized that the government remains committed to safeguarding farmers' interests by intervening in the market whenever prices fall below the MSP.

According to official estimates, red gram was cultivated across 4,99,393 acres during the current season in the state, with an expected production of around 2,99,635 metric tonnes. The MSP for red gram has been fixed at 8,000 per quintal, while prevailing market prices

are currently around 7,200 per quintal. To address this gap, the Centre has accorded approval for the procurement of 1,71,310 metric tonnes of red gram from Telangana for the Vanakalam 2025–26 season. The minister informed that MSP procurement of red gram commenced on December 27, 2025, and will continue until March 26, 2026. A total of 82 procurement centres have been proposed across the state, of which 13 have been made operational so far. As of January 16, 2026, red gram procured from 32 farmers amounted to 30.25 metric tonnes, with a total value of 0.24 crore. He said procurement operations are presently progressing smoothly in Narayanpet district. In other red gram-growing districts,

additional procurement centres will be opened in a phased manner as arrivals increase. The minister urged farmers not to sell their produce to middlemen at lower prices and instead bring their crop to the nearest TG Markfed procurement centres to avail the MSP. On payments, the minister clarified that the amount for the procured red gram will be credited directly into farmers' bank accounts through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system within the stipulated time frame.

Reiterating the government's commitment to farmer welfare, he appealed to farmers to fully utilize the MSP procurement programme to secure fair and remunerative prices.

Social Activist Gaade Innaiah Granted Temporary Bail

Jangaon/Hyderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau)

A special court has granted temporary bail to social activist Gaade Innaiah, who is in custody under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The bail has been allowed for 48 hours on humanitarian grounds so that he can attend the funeral rites of his 93-year-old mother, who passed away on Thursday night.

Gaade Innaiah was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on December 21, 2025, from his residence in Zaffargadh mandal of Jangaon district. The arrest was made in connection with allegations that he made remarks seen as sympathetic to

the banned CPI (Maoist) during the funeral of a slain Maoist leader. Based on these remarks, the NIA registered a case under sections of the UAPA and the Indian Penal Code relating to unlawful activities and support for a banned organization.

After his arrest, Innaiah was produced before a special NIA court in Hyderabad, which remanded him to judicial custody. He has since been lodged in Chanchalguda Central Jail.

On Friday, the court allowed him temporary bail, taking into account the emotional distress caused by his mother's death, permitting him to travel to Jangaon district for her last rites.

The order highlights

the judiciary's approach to balancing strict legal frameworks with compassionate relief in extraordinary personal circumstances, even in sensitive cases under the UAPA. While permanent bail in such cases is rare due to the stringent nature of the law, temporary relief is occasionally granted for exceptional humanitarian reasons.

Gaade Innaiah, known as a social activist with controversial past links, has drawn attention for his alleged remarks in support of the Maoist movement during a funeral. The NIA contends that the speech could potentially encourage support for banned extremist elements, a charge his legal

team disputes. During the brief release, Innaiah is expected to attend the funeral of his elderly mother. Court conditions require him to return to custody once the temporary bail period ends. Authorities have maintained that the investigation into the alleged offense under national security laws remains

active, and Innaiah will have to rejoin custody after the completion of the temporary bail.

The bail order has drawn mixed reactions, with some human rights observers welcoming the court's humane approach, while others have reiterated concerns regarding the larger charges against him. Innaiah's legal team is expected to pursue further remedies as proceedings in the UAPA case continue.

This development underscores the delicate balance courts maintain between upholding stringent laws and granting compassionate relief in cases involving extraordinary personal circumstances.



team disputes.

During the brief release, Innaiah is expected to attend the funeral of his elderly mother. Court conditions require him to return to custody once the temporary bail period ends. Authorities have maintained that the investigation into the alleged offense under national security laws remains

Union Minister Kishan Reddy Urges Telangana CM to Expedite Hyderabad Metro Phase-II

Hyderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau)

Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, has written to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, urging immediate action to accelerate the progress of the Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-II project. The letter highlights delays in procedural formalities and emphasizes the need for timely coordination between the State and Central governments to ensure the project's smooth execution.

Kishan Reddy noted that while the Central government has approved Phase-II in principle, progress has been slower than expected because certain preliminary conditions remain unfulfilled. He specifically highlighted that the takeover of Metro Phase-I from Larsen & Toubro (L&T), repeatedly mentioned by the State government as a prerequisite, has not yet been completed.

This step is critical to enable planning and construction of the second phase of the metro network.

The Minister stressed the importance of establishing a joint committee comprising officials from both the Central and State governments to oversee planning, approvals, and implementation of Phase-II.

While the Centre has nominated two officials to the committee, Kishan Reddy pointed out that the State government has not yet submitted the names of its representatives. He urged CM Revanth

Reddy to immediately nominate two officials so that the committee can be constituted and meetings can begin without further delay.

Once the joint committee is in place, preparatory work for Phase-II, including technical planning, detailed proposals, and project clearances, can commence. Kishan Reddy emphasized that the timely expansion of Hyderabad Metro services is crucial to address growing traffic congestion and increasing commuter demand in the city. The Phase-II project, he said, will enhance urban mobility and contribute to sustainable development in the metropolitan region.

The Minister's letter also underlines that the Centre is ready to provide full cooperation once the procedural requirements are completed. He urged the State government to expedite the takeover of Phase-I, submit

the required documents, and coordinate closely with the Central authorities to ensure that construction work on the new corridors begins at the earliest.

Officials from both the State and Union governments are expected to discuss the next steps following Kishan Reddy's communication. The letter signals the Centre's commitment to supporting Telangana's infrastructure projects while emphasizing that timely administrative action by the State government is essential for the successful implementation of the Hyderabad Metro expansion.

The correspondence is seen as a significant step toward fast-tracking Metro Phase-II, which is expected to improve connectivity, reduce congestion, and provide modern public transportation facilities to millions of residents in Hyderabad.

15 Arrested in Dharani and Bhu Bharathi Land Registration Scam

Jangaon/Hyderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau)

Telangana police have arrested 15 individuals in connection with a major scam involving the Dharani and Bhu Bharathi land registration portals, in which officials and intermediaries allegedly manipulated online land records and defrauded the state government. Nine other suspects are still at large as investigations continue. The scam reportedly took place in Jangaon and Yadadri districts and caused an estimated loss of 3.90 crore to state revenue. The accused allegedly used deceptive practices

to alter land transaction documents and generate fake or doctored receipts on the official portals, undermining the integrity of government land records.

Investigators said the main suspects operated through online service centres and intermediaries, including MeeSeva agents, who assisted landowners in paying fees and submitting applications. The gang collected registration fees while tampering with challans using mobile applications to reduce amounts and manipulate records for personal gain. Once the fraudulent receipts were created, they were submitted to Mandal Revenue



Officers and Tahsildars for approval. In several cases, the altered documents were used to complete registrations with

out proper payments, depriving the state treasury of legitimate revenue. Police seized significant evidence during the operation, including 63.19 lakh in cash, 1 lakh in a bank account, property documents valued at around 1 crore, a car, two laptops, five desktop computers, and 17 mobile phones. These items are now part of the ongoing

investigation to trace the full extent of the fraud.

Authorities have registered 22 related cases—seven in Jangaon district and 15 in Yadadri district—and continue to track the remaining nine suspects.

Investigators are closely scrutinizing the involvement of some MeeSeva operators and private online centre employees, and further arrests are expected as the probe deepens.

Senior police officials commended the investigative team, including the DCP, ASP, and local station officers, for uncovering the syndicate. They emphasized that such scams not only

harm landowners but also undermine public trust in digital land systems, which are intended to improve transparency and ease of transactions.

The Telangana government has reiterated that strict action will continue against individuals exploiting online land portals and that additional safeguards are being reviewed to prevent similar frauds in the future.

This crackdown marks a significant step toward maintaining the integrity of the state's digital land registration system and ensuring that such fraudulent practices are identified and punished promptly.

Former Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav Calls for 'Secunderabad Identity and Self-Respect Rally'

TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, January 16: Former Telangana Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav has called upon the residents of Secunderabad to participate in a large-scale "Secunderabad Identity and Self-Respect Struggle Rally" scheduled to be held on Saturday at 9 am. Addressing the media, he said the rally would begin from the Secunderabad Railway Station and proceed up to the Mahatma Gandhi statue on MG Road. Talasani Srinivas Yadav appealed to the people of Secunderabad to turn out in large numbers, urging at least one member from every household to partici-

pate. He said the rally is aimed at protecting the historical identity, existence, and self-respect of Secunderabad, a region with a rich legacy spanning more than 220 years.

Highlighting Secunderabad's historical significance, Talasani said the area is home to several iconic and heritage landmarks that reflect its unique cultural and historical character. He pointed out that traditions such as Lashkar Bonalu have a deep-rooted history linked closely with Secunderabad's identity and sentiments of the local population.

The former minister alleged that the pre-

sent government is attempting to erase the distinct identity of Secunderabad by diluting its name and admin-

istrative structure. He claimed that commissionerates were merged illegally and demanded that the government

explain the reasons behind such decisions. "There appears to be a deliberate attempt to strip Secunderabad of

its name and historical importance," he alleged.

Talasani further stated that this is the right

time to exert pressure on the government and called upon associations from all sectors to participate in the rally. He emphasized that the movement is not confined to any single political party and urged all political parties to join hands for the cause of Secunderabad. He announced that BRS Working President K. T. Rama Rao, along with party MLAs and other leaders, will be participating in the programme. Talasani accused the government of coming to power by making reckless promises and failing to implement them, instead resorting to what he described as "arbitrary



Allegations of Corruption and Extortion Raised Against Former MLA Sampath Kumar in Alampur

Alampur, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

Serious allegations of corruption, extortion and abuse of power were levelled against former MLA Sampath Kumar on Friday, triggering political heat in Alampur. Former Corporation Chairman Krishank and BRS leader Kishore accused the former legislator of running a regime of intimidation, illegal collections and land encroachments, and demanded an immediate Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the matter.

Addressing the media, Krishank alleged that Sampath Kumar was indulging in "public harassment instead of public governance." He claimed that during the ongoing National Highway-44 works, contractors were allegedly threatened and forced to pay up to 8 crore to allow the execution of works. He further alleged that mandal-level officials were being routinely intimidated and illegal collections were made, branding Sampath Kumar a "Vasool Raja."

Krishank said Sri Bharama Infrastructure had lodged a complaint alleging threats with deadly weapons. Questioning the government's silence, he asked

whether an SIT would be constituted, especially with the Chief Minister scheduled to visit the region shortly. He pointed out that Sampath Kumar had lost the last election by a margin of nearly 40,000 votes and claimed that even the Congress party was no longer giving him importance.

Raising concerns over asset declarations, Krishank alleged that Sampath Kumar had declared no landholdings in his affidavit, but later registered two acres of assigned land in his wife's name. He also questioned whether his wife, a government teacher, was attending

her official duties regularly.

Further allegations were made regarding irregularities in contracts related to a 100-bed government hospital set up for public welfare. Krishank claimed that contracts were allegedly cornered by a private company linked to Sampath Kumar's son, and that hospital staff had not been paid salaries for the past nine months, causing severe hardship.

BRS leader Kishore echoed these allegations, stating that Alampur was witnessing rampant sand and soil mafia activities, land grabbing through ben-

mi arrangements and open threats to officials and contractors. He alleged that officials who refused to comply with illegal demands were transferred arbitrarily and that even police personnel were afraid to act due to political pressure. Both leaders demanded a transparent SIT inquiry, asserting that they possess documentary evidence to substantiate their claims. They warned that continued inaction would further erode public trust, adding that the people of the region would eventually reject those accused of exploiting public resources and authority.



BJP Workers Celebrate Maharashtra Municipal Poll Victory at Nampally Party Office

Hyderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) office at Nampally in Hyderabad witnessed grand celebrations on Thursday following the party's impressive performance in the Maharashtra municipal elections, where the BJP secured 26 out of 29 seats.

Jubilant party workers gathered in large numbers at the state party headquarters to celebrate the sweeping victory.

The BJP office reverberated with festive spirit as activists burst firecrackers, played traditional drums and bands, and danced enthusiastically to mark the occasion. The atmosphere was charged with slogans praising the party leadership and highlighting the BJP's growing strength in local body elections across states.

The celebrations were led by BJP Telangana State President Ramachander Rao, Member of Parliament Arvind Kumar, state general secretaries, morcha leaders, and several senior party functionaries. Addressing the gather-

ing, leaders congratulated party workers and candidates for the decisive mandate and credited the victory to the BJP's development-oriented governance and grassroots outreach.

Speaking on the occasion, BJP leaders said the results in Maharashtra reflect public confidence in the party's leadership and policies. They stated that the people have once again rejected opposition politics and chosen stability, development, and transparent governance.

The event also saw participation from various BJP morchas, including youth, women, and SC/ST wings, showcasing unity within the party. Leaders urged workers to take inspiration from the Maharashtra results and work with renewed commitment to strengthen the party in Telangana.

The celebrations concluded on a high note, with BJP leaders expressing optimism that the party's momentum will continue to the grassroots level. They asserted that the BJP will continue to work for the welfare of citizens by strengthening local governance and ensuring development reaches every section of society.

Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy Calls for Responsible Journalism Amid Recent Media Controversy

Hyderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Thursday extended warm Kanuma festival greetings to media professionals and the people of Telangana, while expressing serious concern over recent developments following an "off-the-record" media report aired by a prominent television channel.

Addressing the media in Hyderabad, the MP said the sequence of events after the telecast, including the arrest of journalists, was deeply distressing. He noted that he has always maintained cordial relations with the media and described the emergence of such incidents as unfortunate for a democratic society.

Referring to statements allegedly attributed to a cabinet minister, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said that

when a minister publicly claims that someone asked him to poison and kill, the gravity of the situation must be clearly understood. He pointed out that such developments reflect a worrying trend in public discourse and media practices.

The MP observed that earlier, news reports were published based on complete facts and solid evidence, whereas now, many reports are being written based on assumptions and speculation. He warned that such hypothetical reporting has caused severe distress to political leaders and government officials alike. At the same time, the arrests of journalists have resulted in hardship for their families, which he termed an equally painful consequence.

He said the public had witnessed the anguish of a state minister in re-



cent days and urged people to consider the mental stress faced by senior officials, particularly highly educated women officers, when unverified stories are circulated. According to Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, mounting pressure on the government compelled Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and the state administration to take a decisive stand to put a full stop to the controversy at some point.

However, he stressed that the role of the media in society remains indispensable. He clarified that there is nothing wrong with media reporting on political leaders. If leaders or officials indulge in corruption, misuse power, or commit wrongdoings, the media has every right to expose such actions. At the same time, he appealed to media organizations not to publish stories without

facts or evidence, especially when such reports cause suffering to individuals and their families. The MP also expressed concern that some social media channels are being misused for political gains by spreading imaginary narratives under the guise of news. He urged credible television channels and newspapers, which enjoy public trust, to refrain from publishing speculative stories in the name of off-the-record information. Concluding his remarks, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said both he and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy owe their public standing to the media. He emphasized that the system cannot function on imaginary reporting and asserted that ensuring responsible journalism is a key responsibility of media management.

confidence that similar results would be achieved in upcoming elections in Telangana and other states.

Senior leaders emphasized that victories in local body elections are crucial as they reflect people's trust at the grassroots level.

They asserted that the BJP will continue to work for the welfare of citizens by strengthening local governance and ensuring development reaches every section of society.

The event also saw participation from various BJP morchas, including youth, women, and SC/ST wings, showcasing unity within the party. Leaders urged workers to take inspiration from the Maharashtra results and work with renewed commitment to strengthen the party in Telangana.

The celebrations concluded on a high note, with BJP leaders expressing optimism that the party's momentum will continue to the grassroots level. They asserted that the BJP will continue to work for the welfare of citizens by strengthening local governance and ensuring development reaches every section of society.

Prabhakar Rao's Anticipatory Bail Hearing Adjournded in Phone Tapping Case

Hyderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

The hearing on the anticipatory bail petition of former Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) chief T. Prabhakar Rao in the high-profile phone tapping case has been adjourned by the court, prolonging the legal proceedings in the matter. Prabhakar Rao, a retired IPS officer and the prime accused in the alleged illegal phone tapping scandal that surfaced from actions during the previous government's tenure, had moved the court seeking anticipatory bail amid ongoing

investigations and legal challenges. His petition has been under consideration as part of the broader judicial review of allegations that phone calls of political leaders, journalists and other individuals were intercepted without proper authority.

During the hearing, the court observed that procedural and evidentiary aspects of the case require further examination before any decision on bail relief can be made. Given the complexity of the allegations and the stage of the investigation, the court decided to defer

further proceedings to a later date. The move effectively postpones a final ruling on whether Prabhakar Rao should be granted the anticipatory



bail protection he is seeking, keeping the matter pending in the judicial system.



In related developments, the Supreme Court has previously intervened in aspects of the case, including directing Rao to surrender to investigative authorities for custodial

case proceeds — remains unresolved with the adjournment of the hearing. Prabhakar Rao's plea for bail has seen multiple submissions by senior counsels emphasizing his long service record, health considerations and cooperation with legal procedures. Meanwhile, the State and the Special Investigation Team (SIT) have opposed bail, arguing that custodial cooperation is necessary for thorough examination of evidence and that protective orders should not impede investigation into alleged illegal surveillance.

With the hearing now postponed, the court is expected to revisit the matter once additional documentation and arguments have been placed before it. Until then, the legal status of Prabhakar Rao's anticipatory bail application remains pending, reflecting the ongoing judicial balancing act between individual legal remedies and the State's interest in fully probing the serious allegations at the heart of the phone tapping case.

The next date for the bail hearing will be notified by the court in due course.

CM Revanth Reddy Pays Tribute to Former Union Minister Jaipal Reddy on His 84th Birth Anniversary

TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, January 16:

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday paid rich tributes to late former Union Minister Jaipal Reddy on the occasion of his 84th birth anniversary. The homage was offered at the Sphurta Sthal on Necklace Road, where leaders from across the political spectrum gathered to remember the veteran statesman and his enduring contributions to the nation.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy described Jaipal Reddy as a leader of rare integrity and intellectual depth, who consistently upheld democratic values and parliamentary traditions. He said Jaipal Reddy's long public life was marked by courage, clarity of thought, and a

strong commitment to social justice and national development. The Chief Minister noted that Jaipal Reddy's role as a Union Minister in several key portfolios left a lasting imprint on public policy and governance.

The tribute programme witnessed the presence of several members of the Telangana cabinet, including Ministers Ponnambalam Prabhakar, Pongal Srinivas Reddy, and Jupally Krishna Rao. Government Advisor Vem Narender Reddy also attended the ceremony. Members of Parliament, MLAs, and MLCs from different constituencies participated in the event, reflecting the widespread respect Jaipal Reddy commanded across party lines.

Leaders recalled Jaipal Reddy as an outstanding parliamentar-



ian who was admired for his articulate speeches, firm convictions, and fearless stand on issues of national and international importance. They highlighted his dedication to inclusive growth, environmental protection, and democratic accountability, stating that his legacy continues to guide political discourse.

Family members of the late Jaipal Reddy were present at the memorial and expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister and other leaders for honouring his memory. Floral tributes were offered at the memorial, followed by a moment of silence.

The event concluded with speakers reaffirming their commitment to the values and principles that Jaipal Reddy upheld throughout his distinguished political career.

Telangana Government Launches Alive-Arrive Road Safety Awareness Program in Quthbullapur

Quthbullapur, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

In a major initiative to promote road safety, the Telangana state government organized an awareness program under its flagship Alive-Arrive campaign at the Gajularamam Municipal Office, located near Gajularamam Circle, Quthbullapur. The program aims to sensitize citizens and government employees about safe travel practices and accident prevention.

The event was jointly inaugurated by GHMC Gajularamam Deputy Commissioner Mallareddy and Quthbullapur Zone Additional DCP Purushottam. Speaking at the occasion, they emphasized the importance of road safety awareness for employees working in government departments, noting that the campaign is part of a 10-day initiative target-



ing different sections of the public and administration.

Officials highlighted the growing concern over daily road accidents and urged every vehicle operator to strictly follow traffic regulations. They specifically advised two-wheeler riders to always wear helmets, car passengers to use seatbelts, and warned against driving under the influence of alcohol. Speed control and adherence to traffic rules were also stressed as key measures to reduce accidents. The Alive-Arrive campaign,

described as a prestigious state government initiative, aims to ensure that people "start their journey alive and reach their destination safely." Officials emphasized that increased public awareness and cooperation are crucial for effectively reducing road accidents. The program saw participation from GHMC Inspector Gaddam Mallesh, DI Dhananjay, GHMC Traffic SI Sandeep, and municipal staff, who collectively worked to educate attendees on safe road practices and traffic discipline.

Hyderabad Police Bust Drug Peddlers, Seize MDMA and OG Worth Rs.1 Lakh

Hyderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

The West Zone team of Hyderabad Commissioner's Task Force successfully apprehended two drug offenders on January 14, recovering narcotics intended for distribution in the city. The accused were found in possession of 8 grams of MDMA and 0.8 grams of OG, with a total market value of Rs. 1,00,000.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Anwar Hussain (33), an IT recruiter residing in Chintalmet, Rajendranagar, and Burra Sampath (31), a car driver from Bandlaguda Jagir, Hyderabad. A third accused, Charan, reportedly residing in Bengaluru, remains at large.

According to police reports, the accused, previously having criminal records and insufficient legitimate income, hatched a plan to sell narcotics to known buyers in Hyderabad for quick financial gain. They procured the drugs by transferring Rs.

38,000 to the absconding peddler, Charan, on January 8, 2026, through an online transaction.

Acting on credible intelligence, the West Zone Task Force apprehended the accused and seized the drugs. The recovered narcotics include 8 grams of MDMA valued at Rs. 96,000 and 0.8 grams of OG worth Rs. 4,000. The arrested individuals, along with the seized substances, were handed over to the SHO of Attapur Police Station for further legal action.

The operation was carried out under the supervision of Inspector Ch. Yadender, along with SIP Md. Jahed and staff members of the West Zone Task Force.

ADDL. Deputy Commissioner of Police Md. Iqbal Siddique confirmed that the arrest was part of an ongoing effort to curb drug distribution in Hyderabad and warned that strict action would continue against offenders involved in narcotics



trade. Authorities have urged anyone with information regarding Charan, the absconding accused, to come forward and assist in the investigation.

Secunderabad Division of SCR Conducts Month-Long Fire Safety and Anti-Smoking Drive

Secunderabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau)

The Secunderabad Division of South Central Railway (SCR) has undertaken an extensive month-long Fire Safety and Anti-Smoking Drive from January 9 to February 8, 2026, with the objective of preventing fire-related incidents and enhancing passenger safety across trains and railway premises under its jurisdiction.

The initiative focuses on curbing the unau-

thorized carriage of inflammable and explosive materials, while strictly enforcing the ban on smoking and flame-based cooking in trains and station areas. Railway officials stated that the drive is part of SCR's broader commitment to ensuring a safe and secure travel environment for millions of passengers who use the rail network daily.

As part of the ongoing campaign, targeted inspections have been car-

ried out at multiple locations. These include checks in 43 SLRs (Luggage and Brake Van coaches), 25 railway yards, washing lines, pit lines used for coach maintenance, and 17 railway stations across the Secunderabad Division. So far, two cases have been registered against individuals for tobacco-related violations linked to fire safety norms.

Special attention is being given to prevent-

ing the unauthorized transport of gas cylinders, flammable cans, and other hazardous materials. Officials are also ensuring that coach corridors, entry and exit points, and pantry car passages are kept clear at all times to facilitate smooth passenger movement and enable quick evacuation during emergencies.

Electrical safety measures form a critical component of the drive. Inspections are being

conducted to identify and eliminate loose wir-

ing, bypassed fuses, and gaps in electrical panels

that could pose fire risks. Generator rooms in power cars are under close surveillance, with regular maintenance checks and deployment of trained AC mechanics and escorting staff to ensure safe operations.

The fire safety drive involves coordinated efforts from multiple railway departments. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has conducted 52 checks, while the Mechanical department carried out 29 inspections. The Commercial wing undertook 28 checks, the Operating department conducted 21, the Electrical wing 14, and the Safety department six inspections. In total, 150 checks have been completed so far as part of the drive.

Under 'Operation Samraksha', an RPF-led initiative aimed at safeguarding passengers and railway property, railway staff have been directly educating passengers and pantry workers on fire preven-

tion measures and strict adherence to safety regulations. Officials are also ensuring the availability and proper condition of fire extinguishers in all coaches.

In addition, Fire and Smoke Detection Systems (FSDS) installed in coaches, pantry cars, and power cars are being tested for effective functioning. Clear display of fire safety instructions and 'No Smoking' signage is being verified, and sensors are being kept free from obstructions.

South Central Railway has reiterated its zero-tolerance policy towards fire hazards and continues to spread awareness through social media platforms and regular public announcements at stations. Passengers have been reminded that smoking in trains or on railway premises and carrying inflammable materials are punishable offences under railway rules.



Women's Self-Help Groups Mobilize in Support of Public Governance in Adilabad



Adilabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

In a significant demonstration of support for public governance, women's self-help groups (SHGs) from across Both Mandal in Adilabad district actively participated in a large-scale rally ahead of a public meeting organized by the Telangana Chief Minister in Nirmal. The initiative reflects growing community engagement and highlights the role of women's groups in advancing state welfare programs. The procession was led by Pasula Chanti, Congress Party District Official Representative, who joined

SHG members from Dhannur (B) village to march in solidarity towards the venue. Addressing the participants, Chanti praised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for his focus on women's empowerment since assuming office. He emphasized that the government has been taking concrete steps to strengthen women's self-help groups, enabling them to become financially independent and socially empowered.

Chanti elaborated on a series of welfare measures introduced under the state government's leadership. These include free bus travel for

women, 200 units of free electricity, gas cylinders at Rs. 500, interest-free loans, dedicated RTC buses and petrol pumps for women's groups, and crop procurement schemes. He said these initiatives are part of the Chief Minister's broader vision to empower women and ensure they actively participate in the state's socio-economic development. The rally drew enthusiastic participation from numerous SHG members, reflecting the deep-rooted support for government schemes that directly benefit women in rural and semi-urban areas. Local leaders, including

Dhannur (B) village Deputy Sarpanch Karam Sujata, also attended, highlighting the collaboration between elected representatives and grassroots women's organizations. Chanti urged women to continue supporting the government's welfare programs and to encourage other community members to participate actively. He stressed that empowering women through financial independence, skill development, and access to public resources is critical for inclusive governance and sustainable development. The event also underscored the Congress Party's commitment to

amplifying the voices of women and aligning local leadership with state government objectives. By engaging SHGs at the community level, the party aims to foster awareness about available benefits while reinforcing the message that governance should be participatory and citizen-focused. The rally concluded on a positive note, with women pledging continued support for government initiatives and reiterating their commitment to public welfare, social empowerment, and inclusive development in Adilabad district.

Supreme Court Gives Telangana Speaker Final Two Week Deadline in MLA Defection Case

Hyderabad, January 16, TPN Bureau:

The Supreme Court of India on Friday issued a stern warning to the Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly, giving him a final two week deadline to provide a detailed status report on disqualification pleas against several MLAs accused of defecting from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) to the Congress party. The bench, led by Justices Sanjay Karol and A.G. Masih, made it clear that this is the last opportunity for the Speaker to comply, and failure to act could invite serious legal consequences.

During the latest hearing, senior advocates representing the Speaker stated that orders had been passed in most cases, with one more judgment reserved, and requested additional time to conclude the remaining proceedings. They cited the Speaker's medical issues and administrative factors for the slow pace. However, the court expressed dissatisfaction with these explanations, emphasizing that the process should have been completed by now.

Senior counsel for the BRS MLAs opposed any extension, arguing that the Speaker had already been granted ample time and that continu-



ing delays undermine the authority of the Supreme Court's directives. The petitioners also highlighted that prolonged inaction could encourage further defections and weaken democratic norms within the state assembly. The bench reiterated that this two week period is the final opportunity for the Speaker to file the status report detailing the steps taken to resolve the disqualification matters. The court stressed that failure to

comply will lead to appropriate legal action, including the possibility of contempt proceedings. The anti defection provisions under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution are intended to curb unethical political crossovers and maintain the stability of legislative bodies. The Supreme Court has underlined in previous orders that while the Speaker adjudicates these petitions as a quasi-judicial authority, he is not immune from judicial scrutiny when decisions are unduly delayed. Political observers note that the case has significant implications for Telangana's political landscape, as timely adjudication of defection cases is crucial for accountability and deterring opportunistic shifts that can affect the balance of power in the state assembly. With the deadline now in place, all eyes are on whether the Speaker will act decisively within the stipulated period.

CM Cup Returns With Multi Stage Competitions Across Telangana

Hyderabad, January 16, TPN Bureau: The second edition of the Chief Minister's Cup is set to kick off across Telangana from January 17, marking a major initiative aimed at discovering and nurturing sports talent throughout the state. The multi-stage competition will unfold across various levels, from village contests to state finals, bringing athletes from rural and urban areas into competitive action.

Launched under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, the CM Cup is designed to promote a broad sporting culture and provide structured opportunities for promising athletes to showcase their skills. The programme covers 44 different sports disciplines, including traditional and modern games such as archery, athletics, badminton,



baseball, basketball, hockey, judo, boxing, lawn tennis, yoga, skating, wushu, and para-sports. The competition will unfold in five key stages:

- Village (Gram Panchayat) Level: January 17 to 22
- Mandal / Municipal Level: January 28 to
- Assembly Constituency Level: February 3 to 5
- District Level: February 10 to 14
- State Level Finals: February 19 to 26

These stages are expected to engage athletes from all walks of life, fostering community participation and

broadening the base for sports talent throughout Telangana.

Officials from the Sports Authority of Telangana (SAT) said the series of events will be digitally enabled, with online registration and centralised systems helping to manage entries, monitor progress, and maintain transparency as competitors advance through the levels. The digital approach is intended to simplify administration and ensure fair tracking of athletes' performances as they move from village to state competitions.

Chief Minister Reddy has described the CM Cup as part of a broader vision to strengthen Telangana's sports ecosystem and encourage participation among youth, particularly in rural areas where opportunities for competition and talent recognition have historically been limited.

The CM Cup's return is being seen as a major step toward creating a vibrant grassroots sporting culture in the state and offering a platform for future champions.

Dharampuri Arvind Alleges Rising Attacks on Hindu Temples in Telangana



Nizamabad, January 16 (TPN Bureau):

Nizamabad MP Dharampuri Arvind on Thursday alleged that attacks on Hindu temples in Telangana have increased after the Congress government came to power, holding Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy morally responsible for the prevailing situation. Addressing the media, the BJP leader said certain statements made by the Chief Minister had created fear among Hindus and could potentially trigger communal violence. Referring to a remark attributed to the Chief Minister — "Congress is Muslim, Muslim is Congress" — Arvind termed it a "highly dangerous statement." He alleged that such comments were deliberately instilling fear in the Hindu community and warned that this fear could act as a trigger for communal unrest. He further accused the Congress and AIMIM of jointly targeting the Hindu community, particularly in Hyderabad's Old City areas, where attacks on temples have reportedly increased.

The MP claimed that

the situation was reminiscent of the exodus-like conditions witnessed in Kashmir during the 1980s and 1990s and alleged a conspiracy to drive Hindus out of Old City localities. He also accused the police machinery of functioning under political pressure, stating that in several cases Hindus were allegedly being arrested even when they were victims of attacks. Recalling history, Dharampuri Arvind said Hyderabad had witnessed severe communal tension during the 1980s and 1990s under Congress rule. He claimed that large-scale riots subsided only after the resignation of then Chief Minister Chenna Reddy. He further alleged that AIMIM leaders were directly involved in riots during that period and cited the killing of police officer ASP Satya as an example, alleging that those responsible were protected by the Congress government. Listing recent incidents, the MP cited alleged attacks on temples across Telangana, including incidents at Bhulakshmi Matha Temple in Santoshnagar (August 26, 2024),

He asserted that the BJP would win the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation elections and pass a resolution for the name change. Concluding, the MP said the BJP follows a development model without religious discrimination and warned that attacks on Hindu society would not be tolerated, asserting that Telangana would soon witness a decisive political shift in favor of the BJP.

Brother Kills Sibling in Drunken Fight During Sankranti in Hyderabad



Hyderabad, January 16, TPN Bureau:

A tragic family dispute during the Sankranti festival in Nacharam ended in the death of a young man after a heated argument over alcohol turned fatal. The victim, 30-year-old Stifford Rohan Sayers, died after being pushed off the terrace of his three-story residence by his younger brother late on Thursday night.

According to police, both brothers, Stifford and 28-year-old Leonard Lionel Sayers, were celebrating the festival on the rooftop with drinks when a minor disagreement over a liquor glass escalated into a heated argument. Witnesses said the contention quickly turned physical, and in a moment of anger, Leonard allegedly pushed his elder brother off the terrace, causing him to fall several floors.

Neighbours and family members rushed to the scene after hearing the commotion. Stifford was found critically injured and immediately taken to a nearby hospital. Despite efforts to save him, he succumbed to his injuries either en route or shortly after arrival.

Following the incident, Nacharam police registered a murder case and took Leonard into custody. Investigators began questioning witnesses and family members to determine the exact sequence of events that led to the confrontation. Police said the accused is cooperating with the ongoing investigation.

Local residents expressed shock and disbelief that what began as a minor dispute over alcohol during a festive celebration could escalate into such a devastating outcome. The Sankranti festival, traditionally a time of joy and family gatherings, has been overshadowed for the Sayers family by this tragic loss. Community leaders and neighbours have urged residents to exercise caution during celebrations, particularly when alcohol is involved.

The incident has sparked discussions in parts of the city about family conflicts and alcohol-related violence, especially during festive seasons when social gatherings are common. As the legal process unfolds, the neighbourhood continues to reel from this sudden and tragic event, hoping for justice for the victim and awareness to prevent similar incidents in the future.

India–Taliban Engagement Marks a Strategic Shift in South Asian Geopolitics

For the first time since the Taliban returned to power in Kabul in August 2021, an officially appointed Taliban diplomat has assumed charge in New Delhi. Noor Ahmad Noor, the Taliban's newly designated ambassador to India, took over the Afghan Embassy in the Indian capital last week. Shortly thereafter, he met Anand Prakash, Joint Secretary in charge of the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran Division at India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). According to a statement issued by the Taliban's embassy, discussions focused on strengthening political and trade ties, including easing visa procedures.

This development marks a significant milestone in the evolving relationship between India and the Taliban-led Afghan government. It also reflects a broader recalibration of regional alignments, particularly as relations between the Taliban and Pakistan continue to deteriorate.

From Reluctance to Engagement

India's engagement with the Taliban has been cautious but steadily progressive. Nearly a year ago, on January 8, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Taliban Foreign Minister Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai. That meeting, described as involving "detailed discussions" on bilateral relations, was the first high-level interaction between the two sides since the Taliban takeover, coming after a four-year gap in

formal engagement.

Following the Dubai talks, the Taliban described India as a "significant regional partner," a notable endorsement at a time when tensions between Kabul and Islamabad were rapidly escalating. Pakistan had launched airstrikes in Afghanistan's border regions, ostensibly to target militants. The Taliban, however, accused Islamabad of causing civilian casualties. India publicly criticised Pakistan's actions and expressed concern over the loss of innocent lives, further widening the diplomatic gap between Pakistan and the Taliban.

A Spate of High-Level Visits

Since then, India–Taliban relations have gathered momentum. Over the past year, three senior Taliban officials have visited New Delhi in quick succession. These include Taliban Foreign Minister Muttaiq in October, Trade Minister Haji Nooruddin Azizi soon after, and Acting Health Minister Noor Jalal Jalali in December. Parallelly, New Delhi announced its decision to upgrade its representative office in Kabul to a full-fledged embassy.

The arrival of Noor Ahmad Noor as the Taliban's official envoy in India is thus part of a broader pattern of deepening engagement rather than an isolated event.

Pakistan's Anger and Accusations

Noori's appointment coincided with sharp criti-



cism from Islamabad. Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar publicly questioned the nature of India–Taliban cooperation, accusing Kabul of allowing Afghan soil to be used for attacks against Pakistan under "foreign designs." In a particularly provocative remark, he asked, "What kind of Islam is this where you take money from India to carry out explosions here?"

Pakistan has long accused both India and the Taliban of supporting Baloch separatists and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). These accusations come amid a sharp surge in militant violence inside Pakistan, with more than 5,000 terror incidents reported in 2025

alone.

However, blaming India for Pakistan's internal security crisis reflects Islamabad's longstanding tendency to externalise its failures. Historically, Pakistan has found itself at odds with every regime in Kabul, regardless of ideology. The Taliban, once considered Pakistan's strategic asset, are no exception.

Regional Consensus on Taliban Engagement

The appointment of Noor Ahmad Noor also highlights the Taliban's broader effort to expand their diplomatic footprint and gain international legitimacy. India is neither the first nor the only country to accept an official Taliban envoy. China was the earliest to do so, fol-

lowed by Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, and Pakistan itself.

In that sense, India's move aligns with an emerging regional consensus that pragmatic engagement with the Taliban is preferable to isolation, particularly when it comes to humanitarian assistance, regional stability, and economic connectivity.

India's Strategic and Humanitarian Calculus

From New Delhi's perspective, Afghanistan stands out as a rare foreign policy success in an otherwise volatile neighbourhood. As Bangladesh deepens its engagement with Pakistan—where the military and intelligence agencies are increasingly influential—India's grow-

ing presence in Afghanistan offers strategic depth and leverage in the region.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has repeatedly emphasised India's "people-centric" approach to Afghanistan. This includes humanitarian aid, medical assistance, food supplies, and vaccines—efforts that have sustained India's goodwill among ordinary Afghans even amid political upheaval.

At the same time, engagement with the Taliban opens significant economic opportunities. Afghanistan requires massive investment across sectors, from healthcare and textiles to infrastructure and mining. The country is home to mineral reserves estimated to be worth trillions of dollars, and India has prior experience implementing large infrastructure projects there under the previous Afghan government.

Trade Dynamics: India Gains, Pakistan Loses

Pakistan's frequent closure of border crossings and its weaponisation of trade and transit routes have forced Afghanistan to seek alternative pathways. India has emerged as a major beneficiary of this shift. Afghan trade has increasingly been rerouted through Central Asia and Iran, particularly via the Chabahar port, bypassing Pakistan entirely. Afghanistan has also begun substituting goods previously imported from Pakistan with supplies from other countries, notably India.

Pharmaceuticals are a key example, with Indian exports replacing Pakistani products in Afghan markets. The numbers underscore this transformation. Transit trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan has collapsed from \$6.7 billion in FY23 to just \$1.01 billion in FY25. Bilateral trade fell to \$594 million in the first half of FY 2025-26, down from \$1.26 billion during the same period the previous year.

In contrast, India emerged as Afghanistan's largest export destination in October 2025, importing \$103.9 million worth of goods out of Afghanistan's total exports of \$274.9 million during that month.

Trade Suspension and Economic Fallout

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid has publicly acknowledged the progress in relations with India, praising New Delhi's humanitarian assistance and expressing a desire to expand cooperation, particularly in healthcare and commerce.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan has suspended trade with Pakistan entirely, refusing to reopen border crossings until Islamabad significantly improves relations. While the closures have hurt Afghanistan, the economic impact on Pakistan has been far more severe. Pakistani exporters are reportedly losing around \$177 million every month, alongside losses to transport companies, warehouses, port operations, and transit revenues linked to Karachi Port. Though Pakistan has

called for reopening the borders, Afghanistan appears in no rush, insisting that any resumption must occur under strict conditions.

Timing Is Everything

India's strategy goes beyond merely filling supply gaps. Alongside increased use of the Chabahar port, New Delhi has moved to activate air corridors between Indian cities and Kabul. These initiatives reduce Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan while incentivising the Taliban to ensure stability for Indian trade with Central Asia—a region Pakistan has historically sought to block India from accessing.

Conclusion

The recalibration of relations between India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan is increasingly being shaped by economics rather than ideology. In this evolving equation, India has positioned itself as a reliable partner, Afghanistan as a pragmatic actor seeking alternatives, and Pakistan as the principal loser—largely due to its own inability to maintain stable and constructive relationships with its neighbours.

What began as a diplomatic shift has now become a strategic realignment, one in which timing, trade, and trust are redefining regional power dynamics.

Iran on the Brink: Why a US Strike Would Shake the Gulf and the World

Tehran's Immediate Response

Iran's leadership reacted swiftly and sharply. Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, Speaker of Iran's parliament, warned that any attack on Iran would render American military bases, ships, and assets across the region legitimate targets. More strikingly, he said Iran would not wait to retaliate after an initial strike but would act upon what it perceives as clear indicators of an imminent threat.

Whether this was bluster aimed at domestic audiences or a genuine operational warning remains unclear. What is certain is that such statements dramatically raise the cost of miscalculation. They suggest that Tehran is prepared to abandon strategic patience in favour of pre-emptive action—an alarming prospect in an already volatile region.

Why the Gulf Is Nervous

To understand the anxiety sweeping through the Gulf, one must understand the scale of the American military footprint in the region. Iran does not lack for visible targets.

In Qatar lies Al Udeid Air Base, the largest US air base in the Middle East and the forward headquarters of US Central Command. It is critical for American air operations across the region. Bahrain hosts the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, responsible for overseeing operations in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean. Kuwait houses tens of thousands of American troops and functions as a major logistics and staging hub. Saudi Arabia once again hosts US personnel and

air defence systems. The United Arab Emirates provides access to ports and airfields regularly used by American forces. US warships patrol Gulf waters continuously.

These installations are fixed, known, and within Iranian missile range. When Iranian officials warn that retaliation would not be confined to

inside Iran

If President Trump authorises military strikes, the immediate effect inside Iran is unlikely to be regime collapse. More plausibly, it would trigger regime consolidation. Nationalism would almost certainly override internal grievances. The Iranian state would shift into survival mode. Protesters

ed. Hardliners would be empowered. Longstanding Iranian suspicions of foreign interference would be validated. This is the central irony of intervention: the louder Washington cheers pro-testers, the more aggressively Tehran tightens its grip.

History offers sobering lessons. External pres-

ened. It has spent decades preparing for precisely this scenario. While it may be weaker today than at any point in recent decades, a limited strike would not neutralise its capabilities. Iran's response would likely be calibrated and symmetrical. A symbolic American strike would invite a symbolic Iranian retaliation.

warfare. Regional and Global Fallout

The regional consequences would be immediate. Shipping lanes could be threatened. Insurance premiums would soar. Energy markets would react violently.

Gulf states would publicly call for restraint while privately preparing for worst-case scenarios.

Iran-aligned militias, weakened but not eliminated by Israeli strikes, remain capable of disruptive action. They would not require direct orders. A single drone attack or misjudged response could trigger an escalation driven more by momentum than strategy.

Globally, the ripple effects would be profound. Russia would quietly welcome the distraction, hoping it eases pressure on its war in Ukraine. Moscow has already warned Washington that military action against Iran could destabilise the world. China would position itself rhetorically as a stabilising force while exploiting economic opportunities, potentially accelerating non-dollar energy trade with Tehran and reinforcing its narrative of American-driven instability.

India would once again find itself walking a diplomatic tightrope. With longstanding ties to Iran and deepening strategic relations with the United States, New Delhi would oppose military escalation without directly confronting Washington. Rising energy prices would be particularly damaging for India's economy.

What the Protesters Actually Want

It is crucial to remember why protests erupted in Iran in the first place. Years of sanctions have crippled the economy. In-

flation, unemployment, and declining living standards pushed people onto the streets in December. These are fundamentally domestic grievances. External attempts at regime change would only complicate the protesters' objectives.

Change, if it comes, must come from within. Outside intervention has historically made that harder, not easier.

President Trump is undoubtedly aware of Iran's history with the United States. The 1979 Islamic Revolution, the seizure of the US embassy, and the 44-day hostage crisis left deep scars. President Jimmy Carter watched diplomacy collapse and his presidency unravel after a failed rescue mission in the Iranian desert. Those images—burning helicopters and blindfolded hostages—became symbols of American humiliation. Carter never recovered politically.

The world is different today, but memories linger.

An Uncertain Road Ahead

Iran's protests are now inseparable from geopolitics. Diplomacy is becoming harder. Escalation looms closer. President Trump has the power to strike Iran. His military is unmatched. What remains elusive—just as it was four decades ago—is certainty over outcomes.

History is instructive. Intervention in Iran has never delivered the control or transformation Washington seeks. It has delivered instability, resentment, and consequences that far outlast any presidency. Afghanistan in 2021 should serve as a final reminder: overwhelming power does not guarantee strategic success.



one theatre, these are precisely the assets they are referring to.

Recent moves by Washington and London have added to the uncertainty. Both countries have reduced personnel at Al Udeid, describing the partial pullback as precautionary. Britain has temporarily closed its embassy in Tehran, relocating operations outside Iran. Whether these steps signal preparation for conflict or merely heightened caution is difficult to determine—but the message to regional capitals is unmistakable.

The Likely Impact In-

would be labelled collaborators or traitors—indeed, Western media reports already suggest more than 250 individuals have been identified and charged. Security forces would justify crackdowns as matters of existential necessity.

This is the typical response of authoritarian systems under external attack. Space for reform shrinks, not expands.

A US strike would not bring Western-style democracy closer. It would likely push it further out of reach. Legitimate economic and political grievances would be discredit-

sure helped weaken Syria's Bashar al-Assad over time, but his eventual collapse came from internal fractures, not symbolic strikes. He ultimately fled to Russia when the regime imploded from within—not because of Western air campaigns.

Military Options, Strategic Dilemmas

The United States has no shortage of military options—long-range bombers, cruise missiles, cyber operations, and covert action among them. All are feasible. None are easy.

Iran is large, militarised, and battle-hard-

BJP Set for Another Landslide in Nagpur Civic Polls, Congress Stagnant



The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) appears set for another emphatic victory in Nagpur, the ideological stronghold of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), as counting trends for the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) elections point to a near-repeat of its dominant 2017 performance. As of 5 pm, the ruling alliance is comfortably ahead in the

151-member civic body, leaving the Congress once again struggling to translate an aggressive campaign into electoral gains.

According to the latest trends, the BJP is leading on 109 seats, while its ally, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, is ahead on three seats. The Congress, despite mounting a "Mission Hundred" campaign, is leading on

only 27 seats—almost identical to its 2017 tally of 28. If these trends hold, the BJP could equal or even surpass its previous performance, when it won 108 seats and secured a clear majority in the civic body. Nagpur holds immense symbolic and political importance for the BJP. The city is the birthplace and headquarters of the RSS, while municipal elections are typically driven by hyper-local civic issues, Nagpur remains a prestige battle for the BJP due to its ideological significance.

Polling for the Nagpur Municipal Corporation was held on Thursday alongside elections for 28 other municipal corporations across Maharashtra. The results also indicate a shifting political landscape in the city. Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is poised to enter the NMC for the first time, with one of its candidates leading in her ward. Meanwhile, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) appears to be gaining a foothold, with four of its candidates currently leading. These include Alisha Khan, Reshma Nandgawli, Sofia Sheikh, and Pawan Koye, all of whom are ahead in ward number 3 in the Asinagar zone, an area with a significant Muslim population.

This development suggests a fragmentation of the minority vote bank that the Congress has traditionally relied upon, further weakening its prospects in the city.

In terms of seat-sharing, the BJP contested 143 seats, with eight allotted to the Shiv Sena. Ajit Pawar's NCP fielded candidates in over 90 seats, while the Congress chose to contest all 151 seats independently, without any alliance. The Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) contested 79 seats, and the AIMIM fielded candidates in six wards.

BMC Setback Signals Existential Crisis for Raj Thackeray's MNS

Mumbai's evolving political landscape is posing an existential challenge for Raj Thackeray and his Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), once known for its aggressive, street-level politics inspired by the late Bal Thackeray. The party's underwhelming performance in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections has underlined the steady erosion of its support base and raised serious questions about its future relevance in Maharashtra politics.

As counting continues for the 2026 BMC elections, the MNS is leading in just 10 wards, a modest presence in India's richest civic body. In contrast, the Shiv Sena (UBT), led by Raj Thackeray's cousin Uddhav Thackeray, has managed to remain competitive, leading in around 75 seats by successfully holding together its alliance. However, even this alliance has fallen well short of challenging the dominant BJP-Shiv Sena



(Eknath Shinde) combine, which is together leading in approximately 118 wards.

The results are particularly damaging for Raj Thackeray, who mounted an intense campaign marked by fiery speeches and a renewed emphasis on Marathi identity. His recent rapprochement with Uddhav Thackeray had briefly sparked hope among supporters that a reunited Thackeray brand could reshape Mumbai's political equations. Instead, the elec-

torate appears unconvinced, signalling waning appetite for the confrontational politics that once defined the Thackeray legacy.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of this poor showing is the growing threat of derecognition for the MNS as a state party. The party's vote share had already plummeted to just 1.55 per cent in the 2024 Assembly elections, with defections to the BJP or Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena increasingly likely as work-

ers seek political security. The results also reveal that the attempted consolidation of the Marathi vote through identity politics failed to materialise. The "Thackeray nostalgia" factor appears insufficient to counter the BJP's superior organisation and ground-level machinery. With diminishing institutional relevance, Raj Thackeray may increasingly turn to street politics, language agitations, and media-centric activism to stay visible. In the long term, the MNS could even be forced to consider aligning with the BJP-led Mahayuti as a junior partner, though no such talks have surfaced yet.

Compounding the party's troubles is the lack of a clear succession plan. Amit Thackeray's third-place finish in Mahim during last year's Assembly elections has raised doubts about his ability to revive the party. As Maharashtra politics crystallises into a bipolar Mahayuti versus MVA contest, the MNS now

Congress at a Crossroads in Tamil Nadu: DMK Deadlock, TVK Temptation and High-Stakes Talks Ahead

The Congress leadership has begun a series of high-level consultations ahead of the five Assembly elections scheduled for April–May, with Tamil Nadu emerging as one of the most sensitive and closely watched battlegrounds. Later today, Rahul Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge are set to meet senior Tamil Nadu Congress leaders, a discussion that could finally clarify the party's alliance strategy in the state.

For nearly two decades, the Congress has been allied with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu. However, internal divisions have surfaced within the state unit, with some leaders now pushing for a potential alliance with actor Vijay's newly launched party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). Whether the Congress is willing—or able—to break away from its long-standing partnership with the DMK remains uncertain.

At the heart of the seat-sharing and power-shar-



ing. Traditionally, the DMK has restricted its alliances with Congress and other partners to electoral arrangements, keeping governance firmly under its own control. This time, however, Congress is demanding a share in the government if the alliance returns to power. Sources say the party is seeking at least six ministerial berths in Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's cabinet. DMK leaders, however, have categorically ruled out any such arrangement, insisting there is no scope for Congress to join the

government. Seat-sharing talks have been equally fraught. In the 2021 Assembly elections, Congress contested 25 seats as part of the DMK-led alliance. For the 2026 polls, the party had expected an expanded presence. Instead, sources indicate the DMK is offering only 19 seats. Congress, citing its historical performance, is demanding around 35 seats. In earlier elections, the party contested 41 seats in 2016, 63 in 2011, and 48 in 2006. Negotiations, which were supposed to conclude by mid-December,

could have spillover benefits in neighbouring Kerala.

Rahul Gandhi's recent gestures have further fuelled speculation. He publicly supported Vijay's film "Jana Nayagan" amid censorship issues and spoke to the actor after the Karur stampede. Rahul's aide Praveen Chakravarty has also met Vijay and openly criticised the DMK government's financial management, signalling growing warmth towards TVK.

Despite this, many Tamil Nadu Congress leaders favour sticking with the DMK for reasons of electoral practicality. Analysts suggest the Congress may be using TVK as leverage to extract better terms from its traditional ally rather than seriously planning a break. Given the DMK's importance to the INDIA bloc and Congress's weak independent base in Tamil Nadu, the high command may ultimately prioritise national considerations over state-level ambitions. With Congress having failed to produce a chief minister in Tamil

India's Highways to Go Cashless: Toll Payments to Shift Fully Digital from April 1

India's highway travel is on the verge of a major digital transformation. The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is preparing to ban cash payments at all national highway toll plazas starting April 1. Commuters will be required to use either FASTag or UPI for toll payments, marking a significant step toward faster, more efficient, and transparent highway travel.

While an official notification has not yet been issued, the ministry is reportedly finalising preparations for a smooth transition. The move is expected to significantly reduce congestion at toll plazas. Long queues caused by cash transactions will become a thing of the past, and travel efficiency is set to improve dramatically.

Streamlining payments will reduce fuel wastage and contribute to more eco-friendly travel. Transparency: Digital payments create a clear, trackable record of all transactions, reducing discrepancies and enhancing accountability.

Looking Ahead: Barrier-Free Tolling

This digital transition is only the first step toward India's goal of a Multi-Lane Free Flow system. This system, inspired by global standards, aims to enable vehicles to drive through toll areas at highway speeds without stopping at barri-



Supreme Court Directs Karisma Kapoor to Respond to Priya Kapur's Divorce Records Application



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday directed actor Karisma Kapoor to file her objections within two weeks regarding a fresh application submitted by Priya Kapur, seeking access to details of Karisma's 2016 divorce proceedings with late businessman Sunjay Kapur. The matter was listed before a bench headed by Justice AS Chandurkar.

In a closed-chamber hearing, Karisma Kapoor's legal team opposed Priya Kapur's application, arguing that it was not maintainable. Her lawyers contended that the consent terms and the divorce decree had already been filed in another matter involving Karisma Kapoor's two children in the Delhi High Court. They described the new application as unnecessary and potentially intrusive into confidential family court proceedings.

Priya Kapur's lawyers, however, stated that the application aims to obtain certified copies of pleadings, documents, and orders

from the divorce proceedings to provide the full factual background in an ongoing estate dispute. This dispute revolves around the Rs 30,000 crore estate left behind by Sunjay Kapur, with Karisma Kapoor's children alleging that the will attributed to their father was forged by their stepmother, Priya Kapur.

Maninder Singh, representing Priya Kapur, emphasized that clarity on the divorce settlement is crucial to determine whether the issues currently raised by Karisma Kapoor's children were already addressed and resolved during Sunjay Kapur's lifetime.

The application was originally filed by Priya Kapur in November 2025, seeking access to court documents related to the matrimonial settlement between her and Karisma Kapoor.

Karisma's lawyers, Ravi Sharma and Apoorv Shukla, countered that the application was "frivolous" and intended solely to extract personal information from a private

India and EU Poised for Landmark Trade Deal Amid Republic Day Visit



India is preparing for a historic diplomatic engagement as top leaders of the European Union (EU) arrive in the country for the 77th Republic Day celebrations, with a potential trade deal expected to be a highlight of their visit.

Yet experts also stress that Trump's grip on leadership is not unassailable. The United States faces several key tests this year that could reshape his influence. Midterm elections in November loom large, with control of Congress at stake. Historically, these elections act as a referendum on the sitting president, and low approval ratings coupled with public discontent over economic pressures could spell trouble for Republicans if voters shift their support.

Political observers warn that a significant loss in Congress could leave Trump in a weakened position, effectively a "lame duck" leader for the final two years of his term. Legal challenges also present hurdles:

The Supreme Court may limit the administration's use of tariffs, and Congress might push back against executive orders seen as bypassing legislative authority. Foreign policy, a major focus of Trump's agenda, has also drawn mixed reactions. Some supporters applaud his bold moves abroad, but critics argue that focus on international interventions has distracted from domestic issues that matter deeply to many voters.

As 2026 unfolds, the central question facing Trump and his allies is whether a media dominating, personality driven presidency can withstand electoral realities and institutional limits — or whether the moment of Trump will soon wane.

of the agreement have been concluded, with only a few sensitive issues pending resolution, including matters related to agriculture and the EU's carbon tax policies. Indian and EU officials are optimistic that these remaining

concerns will be addressed ahead of the leaders' summit.

Alongside the formal summit, an India-EU Business Forum is expected to take place, emphasising economic cooperation and showcasing opportunities

for bilateral trade and investment. The potential agreement is expected to cover sectors including manufacturing, technology, clean energy, pharmaceuticals, and services, paving the way for stronger economic ties and greater market access on both sides.

If signed, this FTA would mark one of India's most significant trade agreements to date and would represent a milestone in EU engagement in Asia. Both sides have high-

lighted their shared commitment to a rules-based international order and sustainable economic growth, reinforcing the strategic and economic importance of the partnership.

The Republic Day invitation reflects the growing significance of India-EU relations, which have expanded across technology, security, sustainability, and trade. The EU leaders' visit also follows increased diplomatic and commercial engagement in recent years, including previous high-level visits and the establishment of new economic initiatives.

As India welcomes its European guests, attention is focused on the potential announcement of the landmark trade agreement, which could redefine bilateral economic relations and create a new chapter of cooperation between the world's fifth-largest economy and one of its major trading blocs.

Trump Accepts Symbolic Nobel Peace Prize Medal from Venezuelan Opposition Leader in Unprecedented Gesture



In a highly unusual diplomatic moment at the White House on Thursday, former U.S. President Donald Trump was presented with the Nobel Peace Prize medal by Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado — a gesture he described as "wonderful" but which has sparked controversy and clarification from Nobel officials.

Machado, who was awarded the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to promote democracy and human rights in Venezuela, presented the medal to Trump during a private meeting. She said the act was in recognition of his perceived support for Venezuelan freedom and democratic transition, describing the transfer as a "symbol of mutual respect" and gratitude on behalf of the Venezuelan people. Trump took to his social media platform to thank Machado, calling her "a wonderful woman who has been through so much" and praising the gesture as one of respect and honour.

A framed version of the Nobel Peace Prize medal was

handed to Trump inside the White House, and a senior White House official confirmed that he intends to keep it. The meeting, which lasted more than an hour, also included discussions between Machado and lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

However, the Norwegian

Nobel Institute has been unequivocal in stressing that Nobel Peace Prizes cannot be transferred or shared. Under the rules of the Nobel Foundation, once a prize is awarded, the title of laureate is permanent and non-transferable, even if the physical medal changes hands. The committee's clarification underscores that Machado's gift does not make Trump a Nobel laureate. The extraordinary exchange comes amid a backdrop of political upheaval in Venezuela. U.S. forces recently captured long-time Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, a move that re-

shaped the nation's leadership landscape. Machado, once a leading figure of the Venezuelan opposition and expected to lead the country, has struggled to maintain political momentum after Trump's administration chose to back Vice President Delcy Rodríguez as interim leader, a decision that disappointed many of Machado's supporters. Critics have described Machado's action as symbolic and lacking institutional significance, while analysts say the gesture illustrates broader political manoeuvring rather than a substantive recognition of Trump's global peace efforts. Nobel officials reiterated that while the physical medal may be possessed by someone else, the honour and status of Nobel Peace Prize remain solely with the original laureate.

The controversy has reignited debate about the meaning of prestigious international awards, political symbolism, and the boundaries between personal admiration and official recognition.

British MP Raises Alarm Over Violence Against Minorities in Bangladesh Ahead of Elections



A senior British lawmaker has sounded the alarm over escalating violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh, describing the situation as "disastrous" and urging urgent international attention ahead of the country's upcoming national elections.

Conservative Member of Parliament Bob Blackman, speaking in the House of Commons, highlighted reports of attacks targeting minority communities, particularly Hindus. He said individuals are being murdered, homes and temples destroyed, and other reli-

gious groups are facing similar persecution. Blackman's remarks have intensified concerns among Western lawmakers about human rights conditions in the South Asian nation.

During his speech, Blackman called on the British government to take decisive

action to protect minorities and ensure that the upcoming elections are free, fair, and inclusive. He noted that he had raised the matter in parliamentary discussions and urged the Foreign Secretary to outline concrete steps to address the crisis.

The lawmaker also linked the rise in violence to the tense political climate ahead of the February 12 national elections. He pointed out that one of Bangladesh's major political parties has been barred from contesting under the current interim government, raising concerns about the credibility of the electoral process. Blackman warned that exclusion of significant political forces, combined with the rise of extremist rhetoric, could further destabilise the country.

In his address, Blackman stated: "Hindu men are being murdered on the streets; their houses are being burned; the temples are being desecrated; and other religious minorities are suffering similar fates." He emphasised that the UK must use its diplomatic influence to encourage Bangladesh to uphold democratic norms

and protect vulnerable communities.

Other British MPs from multiple parties have expressed similar concerns, stressing that credible elections cannot take place if major political groups are excluded. They supported Blackman's call for Parliament to receive a clear action plan from the government on promoting inclusive elections and safeguarding minority rights.

The UK government has reiterated its longstanding commitment to human rights and stated that it continues to engage with Bangladeshi authorities to support peaceful and credible elections. Officials condemned all acts of violence based on religion or ethnicity and stressed the importance of ensuring the safety and dignity of all citizens.

As Bangladesh approaches a pivotal electoral moment, the issue of minority rights and political inclusivity remains under intense international scrutiny, highlighting the challenges the country faces in maintaining social stability and democratic norms.

One Year In, Trump Dominates U.S. Politics — But Questions Loom Over How Long His Hold Will Last

One year after Donald Trump returned to the White House, his influence over American politics and global affairs remains unmistakable — but an increasingly uncertain future raises questions about how long his dominance will last.

Since being sworn in for a second term in January 2025, Trump has stamped his imprint on the presidency with an assertive, highly personal leadership style that critics say has weakened traditional checks and balances. Observers note that ordinary presidential norms have given way to an approach driven more by impulse and individual will than by established institutional processes.

The past year has been marked by a flurry of headline-grabbing actions. Early in his term, Trump issued sweeping pardons to hundreds of pro-Trump rioters involved in the Capitol attack, a move that symbolised his readiness to reshape legal and political norms. On the international stage, he ordered military action against Venezuela and pursued controversial policies on tariffs and foreign relations — dramatic gestures that have unsettled allies and rivals alike.

Legal and political analysts say Trump's presidency has often operated as if the usual constraints of governance do not apply. A law professor in New York described the current era as one in which the presidency has been "personalised" like never before, reflecting Trump's



Pakistan Expands Defence Footprint in the Arab World with "Islamic NATO" and Major Arms Deals



Pakistan is significantly expanding its military and defence presence across the Arab world, pursuing major arms deals and exploring a trilateral security partnership with Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which analysts have termed an "Islamic NATO." These moves highlight Islamabad's growing ambition to play a more prominent role in regional security beyond its traditional sphere of influence.

At the centre of this expansion is Pakistan's effort to formalise a defence cooperation framework with Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Officials say the proposed pact would commit all three countries to collective security measures similar in principle to NATO's mutual defence clause. Although negotiations are ongoing, the agreement reflects a shared interest in closer military collaboration among Muslim-majority nations. In parallel, Pakistan is negotiating multi-billion-dollar arms deals with several countries. Reports indicate that Islamabad is close to finalising a \$1.5 billion contract to supply weapons and aircraft to Sudan's military, including light attack aircraft, drones, and air-defence systems.

Discussions with Saudi Arabia could result in a fighter jet agreement worth around \$2 billion, further strengthening defence ties between the two countries. These developments signal a shift in Pakistan's role from primarily providing military training and support to becoming a significant exporter of

defence equipment in the Middle East. The JF-17 Thunder fighter jet, co-produced with China, has attracted interest from nations such as Iraq and other states seeking cost-effective military platforms. Analysts note that Pakistan's expanding clientele enhances its strategic influence but also requires careful diplomatic navigation.

Experts caution that Islamabad must manage complex regional dynamics, as conflicts in countries like Sudan, Libya, and Yemen involve rival factions backed by different powers. Selling similar weaponry to opposing sides could complicate Pakistan's relations with key partners and affect its long-term credibility as a defence supplier.

Pakistan's increased engagement comes amid intensified geopolitical competition, with several countries reassessing military procurement strategies. As Islamabad strengthens its strategic agreements and expands its defence exports, the regional security architecture could evolve, reflecting new patterns of cooperation outside traditional Western-led alliances. Overall, Pakistan's push into the Arab defence market marks a notable chapter in its foreign policy and military diplomacy. With the combination of high-profile arms deals and proposed security partnerships, Islamabad is positioning itself as a key player in Middle Eastern security, potentially reshaping regional power balances in South and West Asia.

A senior British lawmaker has sounded the alarm over escalating violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh, describing the situation as "disastrous" and urging urgent international attention ahead of the country's upcoming national elections.

Conservative Member of Parliament Bob Blackman, speaking in the House of Commons, highlighted reports of attacks targeting minority communities, particularly Hindus. He said individuals are being murdered, homes and temples destroyed, and other reli-

gious groups are facing similar persecution. Blackman's remarks have intensified concerns among Western lawmakers about human rights conditions in the South Asian nation.

During his speech, Blackman called on the British government to take decisive

Indian Markets Set for Cautious Trade as Global Cues Remain Mixed



Indian equity markets are expected to begin the trading session on a muted note, with early indicators pointing to a flat to marginally positive opening. Signals from the Nifty suggested limited movement at the start, reflecting cautious investor sentiment amid mixed global cues and ongoing assessment of corporate

earnings.

Overnight, U.S. markets ended on a positive note, supported by selective buying in technology and financial stocks. Improved confidence around the U.S. economic outlook and expectations of policy stability helped Wall Street close higher. However, this optimism was only partially reflected across Asian

markets, where trading trends remained mixed in early hours. While some Asian indices registered modest gains, others traded lower, weighed down by concerns over regional growth and currency movements.

Back home, domestic benchmarks have been showing resilience but remain largely range-

bound. In the previous session, the Sensex and the Nifty witnessed intraday volatility, trimming gains after touching higher levels. The Nifty managed to hold above key psychological and technical levels, indicating underlying support, though profit-taking at elevated valuations capped further upside. Market par-

ticipants continue to remain selective, preferring stock-specific opportunities over broad-based buying.

Sectorally, trends have been mixed. Information technology stocks have shown relative strength, supported by recent quarterly results and improved outlook commentary from major companies. Banking and financial stocks, which carry significant weight in benchmark indices, have been trading cautiously as investors assess asset quality trends, credit growth, and margin outlooks. FMCG and other defensive sectors have provided stability, while metal and energy stocks have reacted to fluctuations in global commodity prices.

Investor focus is now firmly on the ongoing earnings season, which is expected to play a decisive role in shaping near-term market direction. Quarterly results from large corporates are being closely tracked for insights into demand conditions, cost

pressures, and margin sustainability. Any earnings surprises could trigger sharp stock-specific movements, even as the broader indices remain confined within a narrow range. In addition to earnings, global macroeconomic developments, foreign institutional investor activity, crude oil prices, and currency movements are likely to influence market sentiment. The rupee's trajectory against the U.S. dollar and trends in global bond yields will also be monitored for cues on capital flows. Overall, market experts believe that while the near-term outlook points to consolidation, the broader trend remains supported by domestic fundamentals.

Investors are advised to remain cautious, focus on fundamentally strong companies, and avoid aggressive positions until clearer signals emerge from global markets and corporate earnings.

SEBI's Mutual Fund Regulation Revamp to Reshape Industry from April 1



Mumbai, January 16 — The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has notified a comprehensive overhaul of mutual fund regulations, set to come into effect from April 1, marking a major step toward strengthening investor protection and improving transparency in the fast-growing

asset management industry. The revised framework is expected to significantly impact how mutual fund houses operate, disclose costs, and maintain governance standards.

A central feature of the new regulations is tighter control over expenses charged to investors. SEBI has clear-

ly defined which costs can be included in the Total Expense Ratio, ensuring that only legitimate and essential expenses are passed on to unitholders. Any costs falling outside the prescribed list will have to be borne by the asset management companies, sponsors, or trustees themselves. This

move is aimed at preventing hidden charges and ensuring that investors have a clearer understanding of what they are paying for.

The regulatory overhaul also places greater responsibility on trustees and independent directors. They will be required to actively monitor fund management agreements, compensation structures, related-party transactions, and overall fee reasonableness. Trustees must identify regulatory lapses, ensure timely corrective measures, and formally report compliance issues. This enhanced oversight framework is designed to strengthen accountability and reduce conflicts of interest within the mutual fund ecosystem.

Another important change relates to the treatment of transaction-related costs. Expenses incurred directly for trade execution,

such as brokerage and exchange fees, have been clearly segregated from the base expense ratio. This distinction is expected to improve cost transparency and allow investors to make more accurate comparisons across different mutual fund schemes.

Disclosure norms have also been significantly strengthened. Mutual funds will now be required to provide more detailed and standardized reporting in their annual disclosures. Trustees will need to include comprehensive commentary on scheme performance, justification for expense levels, historical unit data, and detailed expense break-ups. These reports must be shared with investors in a timely digital format, enhancing accessibility and investor awareness.

From an industry perspective, the new rules may lead to high-

er compliance and operational costs in the short term, particularly for smaller fund houses. However, market participants believe the long-term benefits will outweigh these challenges. Improved transparency, stronger governance, and clearer cost structures are expected to boost investor confidence, encourage higher retail participation, and support sustainable growth in the mutual fund industry.

As the implementation date approaches, asset management companies are likely to accelerate system upgrades and internal audits to ensure compliance. Overall, SEBI's regulatory revamp is being viewed as a structural reform that aligns India's mutual fund industry with global best practices, reinforcing its role as a key pillar of the country's financial markets and household savings ecosystem.

Foreign Fund Rebalancing Triggers Equity Stake Changes in Aavas Financiers and IndiaMART

Institutional portfolio rebalancing by global investors has led to notable shifts in shareholding patterns of two prominent Indian listed companies, signalling dynamic flows in equity markets. Small Cap World Fund Inc, a global investment vehicle managed by Capital Group, exited its entire holding in Aavas Financiers and trimmed its stake in IndiaMART InterMESH through open market transactions on January 14. This move reflects active allocation strategies by foreign funds in response to evolving market conditions and investment outlooks.

Small Cap World Fund sold its entire 2.48 percent stake in Aavas Financiers, offloading 19.64 lakh shares at around 1,440 apiece for approximately 282.8 crore. Aavas Financiers, a housing finance company focused on retail and affordable housing segments, has been a favorite among institutional investors



due to its consistent growth in net sales and strong asset quality. The exit by the fund underscores shifting priorities among global small-cap investors, potentially influenced by valuation considera-

tions and broader macroeconomic signals. Stepping in to acquire these shares, HDFC Mutual Fund purchased 19.5 lakh equity shares, amounting to a 2.46 percent holding in Aavas Financiers for

nearly 280.9 crore, reiterating domestic institutional appetite for quality financial stocks. The transaction suggests confidence among Indian mutual funds in the long-term prospects of the housing finance

segment, even as foreign portfolios recalibrate exposures.

Simultaneously, Small Cap World Fund reduced its stake in IndiaMART InterMESH, selling 6.26 lakh shares — roughly a 1.04 percent holding — for around 132.2 crore. Prior to the sale, the fund held about 1.83 percent in the B2B online marketplace company. This repositioning by a global fund highlights active risk management and profit-taking behaviour after periods of stock-specific or sectoral gains.

Acquiring the trimmed stake in IndiaMART, Nalanda India Equity Fund, managed by Singapore-based Nalanda Capital, bought 11.18 lakh shares, representing nearly a 1.86 percent stake valued at about 236 crore. The participation of another foreign institutional player indicates sustained interest from global equity investors in India's digital and technology-enabled ser-

Global Bond Index Snub Raises Odds of RBI Expanding Debt-Buying Program



The unexpected deferral of Indian government bonds' inclusion in a major global index has triggered market speculation that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may expand its record debt-buying program in the current fiscal quarter. Investors and analysts say the central bank could step up purchases to stabilize yields and support liquidity amid subdued foreign inflows.

Bloomberg Index Services recently postponed the inclusion of Indian debt in its flagship Global Aggregate Index, disappointing market participants who had anticipated significant foreign capital inflows. Analysts had estimated phased investments of roughly \$10-\$20 billion had the integration proceeded as planned. The postponement has heightened uncertainty in the bond market, pushing up yields on India's benchmark 10-year government securities by nearly 10 basis points. This comes at a time when the market is already grappling with heavy government borrowing and weaker overseas demand.

Since December, the RBI has been aggressively intervening in the sovereign debt market through open market operations (OMOs), purchasing around 2.54 trillion of government securities to anchor yields and support market liquidity. Additional purchases of roughly 500 billion are scheduled in the coming week. Market participants had largely expected such support mechanisms for stabilizing yields.

As the fiscal year progresses, all eyes will remain on the RBI's next moves and how the market responds to evolving supply-demand dynamics. Analysts suggest that continued central bank support may be essential to offset the impact of heavy government borrowing and to maintain orderly functioning of India's sovereign bond market.

Budget 2026: Making the New Tax Regime a Clear Winner



As preparations intensify ahead of India's Union Budget 2026, tax experts and financial planners are focusing on ways to strengthen the new personal income tax regime so it appeals more broadly and becomes the preferred choice for taxpayers. While previous reforms have simplified the structure and offered significant relief, analysts believe targeted tweaks could further boost adoption and make the system more equitable and practical.

The new tax regime, redesigned in recent budgets, has already delivered notable benefits to taxpayers. By widening tax slabs and enhancing rebates, especially for middle income earners, the overhaul has reduced tax liabilities for many and simplified compliance by removing most deductions and exemptions. This shift has encouraged a growing number of taxpayers to opt for the new regime over the older, more complicated structure.

Still, there are concerns about gaps that could be addressed to "clear the runway" for the new regime to become a clear winner. One of the biggest criticisms is the absence of commonly used deductions such as house rent allowance and medical insurance, which many argue should be reintroduced in a limited form. Experts point out that allowing essential deductions would improve the regime's appeal without undermining its core objective of simplicity.

Another key suggestion is to increase the standard deduction, which has become the main source of relief under the new regime after most exemptions were removed. Raising this deduction could help offset the loss of other benefits and better reflect inflation and rising living costs, particularly for

experts also urge extending loan linked tax benefits to the new regime. Deductions for education loan interest and home loan interest, currently only available under the old regime, could be incorporated since they are administratively straightforward and tied to formal financial records.

There is a strong case for improving provisions for senior citizens, who currently receive fewer benefits under the new regime despite facing higher health related expenditures. Revisiting basic exemption limits and offering targeted relief for older taxpayers could make the system more inclusive.

Finally, observers note that tax policy should not stop at compliance ease but also support long term financial planning. Introducing capped incentives for retirement savings, health insurance, or first home purchases could strike a balance between simplicity and financial security, encouraging responsible financial behaviour without adding undue complexity.

With these refinements, Budget 2026 has an opportunity to deepen the new tax regime's appeal, helping it transition from a simplified alternative into the mainstream choice for a broader cross section of India's taxpayers.

A Sewing Mistake Creates an Unlikely Mascot for the Year of the Horse

A minor production error at a toy factory in eastern China has unexpectedly given birth to a viral sensation, turning what was once considered a defective product into an internet favourite. Toy ponies with unusually sad, weeping expressions have captured public imagination online and are now being celebrated as unlikely mascots for the Year of the Horse.

The unusual toys first gained attention in January when a social media user shared an image of a pony with tearful eyes and a sorrowful expression. What appeared to be a deliberate design choice was, in fact, the result of a simple sewing mistake. The toys were produced in Yiwu International Trade City in Zhejiang province, widely regarded as the world's largest wholesale market for small commodities, according to a report by the "South China Morning Post".

Standing about 20 centimetres tall and priced at 25 yuan, the toy pony was originally designed as a festive symbol of the Year of the Horse. It features a bright red body—traditionally considered an auspicious colour in Chinese culture—and is embroidered with a golden message meaning "wealth will arrive soon." However, a technical error during production caused the toy's mouth and nostrils to be stitched incorrectly, giving it a downturned, tearful expression.

Initially, the crying face was viewed as a flaw. But instead of rejecting the product, internet users found the pony's emotional appearance oddly endearing. Nicknamed the "Crying Horse," the toy quickly went viral, with



Couple Uncovers Secret Rooms in 130-Year-Old Home After Receiving Eerie Letter



What began as the purchase of a charming 130-year-old home quickly turned into a real-life mystery for a millennial couple, who uncovered secret rooms, hidden compartments, and long-forgotten spaces after receiving an eerie handwritten letter. Courtney and her husband Matt were drawn into the house's hidden past when a message addressed simply to "Purchaser" arrived at their doorstep, promising to reveal secrets about the historic property they had just bought.

Courtney later shared the entire experience in a TikTok video that quickly went viral, amassing more than 1.5 million views. According to her account, the letter was sent from Canada and claimed to be written by the last surviving member of the Madison family, the former owners of the house. The writer said she had grown up in the home and wanted to ensure the new owners knew about hidden rooms and features that may not have been disclosed during the sale.

While the exact location of the house remains undisclosed, Courtney and Matt confirmed that the property is a large Victorian-style home purchased from a historical institution. They have also chosen not to release any detailed information about the Madison family.

Intrigued by the letter's clues, the couple began searching their new home and soon discovered several concealed spaces. Their first major find

Nebraska Grandmother's 40-Year-Old Porch Pot Sells for 29 Lakh on Her 91st Birthday

What began as an ordinary plan to hold a garage sale turned into a once-in-a-lifetime moment for Lois Jurgens, a 91-year-old Nebraska resident, when a stoneware crock she had kept on her porch for four decades sold at auction for an astonishing 29 lakh (around \$32,000).

Jurgens had originally intended to sell the 30-gallon Red Wing crock for no more than \$50, unaware that it was a rare collector's item. Just before finalising her garage sale plans, she noticed that Bramer Auction and Realty was hosting an auction featuring antique crocks. On a whim, she called to ask if they might be interested in including her pot.

With the auction only days away and all advertisements already published, the request came late. Still, auc-



tioneer Bramer decided to visit Jurgens' home to inspect the crock. When he turned it around, he immediately noticed a set of distinctive blue butterfly markings—an extremely rare feature among Red Wing stoneware.

What truly stunned him, however, was that the crock was stamped twice, something collectors consider a "once-in-a-lifetime" find. The markings instantly elevated the pot from a household item to a prized collector's piece.

Jurgens, meanwhile, modestly estimated the crock might fetch about \$100. Bramer reportedly laughed and told her she was "going to be surprised."

On auction day, nearly 300 bidders gathered, with intense competition driving the price upward. By the time bidding crossed \$19,000, only three bidders re-

mained—hailing from Texas, Kansas, and Iowa—locked in a fierce bidding war.

Jurgens couldn't attend the auction initially, as she was spending her 91st birthday volunteering at her local church. When she later arrived at the fairgrounds, the bidding had ended.

"We did a little better than \$100," Bramer joked before revealing the final price: \$32,000.

Overwhelmed by the news, Jurgens reportedly felt weak in the knees and was helped onto the stage to sit beside the crock that had changed her life. She later said that in her 91 years, nothing had been more exciting than the sale of that humble porch pot.

What she once saw as a simple household item turned out to be a rare treasure—proving that sometimes, history is hiding in plain sight.

BSF Soldier's Soulful Rendition of 'Sandese Aate Hain' Wins Hearts Online

Music has a unique ability to transcend boundaries and touch the deepest emotions, and a recent viral video of Border Security Force (BSF) soldier Chakrapani Nagiri is a powerful reminder of that truth. The video, which has been widely shared on social media, shows Nagiri singing the iconic patriotic song **"Sandese Aate Hain"** from the film *Border*, accompanied by his fellow soldiers. What makes the clip truly special is not just the song itself, but the heartfelt emotion with which it is performed.

Set against a simple, intimate backdrop, the video captures a quiet moment among soldiers stationed far from home. Nagiri's voice carries warmth, sincerity, and calm strength, instantly resonating with viewers. There is no elaborate setting or professional arrangement—just a soldier singing from the heart, reflecting the longing, sacrifice, and devotion that the song represents. Each note conveys a deep sense of connection to family, country, and duty, making the performance all the more moving.

Nagiri shared the video on his Instagram account, offering a glimpse of his musical



talent and a rare, personal moment from a soldier's life. The clip quickly gained traction online, drawing praise not only for his melodious voice but also for the genuine emotion that shone through his singing.

Social media users flooded the comments section with admiration and gratitude. One user wrote, **"Real owner of the song,"** suggesting

that Nagiri's rendition captured the soul of the track. Another commented, **"Your voice is so sweet,"** while a third added, **"Hats off to you sir. I can feel the emotions of the soldiers who stand on the border for our motherland."** Many viewers said the video gave them goosebumps and brought tears to their eyes.

The heartfelt performance

also caught the attention of Bollywood celebrities. Actor Varun Dhawan responded to the video with appreciation, writing, **"What a great thing."** Actor Ahan Shetty also reacted, sharing a heart emoji along with the Indian flag, signalling pride and respect.

Beyond its viral success, the video stands as a gentle yet powerful reminder of the

human side of soldiers—men and women who, despite their tough duties and challenging environments, carry emotions, talents, and deep love for the nation. Chakrapani Nagiri's soulful rendition of "Sandese Aate Hain" is more than a song; it is a tribute to the spirit of those who guard the country's borders, often in silence.

A Small Act of Kindness on Bengaluru Metro That Touched the Internet



Metro journeys are often associated with overcrowded coaches, rushed commuters, misplaced belongings, or occasional unpleasant encounters. Yet, every once in a while, an ordinary commute offers a moment so gentle and unexpected that it restores faith in human

kindness. One such moment from a Bengaluru Metro ride has recently captured the hearts of people online.

A woman, while travelling on the metro, noticed a little girl sitting nearby wearing a beautifully designed "gold" bangle. Struck by its

intricate craftsmanship, the woman casually complimented it and politely asked the child if she could take a photograph to show her goldsmith. She expected a simple yes or no. What followed, however, completely caught her off guard.

Instead of allowing a photo, the young girl calmly removed the bangle from her wrist and handed it to the woman, saying it would help the goldsmith understand the design better. The woman was left stunned by the child's spontaneous trust and generosity. In a crowded metro, surrounded by strangers, such an unguarded act felt rare and deeply moving.

Moments later, the girl smiled and casually revealed that the bangle was not made of real gold but was artificial. Rather than diminishing the gesture, this revelation made it even more meaningful for the woman. The child's willingness to hand over something she cherished—without hesitation or suspicion—felt like a powerful reminder of innocence, honesty, and warmth.

Touched by the experience, the woman decided to keep the bangle with her as a memento of that fleeting yet unforgettable moment. For her, it symbolised a quiet act of kindness that made an otherwise routine journey extraordinary.

She later shared the story

on X (formerly Twitter), recounting how she had admired the bangle, requested a photo, and instead received the entire ornament in her hand. In her post, she described how the child's simplicity and trust left a lasting impression on her.

Concluding her reflection, the woman wrote that not every metro ride is defined by negativity. Some journeys leave behind soft, heartwarming memories—moments that make no noise but stay with you long after the destination is reached.

The post resonated widely on social media. Users praised both the child's innocence and the woman's appreciation of the gesture. One commenter wrote, **"This post brought a smile to my face! She's such a kind person."** Another added, **"This is the best thing on the internet today!"**

In a world often dominated by hurried lives and guarded hearts, this small metro moment served as a gentle reminder that kindness can appear anywhere—even between strangers on a daily commute.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru Set Competitive Total as Gujarat Giants Eye Chase in WPL 2026 Clash

In a high-voltage Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026 encounter at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) posted a competitive total against the Gujarat Giants, setting up a thrilling contest under lights. RCB continued their promising start to the season, while the Giants aimed to bounce back after mixed results in recent matches.

Gujarat Giants captain Ashleigh Gardner won the toss and opted to bowl, hoping to exploit the conditions under lights and restrict RCB to a manageable total. The pitch, while generally favorable for batters, had early move-

ment that posed challenges in the first few overs, but the expected dew later in the evening was likely to favor the chasing side.

RCB came into the match with momentum, riding high on back-to-back victories. The team's confidence was evident as they looked to post a score that could put pressure on the Giants' batters. However, their innings started cautiously, with early wickets falling and threatening to destabilize the batting line-up.

A crucial partnership between Radha Yadav and Richa Ghosh steadied the innings, frustrating the Giants' bowlers and building a

platform for a competitive total. Yadav's com-

posed stroke play com-

posed hitting ensured fluent hitting ensured RCB remained in control. In the final overs, Nadine de Klerk provid-

ed rapid acceleration, helping RCB finish strongly at 182/7 in 20 overs.

For Gujarat Giants, the bowling unit showed promise early on. Young pacers applied pressure in the powerplay, with key breakthroughs slowing the scoring rate. Despite these efforts, RCB's middle order responded effectively, balancing caution with aggression at critical moments.

Chasing 183, the Giants started cautiously, looking to build a solid foundation. Experienced players such as Beth Mooney and Sophie Devine contributed crucial boundaries, keeping the required run rate manageable.

As the innings progressed, the Giants began to pick up the pace, aiming to keep the pressure on RCB's bowlers.

This match highlighted the growing competitiveness of the WPL, with both sides demonstrating batting depth, strategic bowling plans, and fielding sharpness. RCB's balanced performance keeps them firmly in contention for the title, while Gujarat Giants will aim to capitalize on their chase and secure a morale-boosting win in the second innings. The encounter promises to go down to the wire, showcasing the excitement and intensity of the women's game at its best.



Shreyas Iyer Recalled to India T20I Squad Ahead of New Zealand Series



India's senior men's cricket team has strengthened its preparation for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2026 with the recall of experienced middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer to the national T20I squad for the five-match series against New Zealand. The series, beginning on January 21, serves as India's final bilateral assignment before the global tournament, and selectors have moved decisively to bolster the squad amid injury concerns.

Iyer's inclusion comes alongside leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, replacing Washington Sundar and Tilak Varma, both sidelined due to injuries. Sundar is out with a side strain sustained during the preceding ODI leg of the tour, while Varma will miss at least the first three T20 internationals due to an abdominal issue.

A seasoned campaigner, Iyer last appeared for India in T20Is in late 2023. His recall highlights the selectors' confidence in his ability to anchor the middle order and provide stability under pressure. He is slated to

feature in the first three matches of the series, with participation in the final two games to be assessed based on workload and team requirements.

For Iyer, this call-up represents a major step in his return to international cricket following a period on the sidelines due to injury. He has been actively working to regain full fitness, performing in domestic competitions and franchise tournaments, including the Indian Premier League. His consistent form and readiness have earned him this timely opportunity, offering a chance to cement his place in India's T20 plans ahead of the World Cup.

The New Zealand series carries added significance as it allows India to fine-tune combinations and acclimatize to high-pressure scenarios expected in the upcoming tournament, which will be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka in February. With a strong batting lineup already in place, Iyer's experience and tactical versatility are expected to strengthen India's middle order and deepen their options both with the bat and in crucial finishing roles.

As the team navigates injuries and finalizes combinations, fans will be keenly watching how Iyer seizes this chance to make an impact, enhance India's balance, and contribute meaningfully to the team's T20 World Cup preparations. His performance in the New Zealand series could well shape his role and significance in India's pursuit of T20 glory later this season.

KL Rahul Seeks Blessings at Mahakaleshwar Temple Ahead of Third ODI



Indian wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul visited the revered Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain ahead of the crucial third and final ODI against New Zealand. The visit was a spiritual preparation as Team India geared up for the series decider at the Holkar Stadium in Indore.

Rahul offered prayers at one of the twelve sacred Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva, including ritual worship of Nandi, the bull revered as Shiva's vehicle. The calm and devotional visit reflected Rahul's personal faith and his focus on mental readiness ahead of a high-pressure encounter.

This was not Rahul's first visit to the historic temple. In the past, he has sought divine support here on significant occasions, including ahead of the Indian Premier League season and previous matches in Indore.

His family has also accompanied him during some visits, demonstrating the personal and familial importance of these spiritual rituals. The series decider in Indore promises to be an intense contest, with India looking to leverage both form and focus to secure the win. Rahul's temple visit not only underscores his personal approach to handling pressure but also reflects a broader culture within the team of seeking balance, calm, and concentration before critical games.

As fans eagerly anticipate the clash, attention

will now turn to the field, where India and New Zealand are set to battle for the series. KL Rahul's blend of skill, form, and

spiritual focus may well prove decisive in helping India clinch the final ODI and finish the series on a high note.

Jamal Musiala Set to Return for Bayern Munich After Six-Month Injury Layoff



Bayern Munich are poised to welcome a major boost as midfielder Jamal Musiala nears his return from a six-month injury layoff, with head coach Vincent Kompany confirming that the 22-year-old could be part of the squad for the upcoming Bundesliga clash against RB Leipzig. Musiala has been sidelined since suffering a serious leg injury, but his recent progress in training indicates he is finally ready to rejoin competitive action.

Musiala has been out of action since July last year when he suffered a broken leg and dislocated ankle during the Club World Cup. The injury ruled him out for the start of the season and left Bayern without one of their most creative attacking players for much of the campaign. Despite his absence, the German champions have performed strongly, maintaining an unbeaten run in the league and building a commanding lead at the top of the Bundesliga.

Coach Kompany noted that Musiala's inclusion in the matchday squad will depend on his training and fitness levels in the coming days. While he is steadily regaining full fitness, any return to competitive minutes will be carefully managed to ensure he is fully prepared before being reintegrated into the team. Bayern are taking a cautious approach to avoid any risk of setbacks.

Musiala, who joined Bayern's senior team in 2019, has been a central figure in the club's success. Over more than 200 appearances, he has contributed consistently with goals and assists, helping Bayern secure multiple Bundesliga titles as well as Champions League honours. His return is expected to add creativity and

unpredictability to an already strong side, giving the team an additional attacking weapon.

Alongside Musiala, Bayern may also see the return of other key players from

injury, including German captain Joshua Kimmich and Canada skipper Alphonso Davies, further strengthening the squad's depth as they pursue domestic and European titles. As the season enters a crucial

phase, Musiala's comeback is a timely lift for Bayern Munich. His technical skills, pace, and attacking flair could prove decisive in high-stakes matches ahead. Fans and teammates alike will be eagerly

watching to see how he reintegrates after his long spell on the sidelines and how he contributes to Bayern's push for continued success in the Bundesliga and beyond.

Sankranthi Box Office Boom: Anaganaga Oka Raju Emerges as Major Economic Driver

The resounding success of Anaganaga Oka Raju has reinforced the growing economic strength of Telugu cinema, particularly during the high-stakes Sankranthi festive season. Starring Naveen Polishetty in the lead, the film has rapidly transformed into a significant commercial force, collecting an impressive 41.2 crore worldwide within just two days of its release on January 14.

Produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, and presented by Srikara Studios, the film's per-

formance highlights the financial impact of well-timed festive releases. Sankranthi remains one of the most lucrative windows for the film industry, driving increased footfalls, higher ticket pricing, and strong ancillary revenues across distribution, exhibition, and hospitality sectors.

Trade analysts point out that Anaganaga Oka Raju benefited from strong word-of-mouth from its opening show, translating into sustained occupancy levels across urban and mass centres. Despite competition from other big-ticket releases, the film secured adequate screens and show tim-



Pan-India Music Launch Strengthens Market Buzz for Arjun's Seetha Payanam

Hyderabad, January 16 — The unveiling of the energetic mass track Basavanna from Action King Arjun's upcoming pan-India film Seetha Payanam has added fresh momentum to the film's commercial prospects, underlining the growing role of music-driven promotions in the Indian film economy. Released ahead of the film's theatrical debut, the song has quickly captured audience attention and boosted pre-release market visibility across multiple languages.

Produced under the Shree Raam Films International banner, Seetha Payanam is positioned as a large-scale multilingual project, set for release on February 14 in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi. Such a simultaneous multi-language rollout significantly enhances revenue potential by tapping into diverse regional markets while optimizing marketing and distribution costs. Industry analysts note that pan-India films with strong music assets often see higher advance bookings and better opening-weekend footfalls.

The Basavanna track introduces Ac-

tion Prince Dhruv Sarja in a powerful cameo, a strategic move that adds star value and widens the film's reach, particularly in Karnataka and neighbouring markets. Cameo appearances by popular stars have increasingly become a calculated commercial tool, helping producers attract cross-regional audiences and strengthen satellite, digital, and music rights valuations.

Composed by Anup Rubens, the high-energy song is designed to appeal to mass audiences, a segment that remains critical for box-office sustainability. Lyrics by Kasarla Shyam and vocals by Nakash Aziz and L. Keerthana further enhance the song's recall value, while dynamic choreography by Laltha Shobi and Srishti Varma adds visual appeal suited for both theatrical screens and digital platforms.

Trade circles observe that such mass tracks often translate into higher repeat viewership, especially in single-screen and semi-urban centres.

Seetha Payanam also marks the silver-screen debut of Aishwarya Arjun as the female lead, introducing



new talent while maintaining commercial balance through the presence of seasoned actors like Sathyaraj, Prakash Raj, and Kovai Sarala. Arjun himself takes on multiple responsibilities as producer, director, writer, and actor, reflecting a vertically integrated production model that allows for tighter budget control and unified creative vision.

With shooting and post-production completed, the film now enters a crucial marketing phase. The release of Basavanna serves as a cost-effective promotional catalyst, driving social media engagement and strengthening the film's pre-release business across audio, digital, and theatrical rights.

ings, allowing distributors to maximize returns within the crucial opening weekend. Producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi described the success as his most satisfying Sankranthi outcome in six years, underlining the film's importance from a business perspective. The Thank You Meet organized by the team reflected not just creative triumph but also economic confidence. Naveen Polishetty, addressing the gathering, acknowledged the audience as the real driving force behind the film's success. With Anaganaga Oka Raju marking his first Sankranthi release and fourth con-

secutive hit, his market value as a dependable box-office performer has seen a notable upswing, strengthening future project economics.

Beyond box-office collections, the film has generated widespread employment and revenue across the value chain—from production crews and technicians to theatre owners, food vendors, and promotional agencies. Directed by debutant Maari, the film also demonstrates how new talent, when backed by established production houses, can deliver commercially viable results. Industry observers note that the film's blend of comedy, emotion, and

topical political satire broadened its audience base, ensuring repeat viewership and steady weekday collections. The music by Mickey J. Meyer and strong performances by Meenakshi Chaudhary and Rao Ramesh further enhanced the film's commercial appeal. As Anaganaga Oka Raju continues its strong theatrical run, it stands as a clear example of how content-driven cinema, released strategically during festive seasons, can deliver robust economic returns while boosting confidence across the Telugu film industry's business ecosystem.

Regional Cinema Fuels Local Economy as Prabhas Nimmala's "Miracle" First Look Unveiled

Hyderabad, January 16 — The unveiling of the first look of "Miracle," directed by Prabhas Nimmala, has brought renewed attention not only to regional cinema but also to its growing contribution to the local and allied economies. Released as a Sankranthi special, the announcement highlights how mid-budget action entertainers are emerging as significant economic drivers within the Telugu film industry.

Produced jointly by Ramesh Eggidi, Srikanth Mogadasu, and Chander Goud under the Saida Family Entertainment banner, Miracle represents a collaborative production model that is increasingly common in regional cinema. Such partnerships help distribute financial risk while enabling steady investment in content creation, employment generation, and technical infrastructure.

With shooting and post-production completed, the film now enters a crucial marketing phase. The release of Basavanna serves as a cost-effective promotional catalyst, driving social media engagement and strengthening the film's pre-release business across audio, digital, and theatrical rights.

The casting reflects a balanced mix of emerging talent and established performers, a strategy that helps control costs while ensuring market appeal across different audience segments.

The first schedule of Miracle, dominated by high-octane action sequences, has been completed successfully, injecting revenue into local economies through spending on sets, equipment rentals, accommodation, transport, and daily wages for technicians and support staff. The second schedule, scheduled to begin from January 22 in and around Hyderabad, is expected to further benefit the city's hospitality, logistics, and ancillary service sectors.

Industry observers note that films like Miracle contribute to a sustainable production ecosystem. By employing a large ensemble cast and crew—including cinematographer Surender Reddy, editor Vishwanath, action choreographer Srinu, lyricist Rambabu Gosala, and PRO Dheeraj Appaji—the project underscores cinema's role as a multi-layered economic activity rather than just a cultural product. Veteran film journalist Dheeraj Appaji's special appearance as a forensic officer also reflects

the cross-pollination between media professions within the industry. Speaking on the occasion, the producers expressed confidence that director Prabhas Nimmala, who earlier delivered Satya Gang and Fighter Shiva, is poised to strengthen his

market standing with Miracle. They emphasized that strong performances, glamour appeal, and action-driven storytelling would enhance the film's commercial prospects.

As regional films continue to scale up production values and pro-

fessional management, projects like Miracle illustrate how cinema remains a reliable engine for employment, regional spending, and creative entrepreneurship, reinforcing its importance in the broader entertainment economy.



'Awwal Dawath' From Ameer Log Goes Viral: Rahul Sipligunj & Annie Master Win Hearts

The latest mass number from the youthful comedy Ameer Log is creating a buzz across social media, with viewers praising the catchy beats and infectious dance moves. Fans are sharing clips of the song, further boosting its reach and cementing its position as a viral sensation. The song's appeal lies in its ability to combine music, rhythm, and visuals in a way that resonates with youth audiences, making it a perfect fit for the film's vibrant tone.

Directed by Ramana Reddy Soma and produced by Madhavi Reddy Soma, with Manohar Reddy Manchuri as co-producer, Ameer Log promises a lively, youth-oriented cinematic experience. The title and first-look poster, unveiled by popular actor Sree Vishnu, went viral instantly, hinting at the film's potential to strike a chord with the audience. Early promotional materials had already generated excitement, but the newly released song has taken the online audience by storm.

Ameer Log's energetic vocals of Rahul Sipligunj and the

dynamic choreography by Annie Master. The duo's efforts have become the talk of social media, with viewers praising the catchy beats and infectious dance moves. Fans are sharing clips of the song, further boosting its reach and cementing its position as a viral sensation. The song's appeal lies in its ability to combine music, rhythm, and visuals in a way that resonates with youth audiences, making it a perfect fit for the film's vibrant tone.

On the technical front, the film boasts cinematography by SVK, music composition by Smaran Sai, and editing by Rohith Penumatsa, ensuring a polished and engaging cinematic experience. The production team, including Shakthi (posters & publicity design), Swapnil Rao (sound & mixing), and Sai Satish (PRO), has worked meticulously to maintain high production standards.

Ameer Log is positioned as a fun-filled, contemporary comedy aimed at young audiences, and the viral response to 'Awwal Dawath' indicates that the film is off to a promising start.

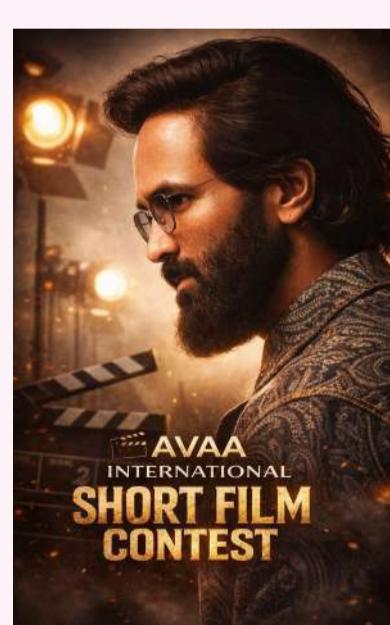


With the soundtrack making waves online, anticipation for the movie continues to grow, leaving fans eagerly

awaiting further updates and the official release.

The film's combination of energetic performances, catchy music,

and youthful storytelling suggests that Ameer Log could become one of the upcoming hits in the comedy genre.



lighting promising directors early in their careers, the contest aims to create a pipeline of innovative storytellers capable of shaping the future of the industry. The production house also extended warm festive wishes to all participants and cinema enthusiasts, aligning the launch with the spirit of celebration and new beginnings that Sankranthi and Pongal represent. Industry observers see this contest as a game-changer in the Indian entertainment space, offering both exposure and substantial professional support to talented filmmakers who might otherwise struggle to break into the competitive film industry. The initiative also underscores the growing trend of short films becoming stepping stones to larger cinematic

In an exciting move for aspiring filmmakers, AVAA Entertainments has announced the launch of the AVAA International Short Film Contest – Season One, coinciding with the festive celebrations of Sankranthi and Pongal. The initiative aims to identify and encourage new directorial talent across India, providing a unique platform for storytellers to showcase their creativity. Unlike typical talent contests, this program is entirely director-centric, focusing on storytelling and cinematic vision rather than celebrity appeal or commercial viability. Filmmakers are invited to submit short films with a maximum duration of ten minutes, giving them a concise canvas to demonstrate their narrative and technical skills. The emphasis is on originality, creativity, and directorial execution, offering participants a rare chance to be evaluated purely on their craft.

The contest's most enticing feature is its grand prize: the winning director will have the opportunity to helm a 10-crore feature film, produced by noted actor and film producer Vishnu Manchu. Known for his consistent support of emerging talent, Vishnu Manchu has long championed initiatives that bridge the gap between aspiring directors and mainstream cinema. His involvement ensures that the winner's vision receives the resources, guidance, and platform needed to transform a short film idea into a full-fledged blockbuster.

AVAA Entertainments, through this initiative, seeks to strengthen its commitment to nurturing fresh voices in Indian cinema. By spot-