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Pawan Kalyan Visits Family of Deceased Jana Sena Activist Who Donated Organs, Hands Over Insurance Cheque



TPN Bureau | January 21

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan on Wednesday visited the family of Chandu Veeravenkat Vasantharayalu, a dedicated Jana Sena activist from Krishna district who tragically lost his life in a road accident but left a lasting legacy through organ donation. Vasantharayalu, a resident of Peda Chandala village in Kruttivennu Mandal, Krishna district, met with a fatal road accident recently. Even in life, he had consented to organ donation, a decision that came to profound effect after his death. His selfless act enabled six individuals to continue living through the transplantation of his organs, embodying the true spirit of humanity

and service.

Pawan Kalyan personally visited the grieving family at their home in Peda Chandala village to offer condolences and support. During the emotional meeting, he handed over the party karyakarta insurance cheque directly to the family, ensuring they receive immediate financial assistance as per Jana Sena's welfare scheme for its workers. "Through his organ donation, Vasantharayalu has kept six people alive. His sacrifice will inspire many more," Pawan Kalyan remarked, highlighting the activist's commitment not just to the party but to society at large. The Deputy CM reassured the family of unwavering support from both the government and himself.

"I and the government will stand as a strong pillar for you in these tough times," he promised, underscoring



his party's ethos of standing by its cadres in moments of crisis. The visit comes amid Jana Sena's growing footprint in Andhra Pradesh politics, where Pawan Kalyan, as a key ally in the NDA government, balances administrative duties with grassroots engagement. Vasantharayalu's story has resonated across the state, promoting awareness about organ donation a critical need in India, where thousands await life-saving transplants. Health experts note that such acts can bridge the massive organ shortage gap, with Andhra Pradesh actively pushing campaigns under the cur-

rent administration. Pawan Kalyan's gesture reinforces Jana Sena's image as a party that cares for its foot soldiers. The family expressed gratitude, noting how the visit provided them emotional strength during mourning. This incident also spotlights the NDA government's focus on welfare schemes, including insurance for party workers and promotion of noble causes like organ donation. As Andhra Pradesh progresses under collaborative governance, stories like Vasantharayalu's remind citizens of the power of individual sacrifice for collective good.



Chief Minister of AP Chandrababu Naidu met with CM of TG Revanth Reddy. Mr Lokesh also in the meeting

IPS Officer AB Venkateswara Rao Fires at Coalition Government Over Case Handling

TPN Bureau | January 21

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Amaravathi: In a series of recent interviews, senior IPS officer AB Venkateswara Rao has openly criticized the TDP-Jana Sena-BJP coalition government in Andhra Pradesh for its inability to effectively register cases and take decisive action against alleged wrongdoings from the previous YSRCP regime. Rao, known for his straightforward style, questioned whether the coalition is deliberately diluting efforts due to lack of political will or support from the top, putting the government on the defensive. Rao highlighted specific failures, pointing to the APPSC (Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission) case as a prime example.

Despite providing detailed information and evidence, he claimed no substantial progress has been made. "The affidavit submitted by the YSRCP government to the High Court remains unchanged under the coalition why no revisions?" he asked, implying bureaucratic inertia or higher directives. On the liquor scam, Rao noted extensive investigations have yielded no convictions, questioning why probes aren't reaching



closure despite evidence.

The officer clarified that the issue isn't a lack of competence among officials but an absence of proper governmental backing. He directly challenged Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's recent remarks that probing Jagan's five-year tenure could take 30 years, asking, "Will you drop cases for development? The government must handle both justice and progress." Rao also raised the plight of Amaravati farmers, questioning why no cases have been filed against those who targeted them during YSRCP rule—or even now. "Are you afraid of Jagan? Why provoke a fool?" he quipped, echoing public frustrations. These comments have sparked widespread debate. TDP leaders counter that actions are methodical, not vengeful,

and delays ensure air-tight convictions.

Insiders hint at upcoming cases against YSRCP figures like Kodali Nani and potential revelations on Jagan's role in the liquor scam. However, public discourse contrasts sharply: many argue the coalition lacks the aggressive drive Jagan would have shown against opponents.

"If Jagan were in power, coalition leaders would be jailed by now," is a common refrain, with criticism mounting over unfilled cases and perceived hesitation. Rao's outbursts have amplified grassroots sentiments, forcing the coalition to respond amid fears of eroding public trust.

As whispers of a "red book" of YSRCP misdeeds circulate dismissed by critics as lacking color the pressure builds for swift justice.

Amaravati Set for Official Nod as Andhra Pradesh Capital in Upcoming Parliament Session



TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Amaravati: The Central government is gearing up to grant statutory status to Amaravati as Andhra Pradesh's permanent capital, with sources indicating a formal announcement could come during the impending Parliament Budget session. Preparations are underway, starting with Cabinet approval followed by introducing a dedicated bill in Parliament, according to reliable information.

This development stems from the end of the 10-year transitional period when Hyderabad served as the common capital for both Telangana and Andhra

Pradesh, as mandated by the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. That arrangement concluded on June 2, 2024, compelling Andhra Pradesh to declare its own capital without further delay. The state government promptly submitted a detailed report to the Centre, advocating for Amaravati.

The report outlined the capital selection process, ongoing infrastructure projects in the Amaravati region including land pooling efforts and master planning—and other preparatory measures. In response, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) asked the state to specify an effective date. Andhra Pradesh requested retroactive implementation

from June 2, 2024, aligning with the expiry of Hyderabad's joint status. The MHA, after reviewing the submission, designated Amaravati as the nodal agency and kickstarted the process to notify it officially. To build consensus, the MHA sought opinions from relevant Central ministries. Several have already responded positively, with directives issued for the Ministries of Housing and Urban Affairs, Law and Justice, and Agriculture to expedite their views. The NITI Aayog's input is also being solicited.

Once these consultations conclude, the MHA will finalize a note for Cabinet clearance and table the bill in Parliament. This move revives

Amaravati's fortunes after years of uncertainty. Initially championed by then-Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu in 2014, the project faced setbacks under the subsequent YSR Congress regime, which proposed a three-capitals model (Visakhapatnam as executive, Amaravati as legislative, Kurnool as judicial). The model's rejection by the Andhra Pradesh High Court and Supreme Court paved the way for Naidu's return to power in June 2024, with renewed focus on Amaravati as the singular greenfield capital. Proponents highlight Amaravati's strategic location on the Krishna River, 35 km from Vijayawada, and its potential as a world-class city with sustainable features like 33% green cover. Over 34,000 acres were pooled from farmers, with construction of key structures like the Assembly and High Court underway before the halt. The state has allocated 15,000 crore in the 2025-26 budget for revival, including metro rail extensions and outer ring roads. Political observers see this as a major win for the TDP-led NDA government, boosting investor confidence amid AP's push for special category status.

However, environmental concerns and farmer compensation issues linger. MHA officials remain tight-lipped, but the momentum suggests Amaravati's capital dream is closer to reality.

YS Jagan Announces Padayatra Resumption After 1.5 Years, Slams Coalition Government in Eluru Cadre Meet

TPN Bureau | Jan 21

Tadepalli: YSRCP president and former Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy declared on Wednesday that he will resume his padayatra after a gap of about 1.5 years, vowing to stay among the people for that entire period. Addressing party cadres from the Eluru constituency at the YSRCP camp office here, he urged workers to remain actively engaged with the public, asserting that people are increasingly turning towards YSRCP amid growing disillusionment with the TDP-JSP-BJP coalition government. The meeting, attended by leaders like Jayaprakash and Karumuri Sunil alongside cadres, focused on constituency issues and recent political developments. Jagan provided clear directions, emphasizing the party's



role as a bulwark for citizens. Jagan launched a scathing critique of the coalition regime, claiming all systems have been paralyzed. "No section of society has benefited," he said, highlighting support for students, farmers, youth, and women facing hardships. He accused the government of stifling welfare: fee reimbursements for eight quarters remain pending despite a 5,600 crore liability, with only 700 crore disbursed; 2,200

crore in hostel reimbursements are outstanding.

Health initiatives like Aarogyasri have been undermined, while 108 and 104 ambulance services bolstered with new vehicles during his tenure, even amid COVID are now defunct, allegedly handed to TDP loyalists and doctors' lobbies, leading to delays of up to three hours. Praising his own government's record, Jagan noted it honored promises monthly, undeterred by

two years of pandemic challenges, unlike the current "lies and deceit" reminiscent of Chandrababu Naidu.

Government schools, which competed with private ones under YSRCP (enrolling nearly 43 lakh students), now see only 33 lakh, he claimed. Jagan decried privatization scams, including medical colleges: his administration started 17 at once, completing 10, but the coalition is privatizing them while footing staff salaries (60 crore annually per college, totaling 120 crore for two years) and maintenance yet profits go private. Agriculture faces ruin, with fertilizers now bought block-wise; law and order has collapsed, with policing absent. "People discuss daily how things were better under me," Jagan said, alleging the government silences critics with cases. He vowed accountability upon YSRCP's return, within two months.



Tirupati Ganja Gang Terrorizes Eguvareddivaripalli Village in Midnight Rampage

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Tirupati: In a chilling display of lawlessness, a gang of ganja-intoxicated youths led by a known rowdy created mayhem in Eguvareddivaripalli village, Chandragiri Mandal, late last night. The assault, which unfolded around midnight, left villagers cowering in fear as the perpetrators hurled stones at multiple homes, shattering doors, windows, and even damaging two-wheelers and electricity meters.

Eyewitnesses described a scene straight out of a nightmare. Sunny, the alleged ringleader,

er, and his band of followers all reportedly under the influence of ganja rampaged through the quiet hamlet without provocation. “They came like wild animals,” said one terrified resident, speaking on condition of anonymity. “We locked ourselves inside, hearts pounding, praying they wouldn’t break in.”

The attack caused widespread property damage but, mercifully, no serious injuries. Families spent the entire night huddled in their homes, too scared to venture out. Villagers wasted no time alerting the local police station. Officers from the Chan-



dragiri police outpost arrived promptly, questioned the affected residents, and gathered preliminary details about the incident.

However, in a twist that has fueled outrage, the police reportedly

left the village shortly after without making any arrests. Barely had their vehicles disappeared from sight when Sunny’s gang returned with renewed fury, reigniting the chaos and sending fresh waves of

panic through the community.

This brazen second attack has amplified calls for immediate action. “The police came and went like guests at a tea party,” fumed another villager. “What good is

reporting if they don’t protect us?” The episode underscores deeper frustrations in rural Andhra Pradesh, where ganja abuse and rowdism often go unchecked, eroding faith in law enforcement.

Local sources reveal this is far from Sunny’s first offense. Residents claim he has a history of similar violent outbursts in the village, terrorizing families over petty disputes or simply for thrills. Notably, Sunny is already booked under a Rowdy Sheet case, a police designation for habitual offenders, yet he remains at large.

“He’s been doing this for years,” alleged a senior villager. “His gang operates with impunity, fueled by drugs easily available nearby.” The Eguvareddivaripalli community, a cluster of around 200 families reliant on agriculture and daily wage labor, now

lives under a shadow of dread. Women and children are particularly anxious, with many refusing to step out after dusk. “We demand protection from Sunny’s gang,” the villagers chanted in an impromptu gathering this morning. “Strict action against the ganja batch is non-negotiable arrests, not just inquiries!” As of this report, Chandragiri police have promised a thorough investigation and increased patrols, but skepticism runs high. SP Tirupati has been urged to intervene, deploying special teams to nab the culprits and dismantle local ganja networks.

Home Minister Anitha Directs Foolproof Arrangements for Arasavalli Festival

Devotees’ Safety Paramount: Instructions Issued to Officials

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Srikakulam: State Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha emphasized that officials must work in coordination to ensure no inconvenience to devotees attending the Rathasapthami celebrations at the Arasavalli temple. During her visit to the district on Wednesday, she inspected the district police office and held a special review meeting with senior officials on festival preparations

and security measures.

She directed them to take proactive steps to prevent any untoward incidents. Keeping in mind the expected crowds of devotees, the minister instructed authorities to organize queue lines systematically. She particularly stressed smooth traffic diversions to avoid hardships for the public.

“Officials should remain vigilant at the field level continuously, and only through coordination between police and revenue departments can we ensure the success of the festival,” she stated. Prioritizing devotees’ safety, Anitha urged that the Rathasapthami festi-

ties proceed peacefully.

Earlier, upon arriving at the district police headquarters, the Home Minister received a grand welcome from the district administration. District Collector Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, SP Maheswara Reddy, Srikakulam MLA Gondu Shankar, and other senior police officials participated in the program.

Following the review, she discussed the current law and order situation in the district with officials and offered several suggestions. The Arasavalli Sun God Temple is one of the most revered shrines in Andhra Pradesh, drawing lakhs of devotees



every year for Rathasapthami, observed on the seventh day of the bright half of Magha month. This year’s event, expected around late January, underscores the temple’s cultural significance, with chariots pulled

amid chants and rituals. Minister Anitha’s visit highlights the state government’s commitment to seamless celebrations amid growing pilgrim footfall. Her directives come at a time when district administrations across Andhra Pradesh

are gearing up for major religious events post the recent festival season. In Srikakulam, known for its coastal heritage and temple tourism, such coordination is crucial to manage influx from neighboring districts and beyond. Offi-



cials confirmed that additional police personnel, CCTV surveillance, and medical camps will be deployed as per her instructions. Anitha, a key figure in the TDP-led coalition government, has been actively touring districts to bolster security frameworks. Her focus on preemptive measures aligns with the state’s

broader push for citizen-centric governance, especially during mass gatherings vulnerable to overcrowding or mishaps. This proactive stance is expected to set a benchmark for other districts hosting similar events, ensuring Arasavalli’s Rathasapthami becomes a model of efficient administration.

UK Deputy High Commissioner Assures Collaboration on Amaravati Projects

TPN Bureau | January 20, 2026

Amaravati: In a significant diplomatic engagement, Andhra Pradesh Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana met with Gareth Wyn Owen, Deputy High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to India, at the CRDA (Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority) office in Amaravati on Tuesday.

The courteous meeting underscored growing international interest in Amaravati’s revival as the state’s greenfield capital city. Minister Narayana provided a comprehensive update on the ongoing construction progress in Amaravati, highlighting key milestones achieved under the current TDP-led government’s renewed push.

He detailed advancements in infrastructure, land pooling efforts, and trunk infrastructure works that have gained momentum since Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s return to power in June 2024. Emphasizing the vision of a world-class capital, Narayana outlined plans for sustainable urban development, including smart city features and eco-friendly designs envisioned by Singapore-based architect Norman Foster.

Owen expressed keen enthusiasm for partnering with the Andhra Pradesh government in Amaravati’s development. “We are committed to working alongside the AP government to realize this ambitious project,” he assured,

signaling potential UK expertise in urban planning, sustainable infrastructure, and investment opportunities.

His interest particularly focused on two flagship initiatives: the River Front Development project along the Krishna River and the International Sports City. The River Front Development aims to transform the riverbanks into vibrant public spaces with promenades, parks, and commercial zones, drawing inspiration from global models like London’s Thames waterfront.

Meanwhile, the International Sports City envisions state-of-the-art facilities for cricket, athletics, aquatics, and multi-sport events, positioning Amaravati as a hub for international tournaments and youth training academies. The meeting was also attended by Srinivas, Managing Director of the Amaravati Growth and Infrastructure Corporation (AGIC), who contrib-

uted insights into project execution and funding mechanisms.

This interaction comes amid Amaravati’s resurgence after a four-year hiatus under the previous YS-RCP regime, which had shifted focus to three capitals. The NDA government’s revival has attracted global investors, with recent pledges from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for financial support. The collaboration could open doors for British firms in construction, green technology, and sports infrastructure, boosting bilateral ties.

Minister Narayana’s office released a statement confirming Owen’s proactive stance, marking a positive step toward Amaravati’s completion by 2029. This development aligns with AP’s broader urbanization goals, promising economic growth, job creation, and enhanced livability for over 3.5 million residents in the capital region.



AP Speaker Ayyanna Patrudu Slams Absentee MLAs for Drawing Salaries Without Attending Assembly

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker U. Ayyanna Patrudu sharply criticized a section of MLAs who have not attended even a single day of sessions yet continue to receive their salaries, calling it unethical behavior that undermines public trust in the legislature.

Speaking at a conference of Speakers from various states in Uttar Pradesh, Patrudu, accompanied by Deputy Speaker Raghunath Raju, addressed the theme of legislative accountability to the people. “Some MLAs have not participated in even one debate. They draw salaries without coming to the House. It pains me to see such conduct,” he said, questioning how such actions could be justified morally. Patrudu highlighted the absence of punitive measures in current rules,

urging legal reforms to enforce a “no work, no pay” policy for non-attending members. He advocated for empowering citizens with the right to recall such representatives, emphasizing that lawmakers must be held accountable to those who elected them.

His remarks come amid ongoing concerns over assembly attendance and productivity in Andhra Pradesh, where political polarization has sometimes led to disruptions. Patrudu expressed anguish over MLAs evading their duties while enjoying perks funded by taxpayers. “Will they not face public ridicule for such unethical behavior?” he asked, underscoring the need for stricter norms to restore faith in the system.

The conference provided a platform for Patrudu to push for nationwide reforms. He proposed amending laws to disqualify habitually absent members



and introduce recall mechanisms, similar to models in other democracies. “There are no provisions to prohibit such conduct today. We must legislate ‘no work-no pay’ and give people the power to recall,” he asserted. Deputy Speaker Raghunath Raju supported these views, stressing collective responsibility.

Political analysts see this as a call for introspection within the TDP-led coalition government, which

holds a majority but faces opposition accusations of lax oversight. Patrudu’s intervention revives debates on MLA accountability, especially after recent sessions marked by low attendance.

With the budget session approaching, his suggestions could spark legislative action. The Speaker’s office has not detailed immediate plans, but the comments signal a push for transparency.

Tirupati Committee Warns PG Doctors: Serve in Govt Hospitals or Face Recovery, Degree Cancellation

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Tirupati (Medical Dept): Doctors who completed their postgraduate (PG) medical education with government subsidies must honor their bond by serving in public hospitals, warned Tot Trimurthulu, Chairman of the State Assembly Subordinate Legislation Committee. He announced strict action against those defecting to private sectors, including notices already issued to 57 doctors and recovery proceedings initiated from

some. During a review meeting at Tirupati Collectorate on Tuesday with various departments, followed by a media interaction, Trimurthulu emphasized enforcement of GOs 85, 127, and 311. Discussions with Medical and Health Department officials revealed amendments to GO 85 incorporated into GO 127 for better field-level implementation. “Field officers must strictly execute these,” he directed. Changes to 30% reservation for in-service candidates were also highlighted. Violators face se-

vere penalties: cancellation of their medical degrees, recovery of subsidies with interest, and fines up to 50 lakhs if needed. With no vacancies in government hospitals, opportunities for MBBS doctors remain blocked, Trimurthulu noted. The committee urged the government to study this and decide accordingly. While HIV cases have significantly declined statewide compared to the past, members stressed ramping up awareness programs in villages and festival-prone areas. The meeting saw par-

ticipation from committee members including MLAs Nallari Kishor Kumar Reddy (Pileru), Shravani Sri (Singanamala), Gali Bhanuprakash (Nagar), Kanna Lakshminarayana (Sattenapalli), Venkata Krishnareddy (Kavali); MLCs Ramgopalreddy, Chandrashekhareddy, DME Raghunandan; and Tirupati Collector Venkateswara. Trimurthulu’s firm stance underscores the YSRCP government’s push for accountability in healthcare, ensuring subsidized education translates

Party Clash in village Turns Deadly: YSRCP Cadres Allegedly Attack TDP Worker in Pre-Planned Assault Murderer dragged on roadMurderer

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Tuni | Ongole, Andhra Pradesh: In a shocking incident amid lingering post-election tensions, a TDP worker succumbed to injuries after being brutally attacked by a group of YSRCP cadres in a remote village, police revealed today. The assault, described as a premeditated conspiracy, has heightened fears of political violence in the region, with authorities vowing swift action against the perpetrators.

According to police statements, the clash erupted over minor disputes between supporters of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), which have been simmering in the village since the recent elections. DSP [Name withheld] explained that old rivalries provided the backdrop, but the violence was spontaneous flare-up. "YSRCP ranks mobilized with clear intent, heading straight to the residence of

Local YSRCP leader Chintakayala Chinababu as part of an advance plot," the officer detailed during a press briefing. The attackers, armed with sickles, knives, rods, and sticks, stormed the area and targeted TDP activists. Their primary focus was Bangaraya, a prominent TDP karyakarta known for his grassroots mobilization efforts. "They singled him out, slashing at him repeatedly with sickles. He collapsed on the spot from severe wounds," police recounted. Eyewitnesses described a chaotic scene as the assailants fled immediately after the attack, leaving panicked villagers to rush the injured to the nearest hospital. Bangaraya, despite receiving emergency treatment, breathed his last at the facility due to excessive blood loss and critical injuries. The DSP emphasized that the assault bore hallmarks of a targeted conspiracy: "This was no random brawl. The intent was to eliminate TDP workers systematical-



ly. Intelligence suggested prior planning, with the group assembling weapons beforehand. "Preliminary investigations point to deep-seated political animosity. Villagers report frequent skirmishes between the two parties over trivial issues like poster placements or campaign rhetoric, exacerbated by the razor-thin margins in local polls. "Small provocations ignite big fires here," a local elder lamented. TDP leaders have condemned the attack, demanding a high-level probe and CBI intervention. "This is a

direct assault on democracy," thundered TDP district president [Name], who led a delegation to the victim's family. YSRCP has distanced itself, with spokespersons calling it an "isolated act by fringe elements" and urging restraint. However, police have registered a murder case under relevant IPC sections, including 302 (murder) and 149 (unlawful assembly). Five suspects are in custody, with sketches of others circulating. Raids continue across the district. This tragedy underscores the volatile political climate in Andhra Pradesh's

rural belts, where electoral grudges often spill into violence. With bypolls looming, authorities have deployed additional forces to prevent retaliation. The victim's family, grieving amid tight security, seeks justice. "Bangaraya fought for the people, not parties. Who will answer for his blood?" his brother appealed. Police assure a thorough probe, promising arrests soon. As tensions simmer, the incident serves as a grim reminder of the need for de-escalation in polarized villages.

YCP leader summoned for derogatory comments on woman dancers



TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh State Women's Commission has taken strong exception to alleged objectionable remarks made against women dancers by YSRCP leader Bhupathi Raju Venkata Satyanarayana Raju in Dr B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district. The incident reportedly took place at Goganamatham village in Rajolu Assembly constituency during Sankranti celebrations, where a dance programme had been organised. Videos of the lead-

er's alleged derogatory comments against the female dancers surfaced on social media and quickly drew public outrage. Taking suo motu cognisance of the issue, AP Women's Commission Chairperson Rayapati Shailaja on Tuesday issued summons to Bhupathi Raju, directing him to appear before the Commission on January 23. In an official statement, she said the Commission views the matter with utmost seriousness. "The objectionable comments made by Bhupathi Raju Venkata Satyanarayana Raju against the

dancers during a cultural event at Goganamatham have come to the notice of the Commission through social media. We strongly condemn this incident. The Commission will not remain silent when it comes to protecting the dignity of women," Shailaja said. She described as "shameful" the alleged behaviour of pressuring dancers to perform in an obscene manner, recording their videos, and making vulgar comments. Such conduct, she said, is not just morally wrong but constitutes a direct attack on wom-

en's personal dignity, freedom and safety. "The Commission considers such remarks and behaviour as a direct assault on the honour, liberty and security of women. This incident has pushed society into a situation where it has to hang its head in shame," the Chairperson observed. Shailaja further stated that an FIR has already been registered against the accused leader in connection with the case. The Women's Commission has instructed the police to submit all relevant details and evidence without delay. "We

have ordered the police officials to immediately furnish complete information and proof relating to the case," she said, adding that the Commission will closely monitor the progress of the investigation and take further action as warranted under law. The summons issued to Bhupathi Raju require him to personally appear before the Commission and explain his conduct. The development has intensified the debate over gender sensitivity and the treatment of women performers at public events in the state.

BJP Leader Kambala Srinivasa Rao Says Thousands Ready To Join Party, Highlights Welfare, Temple Support

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Rajamahendravaram, East Godavari: Senior BJP leader Kambala Srinivasa Rao on Wednesday claimed that thousands of people are ready to join the Bharatiya Janata Party under his leadership, asserting that the party is rapidly expanding its base in East Godavari district.



Addressing a press conference at Hotel Manjeera in Rajamahendravaram, Kambala Srinivasa Rao said he and his supporters are prepared to bring "several thousands" of new members into the BJP fold. He stated that the party in Andhra Pradesh would work with renewed enthusiasm under the leadership of newly appointed BJP national president Nitin Nabin.

Earlier had doubts about the BJP, but the Prime Minister has clearly proved that this is a party for everyone," he said. Detailing his service activities in the region, Kambala Srinivasa Rao said he has been taking up several welfare and charitable initiatives in Rajanagaram, Rampachodavaram and Jaggampeta Assembly constituencies as per party directions, and has now extended similar activities to Rajamahendravaram as well. He said that every day, at some place or the other, he is providing financial assistance of around 10,000 to persons suffering from ill health. Kambala also highlighted his support to temples that lack regular ritual offerings. He said he has been providing financial help to temples where there is no proper ar-

range for daily "dhupa, deepa, navedyam" (ritual worship), in order to ensure continuous "nitya deeparadhana" (daily worship). In several temples, he claimed to have spent from lakhs up to crores of rupees for ornaments and other required items for the deities. Referring to criticism against him, Kambala Srinivasa Rao alleged that some people who cannot tolerate his growth are trying to malign him through false propaganda. He warned that he would soon reveal full details about those behind the smear campaign. He added that leaders and workers across the BJP are extending full cooperation to him, and asserted that with everyone's support, he would work to further strengthen the party in the region.

Nara Lokesh Meets Zerodha Founder Nikhil Kamath in Davos, Pushes for Visakhapatnam Tech Hub and Fintech Boost in Andhra Pradesh

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Davos, Switzerland: In a significant meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Andhra Pradesh IT and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh engaged with Nikhil Kamath, co-founder and CEO of Zerodha, India's leading stock broking platform. The discussion focused on leveraging Zerodha's expertise in platform engineering, back end systems, trading algorithms, data analytics, and fintech R&D to drive technological innovation in the state.



Lokesh urged Kamath to establish a dedicated Technology Development Center in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh's emerging tech hub on the east coast. "Visakhapatnam is poised to become a powerhouse for fintech and IT, with world-class infrastructure and a talented workforce," Lokesh emphasized, highlighting the state's supportive policies under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision for a \$1 trillion economy by 2030. The minister also invited Zerodha to partner with the Ratan Tata Innovation Hub as a lead mentor to nurture fintech startups and strengthen Andhra Pradesh's entrepreneurship eco-

system. This collaboration aims to provide startups with access to Zerodha's cutting-edge tools, mentorship, and scaling support, fostering innovation in discount broking, algorithmic trading, and financial services. A key highlight was Lokesh's proposal for a statewide financial literacy program, the first of its kind in India. Delivered through multiple channels from schools to colleges this initiative would span all 26 districts of Andhra Pradesh, equipping the youth with essential skills in personal finance, investing, and digital banking. "Financial literacy is the foundation of economic empowerment. With Zerodha's platform, we can reach millions and build a financially savvy generation," Lokesh stated. Kamath responded positively, assuring that Zerodha would carefully review the Andhra Pradesh gov-

ernment's proposals. "We're excited about the opportunities in AP. Initiatives like these align with our mission to democratize finance," he said. Zerodha, valued at over \$3 billion and serving 15 million users, has disrupted traditional broking with zero-commission trading and tech-driven solutions. This meeting underscores Andhra Pradesh's aggressive push to attract global tech giants amid its focus on sunrise sectors like IT, AI, and fintech. The state has already inked MoUs with companies like Foxconn and Reliance during previous investor summits, positioning itself as a key player in India's \$1 trillion digital economy goal. Government officials see this as a step toward creating 2 lakh jobs in the tech sector by 2029. Further details on potential partnerships are expected soon.

Puramitra App Fails to Gain Traction in Eluru Urban Bodies Despite 5 Months of Launch



TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Eluru: Urban issues in Andhra Pradesh's towns continue to fester as officials and elected

representatives show little interest in addressing them effectively. Launched on August 1 last year by the Municipal Administration

Department as a "magic mantra" to resolve civic complaints swiftly via WhatsApp integration, the Puramitra app has struggled to reach even 50% of residents after five months. Low awareness, poor promotion, and administrative apathy have crippled its rollout, particularly in Eluru Corporation, Nuzividu and Jangareddygudem municipalities, and Chintalapudi Nagar Panchayat. Officials' indifference has allowed neglect to reign supreme. In Eluru Corporation, a district headquarters, key positions like Superintending Engineer, Town Planning Officer, and Medical Health Officer (MHO) remain vacant, hampering operations. Jangareddygudem operates with a skeleton staff, while Nuzividu has personnel but lacks proactive leadership. "The primary reason is

a lack of sincerity," sources in the department noted, pointing to half-hearted implementation despite the government's push for tech-driven governance to bring services closer to people. Promotion shortcomings exacerbate the issue. The Municipal Administration Department, with ample opportunities for publicity, has failed to prioritize awareness campaigns. Commissioners and senior officials allocate no time for field-level outreach, surprise inspections, or leveraging hoardings at government offices and shopping complexes. "Field reviews are absent, and banner displays are overlooked," critics allege, allowing urban filth and departmental woes to pile up unchecked in these areas. Resolving problems at the source remains elusive. Residents could

use the app as a "diamond weapon" for quick fixes, yet awareness drives are nonexistent. Official data reveals dismal uptake: In Eluru (93,236 families), only 25,077 downloads from August to January 17, with 1,251 complaints registered and claimed resolved. Nuzividu (18,179 families) fares better at 12,990 downloads (71.46%), resolving 246 issues. Jangareddygudem (17,859 families) saw 9,305 registrations and 482 resolutions. Chintalapudi lags worst, with just 1,854 downloads out of 8,746 families and 78 fixes. This gap underscores a disconnect between policy intent and execution. District higher-ups must now step in for aggressive awareness campaigns in urban local bodies to revive the app's potential and tackle mounting civic problems head-on.

Vijayawada Police Commissionerate Launches Tech-Driven Initiative to Track Criminals Escaping in Autos

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Vijayawada: In a bold move to curb criminals fleeing Vijayawada in autos, the NTR Police Commissionerate has rolled out a comprehensive digital tracking system. Criminals, often disguised as regular passengers, have been exploiting autos to escape after house burglaries or snatching gold chains from women. They even negotiate fares to cross district borders, blending seamlessly with commuters.

To counter this, police are now “locking down” autos technologically by creating a detailed database of vehicles and drivers. Vijayawada hosts six traffic police stations

overseeing 25,000 to 30,000 autos daily. Additional autos stream in from nearby areas like Penamaluru, Kankipadu, Uyyuru, Gannavaram, and Mylavaram.

Earlier efforts assigned serial numbers to autos within each station’s jurisdiction, but records remain patchy, with many vehicles still sporting old numbers. Fearing an influx from Krishna district autos, officials shelved full serial numbering. Instead, they’ve developed a custom app for Station House Officers (SHOs) to register every auto in their area. The process is meticulous: SHOs must photograph the auto’s front, rear, and passenger seating areas, uploading them to the app



alongside driver and owner cards, addresses, and phone numbers. So far, details of around 3,000 autos have been digitized, with all angles captured for a robust database.

Proven Effectiveness in Recent CaseThe initiative stems from a successful theft investigation that highlighted the gaps in current tracking.

Criminals typically flee via main roads post-crime, hopping into autos. CCTV footage often captures these escapes, but registration numbers are frequently blurry or obscured, especially at night.

In a recent burglary, police traced a suspect via CCTV from the crime scene to an auto pickup point. Despite

analyzing multiple footages, no clear number emerged. However, the auto’s front grille featured distinctive stickers: a photo of a former political leader on one side and a party symbol on the other.

Officers shared these images with the relevant traffic station SHO, who identified the vehicle, detained the driver, and ex-



tracted details. The driver revealed dropping the suspect in Tenali, providing an address that led to the arrest and recovery of stolen gold jewelry. This case underscored the value of visual markers stickers, dents, scratches, or unique features when numbers fail. “These identifiers will serve as vital clues during inves-

tigations,” a senior official noted. Broader implications for Crime Control Commissionerate authorities aim to expand the database city-wide, integrating it with CCTV networks for real-time tracking. The app ensures comprehensive profiling, making it harder for fugitives to vanish into the auto fleet. Drivers, now under

scrutiny, may deter picking up suspicious passengers. Police emphasize community cooperation, urging auto owners to comply promptly. This tech-savvy approach aligns with modern policing trends, promising quicker resolutions and deterring crime in a bustling urban hub like Vijayawada.

Accused in the Liquor Case sent to SIT Custody

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Vijayawada: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged Andhra Pradesh liquor scam has intensified its investigation, focusing on the flow of funds, irregularities in liquor licensing, and the possible involvement of political figures and private individuals. Acting on the orders of a Vijayawada court, SIT officials have taken two key accused into custody for interrogation. The team is also gathering information on other remand prisoners lodged in different jails in connection with the case, which pertains to alleged large-scale irregularities in liquor sales and payments during the previous Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy regime. SIT custody of key accused.

According to officials, the court granted the SIT three days’ custody of accused Ronak Kumar. He has been shifted to the SIT office, where special teams are questioning him. Investigators are reportedly focusing on alleged irregularities in liquor supply, the process of granting licences to various companies, and whether norms were violated to benefit specific firms.

Another key accused, Anil Chopra, has been given to SIT custody for one day. However, due to security concerns, it was decided that his interrogation would take place inside the Vijayawada district jail itself. SIT officials have already reached the jail and begun questioning him. Sources indicate that several crucial issues have emerged during Chopra’s interrogation.



The SIT is said to be examining alleged loopholes in the liquor policy, the basis on which certain companies were given permissions, and his links with other accused in the case. Parallely, the SIT is also collecting information related to some remand prisoners lodged in the Guntur jail, who are believed to have played a role in the alleged scam.

Allegations in the liquor scam The case centres on allegations that during the Jagan Mohan Reddy government, serious irregularities took place in liquor sales, payments to liquor companies, and digital payment-related transactions. It is alleged that substandard liquor was supplied by some companies, raising questions on what grounds these firms were granted approvals and licences. Officials say the SIT is probing why cash-only transactions were enforced at many liquor outlets and what strategy lay behind restricting payments to cash mode instead of promoting traceable digital transactions. The investigation is also looking into the alleged involvement and influence of political leaders and private individuals in shaping the liquor business, licensing process, and

payment mechanisms.

SIT teams are reportedly grilling the accused on these aspects, trying to map the chain of decision-making and identify who benefitted from the alleged policy distortions and irregular payments. Based on the information given by those in custody, further arrests are considered likely.

Political links and next steps

Sources suggest that the SIT is working with a “clear, step-by-step plan” to identify and establish links, if any, between the liquor scam and key political leaders. Once the current round of custodial interrogation is completed, the SIT is expected to compile the evidence and statements, and submit a detailed report and supporting material to the court. The investigation is also assessing the quantum of loss to the state exchequer allegedly caused by the irregularities in liquor policy, licensing, supply, and payment channels. Official clarity on the estimated financial damage to the state treasury is expected to emerge after the scrutiny of transaction records and company payments is completed and reconciled with policy decisions.

Sports Build Discipline Beyond Physical Fitness, Says Krishna University Official



TPN Bureau | January 16, 2026

Vijayawada: Sports not only enhance physical fitness but also instill discipline and routine, emphasized Prof. J. Naveen Lavanya Latha, Secretary of Krishna University Sports Board, while inaugurating the South Zone Asmita Khelo India Women’s Soft Tennis League here on Friday. The event, organized by the Andhra Pradesh Soft Tennis Association at the Tennis Complex of Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium, kicked off with

great fanfare. Prof. Naveen Lavanya Latha, the chief guest, highlighted the multifaceted benefits of sports.

“Asmita signifies self-confidence, independence, and personality,” she said, urging participants to embrace discipline for success in sports. She noted that soft tennis has gained significant popularity in the state, offering promising growth opportunities for disciplined athletes. Distinguished guest Vallabhaneni Rajeshwari, Cor-

porator of the 26th Division, praised the choice of Vijayawada as the venue. “It’s heartening to host the South Zone Asmita event here. The Central Government is conducting these tournaments nationwide to promote women’s development,” she remarked, underscoring their role in empowering female athletes. Tournament coordinator D. Naveen Kumar outlined the format: the four-day league will feature competitions in sub-junior, junior, and senior categories.

Matches will include singles and doubles events.

Top performers those securing the first eight positions—will advance to the national-level Asmita Soft Tennis League in Ahmedabad. This progression adds high stakes and motivation for the competitors from across the South Zone. The inauguration drew a diverse group of dignitaries, including Tamil Nadu Secretary Sembanan, Odisha Secretary Ajaym, Andhra Pradesh Swimming Association Treasurer I.

Ramesh, and 26th Division TDP in-charge Vallabhaneni Sateesh.

Their presence underscored the event’s regional importance and the growing support for soft tennis in India. Soft tennis, a variant of tennis played with softer balls on similar courts, is increasingly popular in India, especially through initiatives like Khelo India, which aims to nurture grassroots talent. The Asmita series specifically targets women’s participation, aligning with national goals for

Andhra Pradesh Government Releases Second Tranche of Industrial Incentives for SC/ST Entrepreneurs

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Vijayawada | Amaratva: In a significant boost to Dalit and tribal industrialists, the Andhra Pradesh government on Tuesday disbursed the second tranche of industrial incentives, allocating a whopping 60.21 crore to 3,617 Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) entrepreneurs. The initiative, announced by State Minister for MSME Kondapalli Srinivas, underscores the government’s commitment to economically empowering marginalized communities. Of the total amount, 53.05 crore went to 3,122 SC industrialists, while 7.16 crore was released to 495 ST entrepreneurs. “This financial support is designed to strengthen Dalit and tribal business owners, enabling them to thrive in the entrepreneurial landscape,” the minister stated during a press briefing.

Srinivas emphasized that promoting micro,



small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through such incentives not only fosters self-reliance but also generates substantial employment opportunities. “By bolstering small and medium industries, we are creating jobs and driving regional economic growth,” he added. The scheme aligns with the government’s broader vision of inclusive development, ensuring that SC/ST entrepreneurs receive timely assistance to scale their ventures.

This latest tranche builds on the state’s pro-

active measures in the current financial year. So far, incentives totaling 269.9 crore have been distributed to 11,451 industrialists, reflecting a robust push towards industrial diversification. The minister assured continued support, promising that the government would stand firmly behind SC/ST entrepreneurs in future phases as well.

The incentives cover various categories, including capital subsidies, interest reimbursements, and power tariff rebates, tailored to help

beneficiaries overcome initial hurdles in setting up or expanding units. Officials from the MSME department highlighted that the second tranche was processed swiftly following rigorous verification, ensuring transparency and efficiency.

This move comes amid Andhra Pradesh’s aggressive industrial policy reforms under Chief Minister’s leadership, focusing on districts across the state. Industry experts hail it as a model for social justice in economic development, potentially inspiring similar initiatives elsewhere.

With unemployment remaining a key challenge, such targeted interventions are expected to spur entrepreneurship in rural and semi-urban areas, particularly among underrepresented groups. The government plans to roll out more tranches soon, monitoring impact through dedicated portals.

Cyber Scammers Target AP Officials with Fake Humanitarian Plea from Odisha

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026

Vijayawada | Kakinada: Cybercriminals are infiltrating bank accounts with a new twist on fraud, preying on kindness under the guise of humanitarian aid. Posing as journalists, these scammers make emotional calls claiming women from victims’ districts are stranded in Odisha, stripped of their belongings by thieves. In a typical scam, fraudsters dial targets and spin a sob story: “Women from your area are stuck in Odisha. Thieves stole all their bags during travel, leaving them penniless.

They’ve been surviving on Bhubaneswar railway station platforms for three days. I’m a journalist who fed a couple of them, but I can’t afford to help everyone get home. Please inform local officials and leaders to provide financial aid.” Trusting the plea, victims respond

with sympathy “Oh no, they’re from our district! We’ll cover train tickets and meals” and transfer money via PhonePe, Google Pay, or UPI links sent by the caller.

Post-transaction, investigations reveal the harsh truth: The names mentioned are real, but no such women ever traveled to Bhubaneswar or got stranded there. Victims realize they’ve been duped, left ruining their generosity. This scam has recently hit districts including YS Raja Reddy Kadapa, Kurnool, Sri Potti Sriramulu Nellore, and Kakinada.

District officials, journalists, and some locals received these calls. While one or two fell for it and sent money, most stayed vigilant and avoided the trap. Police sources confirm this as an evolving cybercrime tactic, exploiting regional ties and empathy. Scammers use spoofed numbers mimicking



local or journalistic contacts, making calls seem legitimate. In Kakinada alone, at least five officials reported attempts in the past week.

Cybercrime experts urge caution: Verify stories independently before sending money. “Never share OTPs or transfer funds to unknown links, no matter how urgent the plea,” advises a Kakinada police official. Report suspicious calls

immediately to 1930 or local cyber cells. This incident underscores rising digital fraud in Andhra Pradesh, where scammers increasingly target informed professionals like administrators and media personnel.

As awareness spreads, victims are filing complaints, but authorities warn more cases may surface. Stay alert compassion should never cost you your savings.



Government Committed to Livestock Development, Says Parchur ADEA Madhavi at Animal Health Camp

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Parchur, Andhra Pradesh: In a significant initiative for livestock welfare, the Animal Husbandry Department organized a comprehensive animal health camp here on Tuesday under its auspices. The event underscored the state government's dedication to supporting farmers and livestock rearers through accessible healthcare and insurance schemes.

Presiding over the program, Parchur Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry (ADEA) Madhavi emphasized that the government is working tirelessly towards development, particularly in the ani-

mal husbandry sector. "The administration is committed to uplifting livestock rearers by providing low-premium insurance schemes," she told the gathering of farmers. Madhavi urged attendees to make full use of these opportunities, highlighting how such measures safeguard their livelihoods against unforeseen losses. As part of the camp, free vaccinations and essential medicines were distributed to prevent common diseases in cattle. Veterinary teams conducted on-site health check-ups, deworming, and advisory sessions, drawing a large turnout from local livestock owners. This hands-on approach aims



to boost animal productivity and reduce mortality rates in the region.

Chief guests at the event included Directors from Andhra Pradesh Corporation Sheik Shamsuddin from the AP Minority Corporation and Karumanchi Venkata Krishnaravu from the AP Road Development Corporation.

TDP town party president Akula Srinivasa Rao, senior TDP leaders Kathari Durga Prasad, and Kondraganti Shiva Nagaeshwara Rao were among other participants. Addressing the farmers, AP Road Development Corporation Director Karumanchi Venkata Krishnaravu spotlighted the Hari Gowala Pathakam (Green Cowherd Scheme). "Under this

scheme, livestock rearers can cultivate fodder crops on lands with water facilities at 100% subsidy," he explained. He further advised eligible beneficiaries to leverage the NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) for constructing Gokulam sheds—dedicated cattle shelters to enhance animal rearing infrastructure.

Sheik Shamsuddin, Director of the AP Minority Corporation, praised the Animal Husbandry Department's proactive role in organizing such camps. "These health camps are a boon for rural communities. Farmers must utilize them fully to keep their livestock healthy and productive," he said.

Post-speeches, officials jointly released brochures detailing upcoming animal health camps and related services, distributing them to party workers and farmers for wider outreach. The event reflects broader efforts by the Andhra Pradesh government to integrate animal husbandry with rural development. With livestock forming a backbone of the agrarian economy across the state's 26 districts, initiatives like free vaccinations, subsidized fodder cultivation, and insurance coverage address key pain points for small-scale rearers.

Madhavi reiterated

that similar camps would continue, aligning with the government's vision for sustainable agriculture and farmer prosperity. Local TDP leaders commended the program, noting its timely intervention amid seasonal disease risks. Participants expressed gratitude for the free services, with one farmer remarking, "This will save us thousands in vet bills and keep our cows healthy for better milk yield."

"The camp not only provided immediate relief but also educated farmers on preventive care, insurance enrollment, and scheme benefits, fostering long-term self-reliance in Parchur mandal."

South Central Railway Launches Two New Weekly SMTV Bengaluru-Balurghat Express Trains via Andhra Pradesh

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Nellore | Anakapalli: In a boost to long-distance rail connectivity, the South Central Railway (SCR) has introduced two new weekly express trains between SMTV Bengaluru and Balurghat in West Bengal, passing through key stations in Andhra Pradesh. The services commence today, enhancing travel options for passengers across southern and eastern India. The inaugural train, SMTV Bengaluru-Balurghat Express (Train No. 16523), departs from SMTV Bengaluru every Wednesday at 10:15 AM. It will traverse a route covering major Andhra Pradesh stations including Nellore, Ongole, Chirala, Tenali, Vijayawada, Eluru, Rajamahendravaram, Samalkot Junction, Anakapalli, Duvvada, Pendurthi, Kothavalasa,



Vijayanagaram, Srikakulam, and Barampur before reaching Balurghat.

This service promises to ease congestion on existing routes and provide direct access to West Bengal's northern districts for Bengaluru-bound travelers. The return journey, Balurghat-SMTV Bengaluru Express (Train No. 16524), leaves Balurghat every Saturday, arriving at SMTV Bengaluru on Monday morning at 3:00 AM. The trains will operate weekly, offering reliable connectivity amid

growing demand for inter-state travel post-pandemic.

SCR officials highlighted that these additions align with Indian Railways' network expansion under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, focusing on underserved regions. Andhra Pradesh, with its strategic rail corridors, stands to benefit significantly. Stations like Vijayawada and Rajamahendravaram, already bustling hubs, will see increased footfall, boosting local economies through passenger traffic.

Ongole and Nellore residents, in particular, gain easier links to Bengaluru's IT hubs and Balurghat's agricultural heartland. "This is a welcome step for seamless connectivity," said a Vijayawada-based commuter, adding that the service fills a long-standing gap for weekly express options. SCR General Manager highlighted the trains' modern amenities, including AC coaches, pantry cars, and enhanced safety features like CCTV and bio-toilets. Timings

have been optimized to minimize delays, with stops designed for efficiency. Bookings are open via IRCTC, with initial response overwhelming. This launch underscores SCR's commitment to Andhra Pradesh's rail infrastructure amid ongoing projects like the Visakhapatnam-Balurghat corridor upgrades. As the state pushes for better governance in transport, such initiatives promise economic ripple effects across its 26 districts.

Passengers Endure Sun and Rain Waiting for Buses in Dharmavaram Rural

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Dharmavaram Rural: Passengers in rural Dharmavaram are facing dire hardships due to the complete lack of bus shelters along key routes. Whether battling scorching sun or pouring rain, commuters must stand exposed on the roadsides, waiting endlessly for buses. The highway from Dharmavaram to Anantapur via Chigicherla has no bus shelters whatsoever, leaving villagers in a precarious situation.

Residents from several villages along this stretch—Gollapalli Cross, Badannapalli Cross, Garudampalli Cross, Vasanthapuram, and Chintalapalli Cross in Mandala—rely on AP-SRTC buses daily for travel. The RTC operates two buses from Dharmavaram to Anantapur, and one from Puttaparthi to Anantapur.

However, from Gollapalli Cross to

Chigicherla, not a single bus shelter exists on the entire route. This forces passengers from these villages to wait in the blazing sun for buses, with no shade or protection. During rains, the ordeal worsens as they get drenched while standing by the roadside. With summer fast approaching, locals fear intensified suffering from the harsh heat. "The road turns into an oven in peak summer, and without shelters, it's unbearable," said one commuter from Gollapalli Cross. Villagers highlighted that women, children, and elderly passengers face the brunt, often traveling to nearby towns for work, education, or medical needs.

The absence of basic infrastructure has sparked widespread frustration. "A simple bus shelter at each cross would end our daily misery," pleaded a resident from Vasanthapuram. They point out that the route sees heavy foot-

fall, with buses running multiple trips, yet authorities have overlooked this essential facility. Locals have urged elected representatives and officials to act swiftly.

Installing shelters at these key points would provide much-needed relief, shielding passengers from weather extremities. "Even now, leaders and administrators should intervene, survey the spots, and set up bus shelters to alleviate our woes," they appealed. This issue underscores broader challenges in rural Andhra Pradesh connectivity.

While the state government promotes welfare schemes and infrastructure development, basic amenities like bus shelters remain neglected in remote areas. Commuters hope for prompt action before summer exacerbates the problem, calling on the RTC and district administration to prioritize passenger comfort.

Anantapur Pomegranate Farmers Reap Record Prices Amid Maharashtra, Gujarat Delays

TPN Bureau | January 21, 2026
Anantapur: Relief has finally arrived for Pomegranate farmers in Anantapur district, who have endured months of distress due to rock-bottom prices. Delayed harvests in major producing states like Maharashtra and Gujarat have propelled prices to unprecedented levels, offering a much-needed windfall for Andhra Pradesh's cultivators.

Currently, traders are procuring high-quality groundnuts at a staggering 2 lakh per tonne, depending on grade and freshness. This marks a dramatic turnaround: just three months ago, prices hovered around 50,000 per tonne, climbing to 1 lakh to 1.10 lakh a month back. The surge stems from supply shortages elsewhere, positioning Anantapur's output as a critical buffer for national markets. Across Andhra Pradesh, groundnut is cultivated on 15,422 hectares, with an expected yield of 3.85 lakh tonnes this season. Anantapur, part of the erstwhile unified district, leads with cultivation spanning 11,000 hectares the highest in the state. Districts like Kurnool and



Nandyal also contribute significantly, but Anantapur's fertile red soils and farmer resilience have made it a groundnut powerhouse.

Local agricultural officials credit innovative practices for elevating produce quality. "The adoption of fruit covers and plant covers has been game-changing," said a senior horticulture department officer. These protective nets shield pods from rain damage, pests, and aflatoxin contamination, ensuring premium grading.

"Farmers who invested in these despite initial costs are now seeing returns multiply," the officer added. Government subsidies under schemes like the National Food Security Mission have encouraged widespread use, boosting export potential to markets in Europe and Southeast Asia.

Farmers like P. Venkatesh from Garladinne Mandal are jubilant. "We faced losses last year, but this price is a festival," he said, estimating his 5-hectare farm's harvest could fetch over 50 lakh. However, experts caution sustainability: untimely rains or storage issues could erode gains.

The Andhra Pradesh State Seeds Development Corporation is

Vizianagaram MP Urges CM to Address North Andhra Cooperative Sugar Factory Crisis

Visakhapatnam: In a pressing appeal to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Visakhapatnam MP Bharat and Andhra Pradesh Lok Satta Party State President Bheesetti Babji have demanded immediate intervention to revive shuttered cooperative sugar factories in North Andhra, highlighting the severe distress faced by sugarcane farmers, workers, and employees.

On Wednesday, a delegation met MP Bharat in Visakhapatnam and submitted a memorandum outlining the fallout from the closure of key facilities including Tandava, Etikoppaka, Anakapalli, Chodavaram, and Bhimasingi cooperative sugar factories. Speaking on the occasion, Bheesetti Babji detailed the widespread hardships.

In Bharat's constituency alone, the Bhimasingi Sugars shutdown has left farmers in S. Kotha, Vepada, L. Kotha, Kothavalsala, Jami, and Mandal areas struggling without fair prices for their cane crops. Similar woes plague the other factories' regions, he noted. Workers and employees



are suffering without provident fund (PF) and gratuity payments," Babji emphasized.

He blamed the previous government's decisions for forcing these four factories to close, pushing hundreds into unemployment and forcing many onto the streets. The state government owes approximately 40 crore to workers across the units. Notably, Chodavaram factory alone has 28 crore in pending dues to farmers, while the others have cleared farmer liabilities.

Babji reminded the Chief Minister and his son, Nara Lokesh, of their pre-election promises two years ago to reopen these factories. "Despite assurances, nothing has materialized," he said, urging swift action to pressure the government into settling worker dues

and restarting operations. The closures have ripple effects on North Andhra's agrarian economy. Sugarcane farmers, a backbone of districts like Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, and Anakapalli, face plummeting incomes as they transport produce to distant mills at high costs or sell at distress prices. Over 1,000 direct jobs are lost, with indirect impacts on transporters, mill hands, and local vendors amplifying the crisis.

MP Bharat assured the delegation of raising the issue in legislative forums and directly with the CM. "These factories are vital for rural livelihoods; we cannot let political promises fade into inaction," he stated. Lok Satta leaders plan statewide agitations if dues aren't cleared within a month.

Wpl After The World Cup: A New Era For Indian Women’s Cricket

Watching a match in the ongoing season of the Women’s Premier League (WPL) has become a fascinating exercise. There is a visible shift in body language, confidence and intent among Indian cricketers and, by extension, their franchises. If it felt as though players like Harmanpreet Kaur, Deepti Sharma, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma and others were playing with an extra spring in their step, that perception is not misplaced. This is, after all, the first WPL season in which Indian players are competing as reigning world champions. The enormity of that achievement has altered not just their careers, but the way they are seen by fans, franchises and sponsors alike.

For these cricketers, winning a World Cup has brought with it a sense of self-belief that is impossible to manufacture. They have climbed the highest peak in the sport, and it shows. That confidence has added a compelling new lens to WPL viewership: the opportunity to assess just how far Indian women’s cricket has come, and where it might be headed next. The WPL is no longer merely a promising league—it has become a litmus test for sustained excellence.

Not very long ago, even avid cricket followers in India could name only a handful of prominent women cricketers. Names like Diana Edulji, Shantha Rangaswamy, Jhulan Goswami and Mithali Raj stood out as pioneers, often discussed in isolation rather than as part of a thriving ecosystem. Today, as WPL 2026 approaches, fan curiosity extends far beyond the established stars. Players such as Shree Charani, Richa Ghosh, Sneha Rana, Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Amanjot Kaur, Kranti Gaud and Radha Yadav are increasing-

ly part of everyday cricket conversations. Not all of them are household names yet, but they are being watched closely—followed because they are World Cup winners, or potential stars shaped by that success.

The WPL is giving these players a platform similar to what the IPL once provided for emerging male cricketers like Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant and Suryakumar Yadav. Perform consistently on this stage, and anonymity can quickly turn into stardom. Fail, and the spotlight moves just as swiftly to the next contender. That is the nature of elite sport, and Indian women cricketers are now firmly part of that reality.

At the same time, the established stars are experiencing a level of scrutiny that would have been unthinkable a decade ago. Every movement in the field by Jemimah, Deepti, Harmanpreet, Shafali or Smriti is analysed, replayed, debated and judged. Performances are dissected on television panels, social media timelines and fan forums. Praise and criticism arrive in equal measure. For perhaps the first time in the history of Indian women’s cricket, the leading players are being viewed through the same unforgiving fan lens as their male counterparts.

For years, male cricketers such as Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah have occupied the pedestal of national sporting idols. Women cricketers admired them, learned from them and often existed on the fringes of mainstream adulation. That equation is changing. Today’s female stars are sharing the same celebrity space. One of the clearest indicators of this shift has been



the sight of packed stadiums during India’s World Cup matches—a phenomenon once reserved almost exclusively for men’s cricket. It would be no surprise if WPL 2026 sets new benchmarks for stadium attendance, television ratings and digital viewership.

The surge in interest, however, is not limited to fans. Well before the World Cup victory ignited public imagination, a powerful and influential group had already identified Indian women cricketers as the next major growth avenue: sponsors. For them, the World Cup triumph marked a decisive transition—from cautious observation to full-scale investment. The women’s team was no longer just a feel-good story; it had become a bankable brand.

Fans now want to know everything about these players: their journeys, struggles,

families, food preferences, holiday destinations, music playlists and favourite films. A World Cup win as an Indian cricketer transforms life overnight. Privacy becomes a luxury, as personal stories turn into public property. Magazine covers, television appearances, radio interviews, billboards and brand campaigns follow in quick succession. Living room conversations and online polls revolve around these athletes. According to reports, India’s inaugural women’s World Cup win led to an almost 30 per cent increase in the overall brand value of the team—a staggering leap by any measure.

Endorsement fees and appearance charges rose sharply as brands from sectors such as automobiles, wellness, FMCG, technology and consumer electronics lined up to associate with the new heroes. WPL franchises ben-

efitted directly from this momentum. The Mumbai Indians, led by World Cup-winning captain Harmanpreet Kaur, added high-profile sponsors such as the De Beers Group and BKT Tyres. The Delhi Capitals reportedly saw a surge in sponsor interest following India’s success and the appointment of World Cup semi-final hero Jemimah Rodrigues as captain. Similar stories emerged across all five franchises, with existing sponsors keen to stay and new ones eager to come on board.

For sponsors, the WPL ecosystem is expanding rapidly. Confidence in the BCCI’s long-term vision is growing—the belief that the WPL can do for women’s cricket what the IPL did for the men’s game. Women’s cricket in India is now firmly embedded in the economic conversation surrounding the sport. It is no longer a pe-

ripheral investment; it is a growth market, and no one wants to be left behind.

Importantly, this newfound wealth and visibility has not triggered widespread resentment. In the men’s game, it is common to see fans question astronomical player salaries, particularly during lean patches. While women cricketers are not yet paid in the same bracket—Smriti Mandhana, Nat Sciver-Brunt and Ashleigh Gardner were retained for a record Rs 3.5 crore, compared to Virat Kohli’s Rs 21 crore IPL retention—it is also worth remembering that the WPL is barely four years old. As the league matures, similar debates may well arise. For now, the country seems content to celebrate and encourage the women’s team’s success, and that support is both refreshing and vital.

Yet, popularity inevitably brings pressure. With greater

fame will come sharper scrutiny and higher expectations. The margins at the top are thin, and competition for Indian team and WPL spots will only intensify. Players will need to keep improving, knowing that each rung up the ladder offers less room for error. At the grassroots level, the message is already clear: excellence in women’s cricket can now lead to financial security, recognition and long-term opportunity. That knowledge alone is likely to strengthen domestic competition and deepen the talent pool.

The ripple effects extend beyond able-bodied cricket. In December last year, during an interview with members of India’s women’s blind cricket team that won the inaugural T20 World Cup, one theme stood out. Players spoke about the encouragement they received from stars like Jemimah Rodrigues and Harmanpreet Kaur, who stayed in touch and offered constant support. For that team, seeing their idols lift a World Cup was deeply motivating. They wanted to follow in the footsteps of “Jemimah didi” and “Harman didi.” Their journey, too, deserves attention and backing if women’s cricket in India is to grow inclusively.

For decades, women’s cricket in India existed on the margins—an afterthought, a postscript. Individual trailblazers were celebrated, but the collective remained largely invisible. The first Indian women’s Test was played in 1976, the first ODI in 1978. Nearly fifty years later, the sport appears to have finally found its moment. Indian women’s cricket is no longer searching for validation. It is claiming its space—under the sun, and in the hearts and minds of millions.

Pakistan’s Defence Export Ambitions: Momentum, Constraints, and Strategic Signalling

Pakistan’s defence export industry has found itself under an unusual international spotlight in recent months, with the JF-17 Thunder Block III fighter aircraft emerging as the centrepiece of Islamabad’s renewed military-diplomatic outreach. Military negotiations involving the aircraft have reportedly extended across Southeast Asia, West Asia, and parts of Africa, marking what Pakistani officials portray as a turning point in the country’s long-standing aspiration to transition from a defence importer to a defence exporter.

The immediate momentum behind this narrative can be traced to Azerbaijan’s induction of the JF-17, with deliveries of its first units reportedly beginning in October 2025. Azerbaijan thereby became the third foreign operator of the aircraft, following Myanmar’s order in 2015 and Nigeria’s induction of the platform in 2021. This was followed by announcements in December 2025 of a defence deal between Pakistan and Libya’s Libyan National Army (LNA), which reportedly included the acquisition of JF-17 fighters. Beyond these confirmed or semi-confirmed cases, a growing list of countries—including Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Iraq—has been cited in Pakistani media and official statements as expressing interest in the aircraft. Saudi Arabia has also been reported to be exploring unconventional arrangements, including the possibility of converting approximately USD 2 billion in outstanding Pakistani debt into a fleet of fighter jets.

Yet the attention Pakistan is currently receiving—particularly in the aftermath of the

May 2025 conflict with India—is not solely about the JF-17 as a weapons platform. Rather, it reflects a broader attempt at rebranding by a security-centric but economically constrained state seeking to reposition itself in the global arms market. Pakistan’s military aviation industry is increasingly being projected as both an instrument of economic relief and a vehicle for strategic signalling. This ambition has been reinforced by official rhetoric, with Pakistan’s Minister for Defence Production, Raza Hayat Haraj, reportedly confirming that Islamabad is in active negotiations with “several countries” for the sale of JF-17 Thunder jets.

Aspirations Versus Industrial Reality

Despite the heightened diplomatic activity and optimistic public statements, most of the discussions surrounding the JF-17 remain at the level of expressions of interest rather than finalised contracts. Defence sales—particularly those involving combat aircraft—are inherently capital-intensive and time-consuming. They require not only the delivery of airframes, but also comprehensive training programmes, sustainment packages, long-term maintenance arrangements, spare parts availability, and upgrade pathways that can span decades.

In this context, the real measure of Pakistan’s military-industrial expansion lies not in the volume of media coverage or diplomatic signalling, but in its ability to convert rhetoric into durable defence partnerships. This challenge is compounded by the JF-17’s status as a jointly developed platform with Chi-



na. While co-development with Beijing has enabled Pakistan to field a domestically assembled fighter aircraft, it also imposes structural constraints. Any export contract requires Chinese approval, placing Pakistan’s ambitions firmly within the political and industrial boundaries of its relationship with Beijing.

These constraints are further sharpened when viewed against Pakistan’s broader defence-industrial capacity. Persistent economic difficulties, foreign exchange shortages, and a high degree of dependence on external financial and political supporters raise questions about Islamabad’s ability to meet long-term obligations related to spare parts supply, maintenance infrastructure, and lifecycle support. Pakistan’s defence industrial ecosystem

also remains heavily state-driven, with limited private sector participation and modest depth in high-end manufacturing and systems integration.

Targeting a Vulnerable Market Segment

Arguably recognising these limitations, Pakistan appears to be targeting a niche segment of the global arms market: conflict-affected and economically fragile states seeking affordable alternatives to Western and Russian suppliers. For many such countries, Western arms deals are constrained by political conditionalities, sanctions risks, and scrutiny related to governance and human rights. At the same time, Russian defence exports face uncertainty due to supply chain disruptions and prioritisation of do-

mestic requirements amid Moscow’s ongoing conflict with Ukraine.

This environment creates a narrow opening for Pakistan to position the JF-17 as a cost-effective, politically less restrictive alternative. The pitch emphasises affordability, operational simplicity, and relative freedom from Western political oversight. However, this strategy also exposes Pakistan to reputational risks, as it reinforces the perception that its defence exports are aimed primarily at vulnerable or unstable markets rather than established air forces with demanding operational standards.

Complicating this narrative is the fact that the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) does not operate the JF-17, despite China’s role as a co-developer. While

this has not prevented Pakistan from marketing the aircraft internationally, it does raise questions about the platform’s standing within China’s own force structure and long-term development priorities.

Conflict as a Sales Pitch

Pakistan has also sought to leverage the May 2025 conflict with India as a marketing tool. Pakistani officials and media outlets have highlighted the alleged combat performance of the JF-17 and other Chinese-origin systems, presenting the episode as evidence of industrial credibility and operational effectiveness. Claims of Indian aircraft losses, alongside assertions of superiority over French-made Rafale fighters and Russia’s S-400 air defence systems, have been advanced as proof of “escalation dominance.”

India, for its part, has not released any official details regarding aircraft losses during the conflict. Nevertheless, for Pakistan, projecting parity—or even advantage—over its larger neighbour serves multiple purposes. Domestically, it bolsters the military’s legitimacy and reinforces narratives of deterrence. Internationally, it functions as strategic signalling aimed at potential buyers who may view recent combat exposure as a validation of the platform’s capabilities, regardless of the contested nature of the claims.

Implications for India

From New Delhi’s perspective, there is little reason for immediate alarm. The countries currently engaging with Pakistan on defence exports do not constitute direct Indian

adversaries, nor do they possess the capacity to meaningfully alter the military balance in South Asia. However, India is likely to monitor closely the growing engagement between Pakistan and Bangladesh, particularly in the wake of political changes in Dhaka following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in 2024. Defence cooperation offers Pakistan a channel to rebuild ties with Bangladesh without directly confronting the sensitive historical legacy of 1971.

More broadly, media attention should not obscure the structural realities facing Pakistan. Even if a limited number of JF-17 deals materialise, they are unlikely to generate revenues sufficient to stabilise Pakistan’s economy or fundamentally transform its defence-industrial base. Fighter aircraft exports are valuable symbols of technological ambition, but they do not, on their own, resolve systemic economic or industrial weaknesses.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Pakistan’s aspirations in the global defence market rest on capacity, consistency, and credibility rather than rhetoric. The JF-17 Thunder has provided Islamabad with a platform to project ambition and seek strategic relevance, but sustained success will depend on Pakistan’s ability to deliver reliable production, long-term support, and institutional stability. Until those foundations are firmly in place, Pakistan’s defence export push is likely to remain more a tool of signalling and narrative-building than a transformative economic strategy.

Spain Signals Strong Support for India Ahead of India-EU Summit, Pushes for Strategic Partnership

NEW DELHI — Spain has sent a clear political and economic signal endorsing India’s rising global role, with Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares describing India as a “reliable country” that upholds international law, multilateralism, and the principles of the United Nations Charter. Speaking in New Delhi on Wednesday during a meeting with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Albares emphasized Spain’s intent to deepen bilateral ties and accelerate co-operation ahead of the high-stakes India-European Union summit scheduled for January 27.

“Very complicated times in the world make it essential for Spain to strengthen its partnership with India,” Albares said, portraying India as a stable and trustworthy actor on the global stage. His remarks coincided with a politically significant moment as the long-pending India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is expected to take center stage at the summit, with the possibility of its conclusion finally materializing. Albares stated that Spain “would very much love to see” the FTA finalized, calling the timing “right” for such a milestone.

The Spanish minister highlighted the economic dynamism of both nations, noting that Spain and India are among the world’s fastest-growing economies. Albares stressed



that the next phase of cooperation should focus on expanding trade relations, increasing the presence of Spanish companies in India and Indian companies in Spain, and fostering joint ventures. Citing the partnership between Spanish infrastructure firm Herbas and India’s Tata Group as a model, he said such collaborations “represent the real example of what we have to foster and achieve” in bilateral economic ties. He emphasized opportunities in manufacturing, infrastructure, mobility, and industrial cooperation.

A key political takeaway was Spain’s intention to elevate its relationship with India to a strategic association, the highest level of partnership Ma-

drid extends to close allies. Albares conveyed a formal letter outlining this intent, signaling Spain’s commitment to anchor India more centrally in its foreign policy, both bilaterally and through the EU. He also announced that Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez will soon visit India and expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would reciprocate, maintaining the recent momentum of high-level exchanges.

Culture and people-to-people ties were also highlighted during the visit. Both ministers unveiled the logo for the “Dual Year” in 2026, marking 70 years of diplomatic relations and focusing on culture, tourism, and artificial intelligence. Albares noted that the

logo, selected via crowdsourcing, symbolized a shared vision for the future of India-Spain relations.

Albares further expressed Spain’s willingness to join India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, signaling Madrid’s growing interest in the Indo-Pacific and readiness to align with India’s regional vision. Jaishankar echoed themes of trust, shared democratic values, and multilateralism, noting that bilateral trade has crossed \$8 billion. He highlighted Spanish firms’ presence in India in infrastructure, renewable energy, urban mobility, water management, and smart cities, while Indian companies are active in Spain in IT, pharmaceuticals, and automotive components.

The meeting also reviewed flagship projects such as the Airbus-Tata C-295 final assembly line in Vadodara, a symbol of deepening defence-industrial cooperation, and discussed AI collaboration ahead of India hosting the AI Impact Summit next month.

In a world marked by geopolitical uncertainty, Albares’ description of India as a dependable partner underscores Spain’s commitment to strengthening ties and reflects a broader European recalibration toward India, with the potential to reshape trade, technology, and strategic cooperation in the years ahead.

Nitin Nabin Takes Charge as BJP National President: What It Means for Bihar and Parliament

NEW DELHI — Nitin Nabin assumed office as the BJP’s new National President on Tuesday morning and has wasted no time taking key organizational decisions. Within 24 hours of taking charge, Nabin appointed the party’s in-charge and co-in-charge for the Kerala Assembly elections later this year, as well as for select local body polls. On Wednesday, he convened a day-long meeting with senior leaders from BJP state units, including state presidents and organisational general secretaries, signaling his immediate focus on strengthening party structures nationwide.

A major priority on his agenda is poll-bound West Bengal, widely seen as the BJP’s toughest electoral battle in recent years, following a hat-trick of defeats to Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee in both state and federal elections. However, political observers are also closely watching whether Nabin will participate in the Bihar Assembly budget session, scheduled to begin on February 2. Although he resigned from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar’s cabinet, where he served as Roadways Minister, Nabin remains a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), which technically obliges him to attend House proceedings.



Nabin has represented the Bankipur constituency five times and is one of Bihar’s most experienced legislators. Balancing his new national role with legislative responsibilities could be challenging. One option is induction into the Rajya Sabha, allowing him to operate primarily from Delhi. His predecessor, JP Nadda, had similarly transitioned to Parliament after taking on the national presidency.

This could happen as soon as April 2026, when five Rajya Sabha seats from Bihar fall vacant. BJP’s numbers make it virtually certain to secure two seats, with the remaining three likely split between Nit-

ish Kumar’s JDU and potentially the BJP. Alternatively, Nabin could represent a different state, as 30 other Rajya Sabha seats fall vacant this year, many of which the BJP is poised to win.

Top BJP sources, however, indicate that Nabin may remain a Bihar MLA for the foreseeable future. This approach mirrors the precedent set by Amit Shah, who remained an MLA while holding senior party positions, including the National Presidency, to maintain strong organizational oversight in Gujarat before transitioning to the Rajya Sabha in 2017 and later to the Lok Sabha in 2019.

Unlike Gujarat during Shah’s tenure, Bihar currently poses no electoral threat to the BJP, as the party-led alliance holds a comfortable majority. Yet keeping Nabin in the state may serve strategic purposes, particularly in planning for a post-Nitish Kumar era. There are ongoing concerns over Nitish Kumar’s health and potential shifts in JDU loyalties, including reports of six Congress MLAs possibly joining JDU, which could alter legislative dynamics.

This year is also significant for the Rajya Sabha, with 71 seats set to fall vacant, including six held by union ministers and eight by Congress members. The BJP currently holds 103 seats, and 30 of its members’ seats are up for election, with potential gains increasing its influence in the Upper House. Key states with upcoming Assembly elections, such as Tamil Nadu, Bengal, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh, will play a critical role in determining the party’s Rajya Sabha strength.

As the youngest National President in BJP history, Nitin Nabin is expected to play a pivotal role in steering the party through a high-stakes electoral year while balancing legislative responsibilities in Bihar and strategic planning at the national level.

Trinamool MLA Threatens Election Commission Amid Bengal Voter Re-verification Row

KOLKATA — Trinamool Congress MLA Monirul Islam on Wednesday issued violent threats against the Election Commission (EC), escalating tensions between Bengal’s ruling party and the poll body over a special intensive revision (SIR) of voter lists ahead of the state Assembly elections.

Islam, who represents the Farakka constituency, threatened to “break the Commission’s waist with lathis” and referenced the controversial law granting lifetime protection to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners for actions taken in their official capacity. He specifically targeted CEC Gyanesh Kumar, claiming he would “drag him from the grave” for allegedly “harassing” Bengal voters to favour the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

“...it has to be broken with a stick. We want lathis to break the Election Commission’s waist. You are playing with people but staying inside a protected shield. You are in the bubble, but we will drag you



out,” Islam declared, echoing opposition claims that the SIR exercise is biased toward the BJP.

Islam’s rhetoric mirrors comments made by other senior Trinamool leaders, including Abhishek Banerjee, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s nephew and party No. 2, who in October urged party workers to aggressively confront BJP leaders involved in the voter re-verification drive, instructing them to “gherao” officials and demand proof of lineage certificates.

The remarks drew immedi-

ate criticism from Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of a “break-down in governance.” He alleged that issues such as education, health, jobs, and industrial development had been sidelined ahead of elections, with SIR dominating political discourse. “There is no discussion on people’s problems... only political intimidation. The Chief Minister has created an atmosphere where SIR alone is being projected as deciding people’s fates,” Chowdhury said.

The tension comes days after violence in Islam’s constituency, where vandals targeted the office of the Block Development Officer (BDO). BJP national general secretary Amit Malviya alleged that the unrest was orchestrated by Islam, claiming it was a response to the EC’s demands for additional voter information during the re-verification process.

The SIR voter re-verification drive has emerged as a major flashpoint in Bengal politics. The Trinamool alleges that the exercise is intended to remove lakhs of legitimate voters likely to support the party, while the EC maintains that SIR operations fall within its constitutional mandate. The Supreme Court is also monitoring the matter, reflecting the national significance of the dispute.

With Assembly elections approaching, the conflict highlights the deepening political polarization in Bengal, as the ruling Trinamool, the opposition BJP, and allied parties like Congress navigate voter verification, election oversight, and accusations of bias.

Supreme Court Extends Stay on Aravalli Hills Definition, Orders Status Quo



NEW DELHI — The Supreme Court of India on Wednesday extended the stay on its earlier verdict regarding the definition of the Aravalli Hills, directing that the status quo be maintained until further orders. The move comes amid growing concerns over environmental protection, mining, and encroachment in one of India’s oldest mountain ranges.

The Aravalli Range, among the oldest mountain systems in the world, serves as a vital ecological barrier and life-support system for the National Capital Region (NCR) and the Indo-Gangetic Plains. It faces increasing threats from deforestation, mining, grazing, and human encroachment.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant stated that the interim direction — which keeps in abeyance the November 20 judgment prescribing a revised definition of the Aravallis — would continue to operate. The earlier verdict had established a uniform definition of the hills, introducing criteria

such as a 100-metre elevation threshold and a 500-metre gap between hills, which environmentalists argued could remove significant portions of the range from legal protection.

On December 29, 2025, the top court had stayed its earlier orders, citing “critical ambiguities” in the definition. Wednesday’s extension continues this approach, allowing time for expert review before any changes are implemented.

The Bench directed Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Rajasthan government, and amicus curiae K. Parameshwar to submit within four weeks a list of environmentalists, scientists, and experts in mining to form an expert committee. This body will examine all aspects of the Aravalli ecosystem, including environmental protection, mining practices, and legal implications, under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

“We need experts from different walks of life so that a body can be constituted to

examine all aspects,” the court said.

The court also took note of submissions indicating that illegal mining continues at scattered locations in the Aravallis. It directed the Rajasthan government to ensure that no unlawful extraction takes place and emphasized that the law must act against violators. Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj assured the bench that the state would take all necessary steps to prevent illegal mining.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court directed all parties to submit a comprehensive note outlining the legal questions involved in the case, helping the court frame the issues for further consideration. The matter has been listed for hearing after four weeks.

The decision underscores the Supreme Court’s cautious approach to balancing environmental conservation with legal and administrative clarity, ensuring that the fragile Aravalli ecosystem continues to receive protection while ambiguities in the definition are resolved.

Indore Contaminated Water Deaths Rise to 25 as High Court Questions State Response



INDORE — Hemany Gaikwad, a 51-year-old resident of Bhagirathpura in Indore, became the latest victim of contaminated drinking water, bringing the death toll in the city to 25. Gaikwad, also known as Bala, fell ill on December 22 after consuming contaminated water. Initially admitted to a private nursing home in Pardeshipura, his condition worsened, and he was referred to Aurobindo Hospital on January 7. Despite treatment, he died on Tuesday morning. Doctors said he was suffering from cell carcinoma and kidney disease, but severe vomiting and diarrhoea triggered by contaminated water caused his health to deteriorate rapidly. Gaikwad, the sole breadwinner of his family, leaves behind four daughters and earned a living driving an e-rickshaw.

The crisis has drawn intensified scrutiny from the Madhya Pradesh High Court, which questioned the state government on the monitoring of its earlier directions and the mechanism for citizens to register complaints. During Tuesday’s hearing, Chief Secretary Anurag Jain, appearing via video conferencing, was unable to provide clear answers.

The state government informed the court that it had constituted a high-level committee of senior bureaucrats to probe the deaths and examine administrative and technical lapses. The committee is headed by Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay Kumar Shukla, with members including Principal Secretary P. Narhari, Urban Administration Commissioner Sanket Bhondve, and Indore Divisional Commissioner Sudam Khade, who will also serve as member secretary. The panel has been tasked with conducting site inspections, reviewing records, fixing accountability, and submitting its report within a month.

The move has drawn sharp criticism from petitioners. Senior advocate Ajay Bagaria described the committee as an “eyewash” that could shield responsible officials. He highlighted concerns over the recent post-

ing of former Indore Municipal Commissioner Dilip Kumar Yadav as Managing Director of the State Tourism Development Corporation, barely two weeks after his removal in connection with the deaths. Bagaria also cited 2016-17 Pollution Control Board reports documenting total and faecal coliform contamination in borewell samples across the city and questioned the incomplete drinking water pipeline project awarded to a private contractor in February 2023, of which the last 20 percent of work was reportedly completed only after judicial scrutiny. He suggested including independent members, such as retired High Court judges, in the committee to ensure credibility.

So far, 21 families have received Rs 2 lakh each in compensation. Nine patients remain hospitalized, seven in intensive care units, while the state government has spent Rs 1.21 crore on medical treatment for affected residents. The High Court has reserved its order after hearing all parties.

Former South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo Sentenced to 23 Years for Role in 2024 Martial Law Declaration



SEOUL — A South Korean court on Wednesday sentenced former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo to 23 years in prison for his involvement in what the court described as a “top-down insurrection” related to ex-President Yoon Suk Yeol’s declaration of martial law in December 2024.

The Seoul Central District Court found Han guilty of being instrumental in creating the outward appearance of a cabinet meeting that enabled the martial law declaration. The judge characterized the actions as a direct threat to South Korea’s democratic order, saying Han participated in a scheme that endangered the nation’s hard-won freedoms. “The defendant was a Prime Minister who had been indirectly given democratic legitimacy and responsibility,” the court said. “Nevertheless, the defendant chose to turn a blind eye and participate as a member of the December 3 insurrec-

tion. As a result of the defendant’s actions, South Korea was in danger of returning to the dark past when the basic rights and liberal democratic order of the people were violated, potentially preventing them from escaping the quagmire of dictatorship for a long time.”

In addition to insurrection, Han was convicted of related charges, including perjury and creating false official documents. Han, 76, denied all wrongdoing except partial admission of perjury. The court noted that Han was the first former cabinet minister to be formally convicted in connection with the 2024 martial law events. He was detained immediately following the verdict. The ruling underscores the judiciary’s commitment to holding even high-ranking officials accountable for actions that threaten South Korea’s democratic framework. Experts have described the case as

unprecedented in modern South Korean history, given the rarity of criminal charges directly tied to martial law and the involvement of former top government officials.

While the ruling carries a lengthy sentence, it is subject to appeal. The lower court judge said he expected the case to move through the appeals process up to the Supreme Court. Legal analysts anticipate a prolonged legal battle, given the historical and political significance of the case and the high-profile nature of the defendant.

The verdict comes nearly two years after the December 2024 martial law declaration, which drew widespread domestic and international scrutiny for its potential threat to civil liberties. Han’s conviction represents a major moment in South Korea’s ongoing efforts to safeguard democratic governance and enforce accountability for senior officials.

Trump Defends ICE Actions Amid Controversy Over Minnesota Immigration Enforcement



WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump defended his administration’s aggressive immigration enforcement Tuesday, acknowledging that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents sometimes make mistakes while standing by a crackdown that has drawn sharp criticism in cities nationwide.

“They’re going to make mistakes. Sometimes ICE is going to be too rough with somebody or, you know, they deal with rough people, they’re going to make a mistake. Sometimes it can happen,” Trump said during an impromptu White House press briefing.

The remarks come amid mounting backlash over federal immigration operations in Minnesota, where thousands of ICE agents have been deployed since December. Protests and street confrontations have intensified, fueled by incidents including the January 7 fatal shooting of Renee Good by an ICE officer and a recent detention of a U.S. citizen in his home at gunpoint without a warrant.

Trump said the killing of Good was a “tragedy” and noted that her father was a supporter of his, adding, “He was all for Trump, loved

Trump, and, you know, it’s terrible.”

The president’s comments followed criticism of his administration’s messaging. Earlier Tuesday, Trump instructed the Department of Homeland Security and ICE to “Show the Numbers, Names, and Faces of the violent criminals, and show them NOW.” At the press briefing, he displayed photos of Minnesota migrants he described as criminals, emphasizing the need for aggressive enforcement.

Trump’s remarks also touched on unrelated topics, including his first-year accomplishments, his upcoming trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the situation in Venezuela, and the cost of living. He acknowledged concerns that his message is not reaching the public, saying he might have “bad public relations people.”

The Justice Department has subpoenaed Minnesota officials, including Governor Tim Walz, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, and Attorney General Keith Ellison, as part of a probe into whether local authorities interfered with federal immigration operations. The Department has also warned protesters who disrupted a church service in

St. Paul that they could face prosecution.

“Attacks against law enforcement and the intimidation of Christians are being met with the full force of federal law,” U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a social media post. Walz called the investigation “a partisan distraction” and said Minnesota “will not be drawn into political theater.”

Public support for the administration’s immigration crackdown appears to be declining. A CBS News/YouGov poll released Sunday found that more than 60% of Americans believe ICE is too harsh, and a majority said its operations make communities less safe. 56% said the administration is prioritizing people who aren’t dangerous criminals for deportation.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has ordered 1,500 troops in Alaska to be ready for deployment, and the FBI is seeking volunteers for temporary assignments in the region. Trump has threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act, which would allow the deployment of U.S. military forces for domestic law enforcement, while Minnesota has mobilized the National Guard to support local authorities.

Mark Carney Declares “End of Old World Order” at Davos, Calls on Middle Powers to Act Together

At the 2026 World Economic Forum in Davos, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney delivered a defining address that forcefully declared the end of the post Second World War “rules based international order” as it has existed for decades, calling the current geopolitical climate not a mere transition but a rupture in global norms and stability.

Carney, a career economist and former central banker who entered politics less than a year ago, warned that the predictable order built around U.S. leadership and multilateral institutions has been significantly weakened. “We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition,” he said, asserting that the idea of a stable, rules based system no longer reflects international reality.

He characterized the old order as a partially useful but fundamentally flawed “pleasant fiction,” saying powerful states often bent or ignored the rules when convenient, and that trade and international law had been enforced asymmetrically. “The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must,”



Carney said, borrowing a classical aphorism to describe what he sees as the resurgence of raw power politics.

Carney argued that the benefits Canada enjoyed under the old system — including open sea lanes, a stable financial framework, collective security and mechanisms for dispute resolution — were products of American hegemony, which helped deliver public goods even as it masked deeper inequalities in enforcement. But he stressed that assumption can no longer be relied upon.

Without naming U.S. President Donald Trump, whose policies

and rhetoric have strained relations with allies, Carney made clear he was responding to a world in which economic integration is increasingly wielded as a tool of coercion. He observed that tariffs, control over financial systems, and reliance on supply chains can all become leverage against less powerful countries.

Pointing to recent disputes — including controversial U.S. moves relating to Greenland — Carney took a strong stance in support of allies’ sovereignty. “Canada stands firmly with Greenland and Denmark and fully supports their unique

right to determine Greenland’s future,” he said, underscoring concerns about unilateral actions that undermine established norms.

A central theme of Carney’s speech was a call to “middle powers” like Canada to adapt strategically rather than simply concede to great power demands. He warned that hoping “compliance will buy safety” is no longer a viable strategy. Instead, Canada and similar nations must work collectively to build new forms of cooperation and alliances, creating what he described as a “dense web of connections” in trade, investment and security that

reflects shared values and enhances resilience.

Carney’s remarks pointed to an active reshaping of Canada’s foreign policy. He highlighted efforts to diversify economic partnerships beyond traditional allies, including strategic engagements with the European Union, China, and other regions, and announced plans to deepen cooperation on trade and security issues.

Rather than mourning the decline of the old system, Carney urged a clear eyed acceptance of global realities. “The old order is not coming back. We should not mourn it. Nostalgia is not a strategy,” he said. His message was that middle powers must build something more ambitious — neither isolationist nor deferential — rooted in values based realism, collective action and strategic autonomy.

Carney’s address, delivered to the world’s political and financial elite, was met with a standing ovation and reflects a dramatic shift in Canada’s diplomatic posture amid rising tensions in the international system.

Ryanair Mocks Elon Musk With “Great Idiots” Seat Sale Amid Feud

DUBLIN — Low-cost airline Ryanair has taken a swipe at Elon Musk just a day after the Tesla CEO jokingly asked how much it would cost to buy the Irish carrier. The airline announced a “Great Idiots” seat sale, offering 100,000 one-way tickets to Basel, Birmingham, and Cologne for just 16.99 Euros (around Rs 2,000), urging customers to “Buy one now before Musk gets one.”

The sale comes amid an ongoing public feud between Musk and Ryanair CEO Michael O’Leary, which has been amplified by social media exchanges and the airline’s trademark humor. O’Leary has scheduled a press conference in Dublin on Wednesday to “address/undress” Musk’s Twitter antics, which the airline called his “latest Twitsh*t.” In a press release, O’Leary said, “Musk knows even less about airline ownership rules than



he does about aircraft aerodynamics.”

The spat began last week when O’Leary rejected Musk’s Starlink satellite internet service for Ryanair flights, citing an antenna that would compromise aerodynamics and increase fuel costs by 200–250 million Euros. He also noted that Ryanair passengers, drawn to the airline for its low fares, would not pay even an

extra 1 Euro per ticket for the service.

Musk responded by polling his followers on X (formerly Twitter) about whether he should buy Ryanair, with nearly 900,000 people voting. The poll joked that Musk would “restore Ryan as their rightful ruler,” referencing Ryanair co-founder Tony Ryan. Musk also called O’Leary an “utter idiot,” suggesting he should be fired, while O’Leary fired back that Musk was “very wealthy, but still an idiot” with “zero” knowledge of airline management.

Ryanair’s social media team has continued to mock Musk, maintaining their signature dry humor. During a recent X outage, the airline tweeted, “Perhaps you need Wi-Fi [Elon

Musk]?” and dismissed the idea that in-flight Wi-Fi is a real draw for passengers.

While Musk’s net worth of \$681 billion far exceeds Ryanair’s market capitalization of nearly \$36 billion, a takeover is highly unlikely due to EU and U.S. airline ownership rules. EU law requires airlines to be majority-owned by EU nationals or member states, and U.S. foreign ownership is capped at 25 percent. O’Leary himself owns over \$1.2 billion in Ryanair shares.

Despite the unlikely possibility of a takeover, the feud has captured global attention, with Musk teasing the idea of buying the airline and Ryanair using the public spectacle to showcase its irreverent branding. The “Great Idiots” sale is just the latest twist in the ongoing war of words between the billionaire entrepreneur and the airline CEO.

Pakistan Defence Minister Inaugurates “Fake” Pizza Hut Outlet in Sialkot, Sparks Social Media Mockery



Public Notice: Unauthorized Outlet in Sialkot Cantonment

Pizza Hut Pakistan informs our valued customers that an unauthorized outlet falsely using the Pizza Hut name and branding has recently opened in Sialkot Cantonment.

This outlet is not associated with Pizza Hut Pakistan, or Yum! Brands. It does not follow Pizza Hut International recipes, quality protocols, food safety and operational standards.

We have formally filed a complaint with the relevant authorities to stop the misuse of our trademark and ensure immediate action.

Pizza Hut Pakistan currently operates a total of 16 stores nationwide: 14 in Lahore and 2 in Islamabad. To verify all official Pizza Hut locations operating across Pakistan, please visit: <https://www.pizzahutpakistan.com/en/store-locations>

Your trust matters deeply to us. Thank you for choosing the authentic Pizza Hut experience.

SIALKOT — Floral arrangements were in place, the red carpet rolled out, and cameras flashing when Pakistan’s Defence Minister Khawaja Asif confidently cut the ribbon at what he believed was a new Pizza Hut outlet in Sialkot’s cantonment area. The high-profile inauguration appeared to go smoothly — until

Pizza Hut Pakistan stepped in to clarify that the outlet was unauthorized and fraudulent.

The clarification came after photos and videos of the event went viral on social media, showing the minister inaugurating an outlet that, despite featuring Pizza Hut’s familiar red roof and branding, was

missing from the official store list. Online users quickly noticed the discrepancy, raising questions about how the event was organised.

Pizza Hut Pakistan issued an official statement confirming the outlet was not affiliated with the brand.

“Pizza Hut Pakistan informs our valued customers that an unau-

thorised outlet falsely using the Pizza Hut name and branding has recently opened in Sialkot Cantonment. This outlet is not associated with Pizza Hut Pakistan, or Yum! Brands. It does not follow Pizza Hut International recipes, quality protocols, food safety, or operational standards.”

The US-based chain added that it had filed a formal complaint with relevant authorities to stop the misuse of its trademark and ensure “immediate action.”

The revelation quickly turned the high-profile ceremony into fodder for social media ridicule. Users mocked the lack of verification before a senior minister attended the event.

One user wrote, “One ribbon cut, one statement issued. That has to be some kind of record.” Another joked, “When even Pizza Hut

says, ‘Not our slice of the pie.’” A third remarked, “Only in Pakistan can a Defence Minister proudly inaugurate a fake Pizza Hut — cut the ribbon, smile for cameras, and walk away — only for the brand to later declare the outlet unauthorised. No one can parody this level of incompetence.”

Social media reactions also included Urdu commentary, with one user asking, “Kuch asli baki reh gaya hai ya nahi is soobay main?” Ajeeb vahiyat log nazif hain hum per” (“Is there anything real left in this province? We are surrounded by absurd and useless people”).

The incident highlights both the perils of high-profile events conducted without proper verification and the rapid scrutiny that social media can bring to public figures in Pakistan.

Market Volatility Peaks Ahead of Union Budget, Analysts Flag Select Sectors to Watch



Indian equity markets have witnessed a sharp sell-off over the past three consecutive sessions, with the Sensex plunging nearly 2,500 points so far this week. The steep decline has unsettled investors ahead of the Union Budget scheduled for February 1, even as market experts believe the correction is driven more by uncertainty than by a deterioration in fundamentals. Analysts have outlined sectors that could offer value opportunities amid the volatility.

On January 21, the Sensex fell more than 1,056 points, or nearly 1.3 percent, to an intraday low of 81,124.45. Although the index staged a brief recovery and even turned positive for a short while, selling pressure resurfaced, pushing it back into negative territory. The Nifty 50 mirrored this weakness, sliding 313 points, or over 1.2 percent, to a day's low of 24,919.8. This marked a weekly decline of around 775 points, or more than 3 percent. After breaching the psychologically important 25,000 level, the index attempted a rebound but failed to sustain it.

The sell-off was broad-based. All major sectoral indices ended

in the red, with consumer durables, banking, and IT stocks leading the losses. Broader markets fared worse, as midcap and smallcap indices underperformed benchmark indices. Adding to the caution, India's volatility index rose to 14.43, its highest level since June, signalling heightened market stress, increased intraday swings, and fragile investor sentiment, according to SAMCO Securities.

Budget expectations and market nerves

Despite the turbulence, analysts say the pre-Budget correction should not be viewed as a sign of weakening fundamentals. Citi Research expects the Union Budget 2026 to stay focused on targeted priorities such as defence, affordable housing, and health insurance, while offering limited direct support to consumption. The brokerage anticipates continued emphasis on public capital expenditure, led by defence spending, even as fiscal consolidation remains a priority amid narrowing tax-revenue options.

Tushar Badjate, Director at Badjate Stock & Share, said markets are correcting largely due to global geopolitical uncertain-

ty and a risk-off environment, not because of structural weakness in Indian businesses. Corporate balance sheets remain stable, earnings visibility is largely intact, and India continues to stand out as a strong long-term growth story, he noted.

Echoing this view, Balaji Rao Mudili of Bonanza highlighted global trade uncertainties, aggressive foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows, a weakening rupee, and concerns over potential US-led trade tariffs as key triggers behind the volatility. These factors, combined with Budget-related uncertainty, have tested the traditional "buy the dip" mindset.

Where value is emerging

Several experts believe the correction has unlocked selective opportunities. Citi Research has flagged defence as a preferred theme, naming Bharat Electronics (BEL) as a top pick. Affordable housing players such as Aavas Financiers and Aadhar Housing Finance are also favoured. Defensive sectors like FMCG and healthcare, along with quality large-cap financial stocks and select PSU banks, are increasingly attractive on valu-

ation grounds, said Pranav Koomar of PlusCash.

Capex-linked sectors such as infrastructure, railways, and defence are expected to continue benefiting from government spending, providing long-term triggers. Analysts also see value emerging in IT due to reasonable valuations and AI-driven growth, as well as in policy-driven areas like renewable energy.

Anirudh Garg of INVasset PMS stressed that investors should focus on balance-sheet strength, pricing power, and cash-flow durability rather than reacting to short-term sentiment. Historically, pre-Budget corrections have rewarded investors who accumulate gradually and stay disciplined.

Investor strategy

Experts advise against panic selling during such volatile phases, except in illiquid or fundamentally weak stocks. Commodities may be added cautiously with a long-term view, while ETFs offer a safer route for those uncertain about stock selection. Overall, analysts recommend patience, discipline, and a focus on quality as markets navigate pre-Budget uncertainty.

Markets Extend Losses for Third Day as Nifty Slips Below 200-Day Average



The Indian equity market extended its decline for a third straight session on January 21, weighed down by weak global cues and rising investor caution. Concerns around geopolitical tensions linked to Greenland, along with a sharp sell-off in Japanese government bonds, added to the negative sentiment. Persistent selling pressure dragged benchmark indices below their 200-day moving averages on an intraday basis for the first time in nearly eight months.

The market opened on a subdued note and remained under pressure through the session. The Nifty slipped below the 25,000 level intraday for the first time since October 6, 2025. However, buying interest in select value stocks helped the index recover from its day's low, allowing it to close above the 25,100 mark.

At the close, the Sensex fell 270.84 points, or 0.33 percent, to settle at 81,909.63, while the Nifty declined 75 points, or 0.30 percent, to end at 25,157.50. Broader markets continued to underperform, with the BSE Midcap and Smallcap indices each shedding around 1 percent.

In the previous session, the total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped by nearly Rs 1.45 lakh crore, falling to Rs 454.37 lakh crore from Rs 455.82 lakh crore. Sectorally, metal and oil & gas stocks were the only gainers, while all other indices ended in the red. Pharma, IT, private banks, realty, and PSU banks declined between 0.5 percent and 1 percent.

On the Nifty index, stocks such as Trent, Bharat Electronics, ICICI Bank, Tata Consumer, and Apollo Hospitals were among the top losers. On the other hand, Eternal, Max Healthcare, Inter-Globe Aviation, Hindalco, and JSW Steel featured among the gainers.

The Indian rupee also weakened sharply during the session, hitting a

fresh all-time low of 91.74 against the US dollar before closing at 91.70, compared with its previous close of 90.97.

Stock-specific action remained volatile. Highway Infrastructure shares slipped 3 percent despite securing an order from NHA1. Shoppers Stop plunged 6 percent after its Q3 profit declined 69 percent. IndiaMART InterMESH rose 6 percent following a 55 percent jump in Q3 profit. Vikram Solar fell 8 percent despite a five-fold rise in consolidated profit, while SRF declined 6 percent even after reporting better-than-expected Q3 earnings.

More than 900 stocks touched their 52-week lows, including Kalyan Jewellers, C.E. Info Systems, Tata Chemicals, Poly Medicare, Godrej Properties, Havells India, Dixon Technologies, Trent, and Tube Investments of India, among others.

In the primary market, shares of Amagi Media Labs ended higher at Rs 348 after a weak debut. The stock listed at a 12 percent discount at Rs 317 on the BSE, compared with its IPO price of Rs 361.

Market Outlook for January 22

Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst at LKP Securities, said the Nifty slipping below the 200-day moving average has increased market nervousness. He expects heightened volatility in the coming sessions, with support at 25,125 and resistance at 25,200 on a closing basis.

Nagaraj Shetti, Senior Technical Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, noted that the formation of a doji-type candle on the daily chart reflects ongoing volatility. While a confirmed reversal could lead to a bounce above 25,200, further weakness below 24,900 may drag the Nifty towards 24,500 in the near term.

Weak Global Signals Drag Markets Lower, Recovery Before Budget Uncertain



Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty continued their downward trajectory on Wednesday, extending losses after the sharp sell-off seen in the previous session. Weak global cues and mounting geopolitical concerns kept investor sentiment fragile, pushing markets deeper into the red during early trade.

The Sensex fell as much as 1,056.02 points, or 1.28 percent, to hit an intraday low of 81,124.45. The Nifty declined 312.7 points, or 1.23 percent, slipping to 24,919.80 and breaching the key 25,000 level for the first time in more than four months. The sustained correction has raised concerns over whether the markets can stage a meaningful recovery ahead of the Union Budget scheduled for February 1.

Market experts have advised investors to remain cautious, citing persistent global and domestic headwinds. Santosh Meena, Head of Research at Swastika Investmart, said the pre-Budget sell-off has pushed investors to seek safety and value-oriented opportunities. He recommended a defensive strategy combined with selective long-term investments to navigate the current volatility.

"Given the sharp pre-Budget correction, investors should consider a defensive rotation along with strategic long-term bets. Currently, large-cap private banks and select public sector undertakings (PSUs) appear to offer the most attractive value," Meena said. He pointed out that private lenders such as HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and Federal Bank are trading at relatively moderate valuations, making them appealing compared to their historical averages.

Meena also highlighted PSUs like ONGC, Bharat Electronics (BEL), and Hindustan Copper, noting that their

alignment with themes such as energy security, defence indigenisation, and industrial demand strengthens their long-term outlook. In addition, he suggested that exposure to FMCG stocks could act as a defensive hedge, offering earnings stability amid heightened volatility.

From a technical standpoint, Meena said the 25,000 mark is a crucial support level for the Nifty. He explained that this level coincides with the index's 200-day moving average and serves as an important psychological threshold. Holding above it could trigger a relief rally, while a decisive break may open the door to deeper correction and increased selling pressure.

Sharing a cautious outlook, Sunny Agrawal, Head of Fundamental Research at SBI Securities, said it is difficult to predict a market rebound ahead of the Budget due to overpowering global factors. He cited geopolitical tensions and recent statements by US President Donald Trump as contributors to a risk-off environment across global markets, including India.

Agrawal added that continued selling by foreign institutional investors, a weakening rupee, and the unwinding of leveraged positions by retail and high net-worth investors have further weighed on sentiment. He also noted that a strong rally in gold and silver may have led to a shift of funds away from equities.

Ajit Mishra, Senior Vice-President (Research) at Religare Broking, echoed similar concerns, pointing to currency weakness, sustained FII outflows, and a lacklustre earnings season as key drags on the market. With the Nifty slipping below its long-term 200-day exponential moving average near 25,150, Mishra warned of potential further downside towards the 24,900 level unless global cues improve.

Excessive Concentration Threatens India's Clean Energy Goals, Experts Warn

In early December 2025, India's aviation sector faced a major disruption when IndiGo, which commands over 65% of the domestic market, cancelled thousands of flights. The crisis prompted intervention from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, forcing the airline to cut its winter schedule. More importantly, the Competition Commission of India began investigating whether IndiGo had violated the Competition Act, which prohibits its abuse of dominant position. The incident highlighted the risks of excessive market concentration: when a single player becomes indispensable, operational issues can escalate into systemic crises.

This pattern is not unique to aviation. The telecommunications sector has experienced similar challenges. Once a vibrant and competitive market with multiple operators, India's telecom industry has consolidated into a duopoly as of September 2025, according to TRAI data. The consequences of this concentration were evident in August 2025, when the most affordable entry-level plans were discontinued, forcing consumers onto higher-priced alternatives. Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia acknowledged that excessive concentration among a few carriers is unhealthy for the market. Spectrum caps—limiting operators to 50% of spectrum in a single band and 25% across all bands—were introduced to prevent dominance, based on lessons learned from past market failures.

The airport sector, too, is showing similar patterns. Consolidation among a limited number of operators has raised concerns over systemic vulnerability. While the Finance Ministry and NITI Aayog have flagged these risks, no regulatory caps have been imposed, unlike in the UK, where the Competition Commission forced BAA to



divest three airports in 2009 after it controlled 81% of London's runway capacity.

India's power transmission sector is now displaying comparable concentration risks. Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. (PGCIL) has secured more than half of all inter-state transmission projects awarded under competitive bidding and currently handles 46 of the 91 ISTS projects under construction, worth over Rs 1.27 lakh crore. While PGCIL has the expertise and scale to lead the national transmission expansion, this dominance has created delays ranging from 18 to 30 months in critical projects across Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh. For example, a scheme to evacuate 8.1 GW of solar energy from Rajasthan remains incomplete,

leading to curtailment levels rising from 8.5% to over 50% between March and August 2025. Similar delays have been observed in Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu.

The issue is not about efficiency but risk management. Excessive reliance on a single institution exposes the sector to structural vulnerabilities. Just as IndiGo's operational problems paralysed aviation and the telecom duopoly exercises pricing power without competition, concentration in transmission threatens to bottleneck India's clean energy transition.

A practical solution exists: market share caps. India already applies such caps in multiple sectors to prevent over-concentration while preserving leadership roles. For transmission, capping

any single developer's under-construction project share at around 50% would distribute execution responsibilities, reduce bottlenecks, and accelerate the clean energy rollout. Large players would continue existing projects but pause on new awards until their share falls below the threshold, spreading risk across multiple capable firms.

Concentration can drive efficiency, but beyond a certain point, it becomes a systemic risk. Lessons from aviation, telecom, and transmission delays show that when one entity controls a dominant portion of a sector, the costs are borne by the entire system. Introducing market share caps now ensures that India's clean energy ambitions remain on track and are not constrained by a single entity's capacity.

From Returning a Lost Phone to CRPF Selection: Heartwarming Videos Move Internet



Two heartwarming videos from India have recently gone viral on social media, reminding viewers that honesty, kindness, and emotional human connections continue to thrive despite the often cynical tone of online spaces. Both clips, though unrelated, struck a powerful chord by showcasing simple yet deeply moving moments of humanity.

The first video captures a touching incident that took place at Indore Railway Station, where a man named Raghu Ahirwar returned a lost mobile phone to its distressed owner. Ahirwar not only ensured the phone was safely returned but also recorded the entire process, showing how he tracked down the owner. The video begins with Ahirwar explaining that he found an unlocked phone at the station. Using the call log, he tried contacting people listed on the device to locate its rightful owner.

After some effort, Ahirwar managed to find the woman outside the station. When he handed the phone back to her, she was visibly overwhelmed and broke down in tears. Deeply emotional, she blessed him repeatedly, saying, “Bhagwan tera bhala kare” (May God bless you). The moment resonated with millions online, highlighting how a small act of honesty can make a huge difference in someone’s life.

The video quickly went viral, garnering over 3 million views and more

than 281,000 likes. Social media users flooded the comment section with praise for Ahirwar’s integrity. “Acha kaam kiya brother” (Good work, brother), one user wrote, while another commented, “If everyone does this, the world will be a better place.” A third user added, “Humanity is still alive, my brother,” echoing the sentiment shared by many viewers.

In another viral moment that touched hearts across the country, a video from Maharashtra’s Sindhudurg district showed an emotional exchange between a young man and his mother. The clip features Gopal Sawant sharing the news of his selection into the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) with his mother, who earns a living selling vegetables on the roadside.

The Instagram video shows Gopal approaching his mother at the very footpath where she works every day to support their family. As he tells her about securing the CRPF job, she listens quietly at first. Moments later, her composure breaks, and her eyes fill with tears of joy. The understated yet powerful reaction captured the sacrifices of a hardworking mother and the fulfillment of a son’s dream.

Together, these viral videos serve as a reminder that compassion, honesty, and perseverance continue to define everyday heroes, restoring faith in humanity one moment at a time.

Dubai or Gurugram: Viral Reddit Post Highlights Cost of Living vs Salary Debate



An Indian professional has turned to social media for advice after finding themselves at a career crossroads—whether to relocate to the United Arab Emirates for work or continue their job in Gurugram. The dilemma was shared in a now-viral Reddit post titled, “Need Advice: 8000 AED per month in Dubai or 72000 in hand in Gurgaon”, which quickly sparked debate among users.

In the post, the employee revealed that they had received a job offer in Dubai with a monthly salary of 8,000 UAE dirhams. While the opportunity to work abroad initially seemed appealing, the individual admitted that the role itself was “not that great.” Despite this, the salary, at least in nominal terms, made them seriously consider making the move overseas.

“I recently got offered 8K Dirham for a role in Dubai. The role in itself is not that great, but do you think since at least in nominal terms I am getting offered pretty good money, so maybe worth moving,” the user wrote. They further asked fellow Redditors for honest opinions, seeking clarity on whether relocating to Dubai would be a sensible decision or if staying in Gurugram would be the wiser choice.

As the post gained traction, social media users weighed in with mixed but largely cautionary responses. Many commenters pointed out that while 8,000 AED may sound attractive when converted to Indian currency, the high cost of living in Dubai could

significantly reduce savings. Expenses such as rent, utilities, transportation, fuel, food, and internet were repeatedly highlighted as major financial burdens.

“8k in Dubai is not going to cut it for savings. Rent, food, gas, electricity, Wi-Fi, and transportation will eat away your earnings,” one user warned. Another commenter suggested that remaining in India might be more beneficial in the long run, especially early in one’s career. “9 LPA in India with proper budgeting can give you a pretty decent lifestyle, and assuming you are just at the start of your career, this amount is bound to grow,” they wrote.

Others provided more detailed breakdowns of expenses in Dubai. One user noted that renting even a modest studio apartment could cost around 3,000 AED per month in cheaper, distant areas. This would likely necessitate owning a car, adding another 1,000 to 1,500 AED in monthly expenses depending on the vehicle.

Some users also highlighted differences in salary growth between the two countries. “Salaries in Dubai don’t grow at the 10% standards that we have in India. Usually it is 2-3%,” one person explained, though they added that the absence of income tax in the UAE was a notable advantage.

The discussion reflects a broader dilemma faced by many Indian professionals, balancing the allure of international exposure against financial realities and long-term career growth.

Viral Post Sparks Debate After Australian Man Compares Friendships in India and Australia

An Australian man’s reflections on the contrast between friendships in India and Australia have struck a chord online, sparking widespread discussion across social media platforms. Andy Evans, who shared his thoughts in a video posted on Instagram, spoke candidly about how his experience of friendship in India felt markedly different from what he was accustomed to back home.

In the video, Evans explained that friendships in India appeared far more intense and emotionally invested. According to him, Indian friends show a deep and genuine interest in each other’s lives, celebrating milestones and successes in ways he had rarely encountered in Australia. He noted that while friendships in Australia tend to be friendly and relaxed, they are often more casual and less demonstrative.

“It took me a while to realise this,” Evans said in the video. “Indian people love to celebrate the



success of their friends. This is not normal, by the way. Like in Australia, this is not normal.” He went on to describe how common it is in India for people to publicly acknowledge personal moments such as anniversaries, promotions, or achievements, often sharing them on social media and celebrating

enthusiastically. Evans admitted that this culture of openly celebrating friends was something entirely new to him. “You come to India, your friend’s anniversary, you’re posting it on your Instagram story and celebrating. I’ve never seen this in my life until I came to India,” he added. For him, the collective

joy and emotional involvement stood out as a defining feature of Indian friendships. The video quickly gained traction online, amassing over 103,000 views and more than 4,000 likes. Many users took to the comments section to share their own perspectives and experiences, with the post resonating

strongly across cultures. Several viewers agreed with Evans’ observations, noting that Indian communities tend to express support and pride for friends more openly.

One commenter wrote, “So true! I love this about the Indian community. As an American, I’ll congratulate a person but I’m not about to gloat about them all over the internet or party unless we’re super close.” Another user simply added, “Yeah, we show support to each other.”

Interestingly, some Indian users expressed surprise at the observation. “As an Indian, I thought this was normal everywhere,” one commenter remarked, highlighting how cultural norms around friendship can vary significantly across countries.

Evans’ post has sparked a broader conversation about how different societies express friendship, support, and celebration, reminding many viewers that what feels ordinary in one culture can feel extraordinary in another.

From Rs 21,000 a Month to Rs 2 Crore a Year: Diploma Holder’s Inspiring Rise Goes Viral

A mechanical engineering diploma holder has gone viral on social media after sharing his remarkable journey from earning a modest monthly salary of Rs 21,000 to building an annual income of Rs 1-2 crore. The story, posted on Reddit, has inspired thousands by highlighting resilience, adaptability, and an unconventional path to success.

In his post, the user explained that his intention was to shed light on how the professional “system” works and how he “accidentally found a way to beat it.” After completing his diploma, he struggled to find stable employment, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, when job opportunities were scarce. With what he described as “zero options” available, he accepted a position titled “Document Executive” at a financial firm.

Despite the formal-sounding designation, the role involved physically collecting documents from clients, verifying paperwork, and submitting files to banks. “Document Ex-

ecutive is a fancy word for a delivery boy,” he wrote. For four and a half years, he worked relentlessly, navigating Delhi’s harsh summers and dense winter fog. Yet, his financial growth remained stagnant, with his salary increasing by only Rs 2,000—from Rs 18,000 to Rs 21,000—over the entire period.

The post, which received close to 200 upvotes, struck a chord when the user described the emotional toll of those years. He recalled standing in the rain with a backpack full of documents, unable to afford even a decent raincoat. That moment, he said, symbolized the lowest point of his journey.

The turning point came when he crossed paths with a Chartered Accountant (CA) who recognized his on-ground experience and offered him an opportunity. The deal involved sourcing funding cases independently, processing them through an established network, and splitting the earnings equally. Taking a leap of faith, the user embraced the oppor-



tunity—and it changed everything. Over time, he built expertise in financial consulting, moving far beyond document collection. Today, he runs his own firm and handles deals worth hundreds of crores. “I realized that the market doesn’t care about your degree. It cares if you can deliver,” he wrote. His current work includes com-

plex debt instruments such as project funding, equity funding, mergers and acquisitions, and high-value B2B loans. Recently, he has also expanded into commercial real estate after learning about India’s booming hospitality sector. He now facilitates the buying and selling of hotels and hospitals, further diversifying his portfolio.

The story has received overwhelming praise on social media. Users described it as inspiring and motivating, with many reflecting on how a single decision can transform one’s life. Others even reached out, hoping to collaborate or seek guidance, proving that the journey has resonated deeply with aspiring professionals across the country.

Indian Content Creator Breaks Down Reality of Driving Uber in Australia in Viral Video



An Indian man living in Melbourne, Australia, has gone viral on social media after sharing a transparent account of his earnings from driving an Uber for an extended shift. Content creator Tushar Bareja posted a video documenting what he described as a “raw, unfiltered” 12-hour UberX driving challenge, aimed at showing the real-life

grind behind cab driving in Australia. In his post, Bareja explained that the challenge was meant to answer a common question many people have about overseas gig work—whether driving Uber in Australia is truly worth it. “I took on a 12-hour UberX driving challenge to see what the grind really looks like,” he wrote. He added

that the experience was physically demanding and far from easy, but important to share for those curious about the reality of the job. Bareja also spoke about his early struggles after moving to Australia. He revealed that before becoming an Uber driver, he worked as an Uber Eats delivery executive and later took up jobs at Dom-

ino’s and a fuel station to make ends meet. His journey, he said, reflects the challenges many international migrants face while trying to establish themselves in a new country. The video shows Bareja beginning his day as early as 4 am, after getting little to no sleep the night before. To increase his chances of securing rides, he drove toward the city and the airport. His first significant trip of the day was a \$47 airport ride, giving him a promising start. However, he soon realised that such high-paying fares were not frequent and that most rides required long hours for comparatively modest returns. By around 7 am, Bareja had earned close to \$100, but the early momentum came with additional costs, including fuel expenses. As the hours passed, fatigue began to set in, making the challenge increasingly difficult. Although he initially planned to complete the full 12-hour shift, Bareja was forced to stop after 10 hours due to exhaustion and the need for rest.

Despite cutting the challenge short, he managed to earn a total of \$330, which roughly translates to Rs 20,000. While the figure caught widespread attention online, Bareja’s video sparked a broader discussion about cost of living, work-life balance, and the realities of gig economy jobs abroad. The video has amassed over 5.2 million views and hundreds of comments, with users offering mixed reactions. Some pointed out that while Rs 20,000 in a day sounds impressive, Australia’s high rent and living expenses significantly reduce the actual value of the earnings. Others compared it to India, noting that many people do not earn that amount even in a month. A few viewers jokingly expressed a desire to move to Australia, citing their own exhausting experiences driving Uber in Indian cities. Bareja’s viral post has reignited conversations around migrant work, financial expectations, and the true cost of earning abroad.

RCB Faces Hurdles in Hosting IPL 2026 Home Matches Amid State Government Conditions

BENGALURU — The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has asked Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to confirm their host cities for IPL 2026 by January 27, but certain conditions set by the Karnataka state government may complicate the franchise's plans. While RCB remains eager to host their home matches at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, the state government has outlined additional responsibilities for the franchise that extend beyond the stadium itself.

The conditions reportedly include managing stadium-related arrangements, as well as taking responsibility for the surrounding roads, adhering to restrictions on DJ usage, and providing for a dedicated fire brigade unit. Sources close to RCB suggested that the franchise sees these requirements as a shift of administrative liabilities onto them, and they are hesitant to assume full responsibility.

RCB plans to hold discussions with both the Karnataka state government and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) before conveying their final decision to the BCCI. The franchise has



also requested that the KSCA mediate talks with the government to ensure smoother coordination.

Speaking on the matter, KSCA president Venkatesh Prasad said that the state cricket body is actively working to secure an unconditional clearance from the Karnataka government to host IPL and international matches at Chinnaswamy Stadium. "We are working to get an unconditional clearance by the end of

February so that we can hand it over to the BCCI," Prasad said.

He added that the onus now lies with RCB to move the process forward. "It is RCB's responsibility to hold talks with the Karnataka government and take this forward. It is their responsibility to come back to Bengaluru and play, and not take the game away from Bengaluru," he said.

The situation highlights the delicate balance between franchise ambi-

tions and government regulations, with RCB needing to ensure compliance while maintaining their preference for playing at their iconic home ground.

Meanwhile, the Rajasthan Royals have already confirmed that they will host their IPL 2026 home matches in Pune, with no games planned in Jaipur this year. This underscores the broader logistical planning challenges fran-

chises face as they navigate venue approvals, local regulations, and the IPL schedule ahead of the tournament.

As the January 27 deadline approaches, RCB's discussions with the state government and KSCA will determine whether the Chinnaswamy Stadium can remain their home venue or if alternative arrangements need to be made, setting the stage for a critical decision in the lead-up to IPL 2026.

PCB Offers to Host Bangladesh's T20 World Cup Matches Amid Security Standoff with India

ISLAMABAD — The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has expressed support for Bangladesh's refusal to play its T20 World Cup matches in India, citing security concerns, and has offered to host the matches as an alternative. The development comes ahead of the ICC Board meeting on Wednesday, where a final decision is expected on Bangladesh's participation and whether the team will travel to India for the tournament starting February 7.

Bangladesh is scheduled to play all four of its group-stage matches in India, with the first three in Kolkata and the fourth in Mumbai. However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), backed by its government, has remained firm on not sending the team to India and has requested that its matches be shifted to co-host Sri Lanka.

According to sources close to the PCB, the board sent a communication to the ICC stating that Bang-

ladesh's concerns are justified and should be accommodated. The PCB further added that if moving the matches to Sri Lanka is not feasible, Pakistan is ready to host all of Bangladesh's games. While the ICC and BCB have engaged in multiple discussions, including a recent meeting in Dhaka, neither side has altered its position.

The ICC has consistently stressed that the tournament should proceed according to the existing schedule, but the BCB maintains that sending its team to India is not possible under current circumstances. PCB officials have not issued a public statement, but insiders confirmed that Bangladesh's government approached Pakistan for support in discussions with the ICC.

Pakistan itself will play all its T20 World Cup matches in Sri Lanka under a hybrid hosting model agreed with the BCCI and ICC, valid until 2027.

The current crisis esca-



lated after Kolkata Knight Riders released Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, following a directive from the BCCI that cited "recent developments all around." In response, the Bangladesh government banned the broadcast of the IPL, and the BCB formally in-



formed the ICC of its refusal to travel to India for the tournament.

The situation has created a diplomatic and sporting impasse, with the ICC seeking to balance tournament logistics and security considerations, while Bangladesh remains unwavering in pri-

oritizing the safety of its players. With the ICC Board set to meet this week, all eyes are on whether a resolution can be reached, either by shifting matches to Sri Lanka or Pakistan or by compelling Bangladesh to adhere to the original schedule.

Harry Brook Apologises for Nightclub Incident, Focuses on England's ODI Series in Sri Lanka



COLOMBO — England white-ball captain Harry Brook has publicly apologised for his involvement in an altercation with a nightclub bouncer in Wellington, New Zealand, describing it as "not the right thing to do" and insisting he has "learnt from my mistakes." The 26-year-old was fined £30,000 (\$40,000) by the

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) following the incident, which occurred the night before a one-day international against New Zealand. England went on to lose the match, with Brook managing only six runs.

Speaking to reporters in Colombo ahead of England's three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka,

Brook reflected on the episode and its aftermath. "I've reflected a lot and I know it wasn't the right thing to do," he said. "I want to apologise to my team-mates, the fans, and the ECB for putting them in a tricky situation. It will never happen again. I'm extremely sorry."

Brook, who will lead England in next month's

T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, admitted that the incident drew unwanted attention but vowed to move on and focus on cricket. His comments come after a turbulent period for England's white-ball side, highlighted by a 4-1 Ashes defeat and allegations of poor preparation, inconsistent team selection, and a perceived "drinking culture" within the camp. Video footage of players socialising during a mid-series beach break, including an apparently inebriated Ben Duckett, intensified scrutiny on the squad.

Looking ahead, Brook said the ODI series against Sri Lanka would provide a valuable opportunity to regain form and build momentum ahead of the T20 World Cup, which starts on February 7. "It's important to get used to the conditions, the climate, and the heat. We are looking forward to a competitive series," he said. Brook also acknowledged the team's recent struggles: England have lost six of their last seven bilateral series and endured a disappointing Champions

Trophy campaign, failing to win any group-stage matches. "We would like to be a little more consistent, absorb pressure, and stay in the game for longer periods. Yes, we've lost a few series, but I feel we're heading in the right direction," he added.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, are dealing with selection challenges ahead of co-hosting the World Cup. Charith Asalanka, recently removed as T20 captain, continues to lead the ODI side, while key bowlers Dushmantha Chameera and Wanindu Hasaranga remain unavailable due to injury or fitness concerns. "I would have liked to have both in the team, but we have to look at the bigger picture, which is the World Cup. No final call has been made on Hasaranga yet," Asalanka said.

The three-match ODI series in Colombo, followed by three T20 internationals, will serve as England's last warm-up for the World Cup, offering Brook and his squad a chance to restore confidence and fine-tune their strategies.

Mohammad Kaif Criticises BCCI Over Burden on Shubman Gill After Back-to-Back ODI Series Losses



NEW DELHI — Former India cricketer Mohammad Kaif has slammed the BCCI and the Gautam Gambhir-led team management for placing too much responsibility on Shubman Gill, following the young batter's struggles as India's ODI captain. Gill has now lost both of his first two series in charge, 2-1 against Australia away and 2-1 at home against New Zealand, sparking debates over whether the 26-year-old was overburdened at such a young age.

Speaking on his YouTube channel, Kaif described the decision to back Gill so heavily as "the biggest mistake." He argued that the captaincy load across formats has put immense pressure on Gill, affecting his form and overall performance.

"The reason Gill is not in the T20I team currently is not because of him. The reason is that a lot of load has been put on him. He is a good player, but he wasn't ready to bear all the burden," Kaif said. He added a vivid analogy, saying, "Just like elevators have a weight limit, Shubman Gill also has a capacity. It is not possible to expect him to carry all the responsibilities at once."

Kaif emphasised that the young captain has been overloaded with expectations. "He has been told 'You do the Test captaincy', 'You can become better than Virat Kohli', 'You will break records', 'You will play every format'," Kaif explained. "I

feel Gill's career is being shortened due to the pressure being put on him. He has the pressure of getting dropped on him and is unable to bat freely in ODIs either. The fluency in his batting is not there."

The former cricketer also stressed that the blame lies squarely with the team management and the BCCI, stating, "Whoever made the decisions to hand Gill so much load must be held responsible." Kaif suggested that a more measured approach would have been to retain Rohit Sharma as captain while assessing his willingness and mental readiness to step down or continue leading the team.

"It would have been smarter to keep Rohit Sharma as the captain, and ask whether he is mentally tired or not. A smart management should have stayed with Rohit and supported him. Moving on from him was the wrong move," Kaif remarked. He added that the decision to appoint Gill as captain across multiple formats seemed driven by the desire to gain credit for building a new team, rather than prioritising the player's well-being and development.

Kaif's comments underscore the challenges faced by young cricketers thrust into leadership roles too early, and highlight concerns over workload management, team strategy, and player support within the Indian cricket setup.

Daryl Mitchell Tops ICC ODI Batting Rankings After Stellar Series Against India



NEW DELHI — New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell has overtaken Virat Kohli to claim the top spot in the latest ICC ODI batting rankings, following a spectacular run of form in New Zealand's historic series win in India. The Hamilton-born batter scored heavily during the three-match series, which New Zealand won 2-1, marking their first ODI series victory on Indian soil in 37 years.

Mitchell, 34, smashed two centuries in the series and became the fourth-fastest male cricketer to reach nine one-day international hundreds, achieving the milestone in just 54 innings, behind only Imam-ul-Haq (48 innings), Hashim Amla (52), and Quinton de Kock (53). Across the three ODIs, he accumulated 352 runs, the most ever by a New Zealander in a three-match ODI series and the third-highest total in ODI history for such a series, trailing only Babar Azam (360 against West Indies, 2016) and Shubman Gill (360 against New Zealand, 2023).

The ICC confirmed that Mitchell now has 845 ranking points, surpassing Kohli, who drops to No.2 with 795 points. The rest of the chasing pack includes Ibrahim Zadran, Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, and Babar Azam. Mitchell has now held the No.1 ODI ranking twice, though his previous spell lasted only three days in November 2025 before he was overtaken by Rohit Sharma.

Mitchell's dominance in India is particularly notable. He has scored four ODI centuries on Indian soil, second only to South African legend AB de Villiers, who has five. Another remarkable statistic is that Mitchell has yet to register a duck in 54 ODI innings, the second-long-

Wessels, who went 105 innings without being dismissed for zero between 1983 and 1994.

Son of rugby coach John Mitchell, currently in charge of England's women's World Cup-winning team, Daryl spent much of his twenties honing his skills in over 200 domestic matches in New Zealand before breaking into international prominence.

Other notable movements in the rankings saw Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran move into third place (764 points), swapping spots with Rohit Sharma, who now sits fourth with 757 points. In the same series, Glenn Phillips contributed to New Zealand's historic win, scoring 106 off 88 balls and forming a 219-run partnership with Mitchell in Indore — the second-highest ODI partnership in New Zealand's history. Phillips climbed 16 places to 20th in the ODI batting rankings and rose 14 spots to equal 31st in ODI all-rounders rankings, while Afghanistan's Azmatullah Omarzai remains at the top.

In bowling, Michael Bracewell was the biggest mover for New Zealand, rising six spots to 33rd following his performance in the first two games against India. The top of the bowling charts remains stable, with Afghanistan's Rashid Khan (710 points) leading ahead of England's Jofra Archer (670 points). Rashid also climbed two spots to second in the T20I bowling rankings after taking two wickets in Afghanistan's series opener against the West Indies in Dubai.

Mitchell's rise to the top highlights his remarkable consistency and adaptability, cementing his place among the world's elite ODI batters and signaling that New Zea-

Powerful ‘Bhaga Bhaga’ Song from Unique Spy Drama “China Peace” Ignites Buzz

The upcoming Telugu spy drama China Peace is steadily emerging as one of the most talked-about films in recent times, thanks to its unique concept and engaging promotional content. Starring Nihal Kodhati and Surya Srinivas in the lead roles, the film is written and directed by Akki Vishwanadha Reddy and produced under the Moon Light Dreams banner. With every new update, the makers are successfully building strong anticipation among audiences.

Earlier promotional material, including the teaser, created a solid buzz by showcasing a refreshing blend of action, thrill, humor, and a distinctive narrative style. The film’s unique presentation and intriguing storyline immediately set it apart from conventional spy dramas. Adding further momentum to the promotions, the makers have now released a powerful song titled Bhaga Bhaga, which has quickly captured attention.

Composed by Karthik Rodriguez, Bhaga Bhaga is a high-energy patriotic number designed to stir emotions and ignite a sense of pride. The composer has crafted the song with intense beats and a rousing arrangement that perfectly matches the film’s spy-action backdrop. Renowned singer Kaala Bhairava’s powerful and commanding vocals elevate the track to another level, making it both impactful and memorable. The lyrics, penned by Rehman, are sharp and thought-provoking, turning words into weapons and resonating strongly



with listeners. The song not only enhances the film’s promotional appeal but also hints at the larger thematic depth of China Peace.

The film features a strong ensemble cast, with Kamal Kamaraju, Raghu Babu, Rangasthalam Mahesh, Srinivas Vaddlamani, Srikanth Iyengar, Harshitha Bandlamoori, and Tulasi playing key roles alongside the lead actors. Each character is expected to add layers to the narrative, contributing to the film’s gripping spy-drama framework.

On the technical front, China Peace is backed by an experienced and skilled crew. Cinematography is handled by Suresh Raguthu, whose

visuals are expected to enhance the film’s scale and intensity. Editing is taken care of by Mart-hand K. Venkatesh, ensuring a crisp and engaging narrative flow. The film’s overall technical finesse is aimed at complementing its bold concept and stylish execution.

Scheduled for a theatrical release towards the end of February, China Peace promises a fresh cinematic experience with its unique spy-drama angle, powerful music, and compelling storytelling. With the release of Bhaga Bhaga, the film has further strengthened its position as one of the most awaited releases of the season.

Ranveer Singh’s ‘Dhurandhar’ Set for OTT Premiere



Bollywood star Ranveer Singh’s high-octane action thriller Dhurandhar is all set to make its much-awaited digital debut soon, following a successful run in theatres. The film, which marked Ranveer Singh’s powerful return in a gritty espionage avatar, is scheduled to stream on a leading OTT platform from January 30, 2026, creating fresh buzz among movie lovers and fans of the actor.

Directed by Aditya Dhar, Dhurandhar hit cinema screens in December 2025 and emerged as one of the major box-office successes of the year. The film received strong appreciation for its intense storyline, slick action sequences, and layered narrative rooted in espionage and national security. Ranveer Singh’s transformation into a ruthless intelligence operative was widely praised by critics and audiences alike, with many calling it one of

the most mature performances of his career.

The film also boasts an impressive ensemble cast, including Sanjay Dutt, Akshaye Khanna, R. Madhavan, and Arjun Rampal, each delivering impactful performances that added depth to the story. The gripping screenplay, combined with a powerful background score and realistic action choreography, played a key role in the film’s theatrical success.

With its OTT release now confirmed, Dhurandhar is expected to reach a much wider audience, including viewers who missed the film in theatres. The digital version is likely to be available in multiple languages, allowing fans across regions to experience the action-packed thriller from the comfort of their homes. Industry insiders believe the film’s strong word-of-mouth and Ranveer Singh’s star power will help it trend prominently on

streaming platforms.

The timing of the OTT release is also significant, as it comes ahead of growing anticipation for the film’s sequel, which is already under discussion. The makers have hinted that Dhurandhar is envisioned as a franchise, and the positive response to the first part has strengthened those plans.

For Ranveer Singh, Dhurandhar marks another milestone in his career, reaffirming his ability to balance mass appeal with intense, performance-driven roles. As the film gears up for its digital premiere, excitement among fans continues to soar, with many eager to relive the adrenaline-filled experience once again.

With its OTT arrival, Dhurandhar is set to find a new wave of viewers and further cement its place as one of the stand-out action thrillers in recent Hindi cinema.

Tovino Thomas’“Palli Chattambi” Motion Poster Out, Release on April 9

Malayalam star Tovino Thomas is all set to enthrall audiences with his upcoming prestigious big-budget film Palli Chattambi, whose motion poster was officially released on Tuesday. Along with the striking motion poster, the makers also announced that the film will hit theatres worldwide on April 9, marking one of the most anticipated pan-Indian releases of the year.

Palli Chattambi is being produced on a lavish scale by Nautal, Brijeeesh, and Chanakya Chaitanya Charan under the banners of Worldwide Films and C Cube Bros Entertainment. The film is directed by Dijo Jose Antony, known for his strong storytelling, while Kayadu Lohar plays the female lead opposite Tovino Thomas.

Set in the backdrop of the 1950s and 1960s, Palli Chattambi is a period drama that promises to showcase Tovino Thomas in a completely new and unseen avatar. The motion poster, rich in period detailing and intense visuals, has already generated significant buzz across social media and film circles. Industry insiders believe the film has the potential to appeal to audiences far beyond Kerala, firmly positioning it as a pan-India entertainer.

Adding to its wide reach, the producers have confirmed that Palli Chattambi will release si-



multaneously in five languages—Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, and Kannada—ensuring a grand theatrical rollout across the country and overseas markets. The announcement has further raised expectations among fans and trade analysts alike.

The film boasts a strong supporting cast, including Vijayaraghavan, Sudheer Karamana, Baburaj, Vinod Kadamangalam, and Prashanth Alexander, among others, promising powerful performances and depth to the narrative.

The technical crew behind Palli Chattambi is equally impressive. Cinematography is handled by Tijo Tomy, while the music is composed by Jakes Bejoy, whose background score is expected to elevate the film’s period setting. The film’s visual authenticity is enhanced by pro-

duction designer Dileep Nath, with costumes designed by Manjusha Radhakrishnan and make-up by Rasheed Ahmed. Editing is overseen by Sreejith Sarang, and the script is penned by S. Suresh Babu.

With its compelling premise, grand scale, and Tovino Thomas’ transformation, Palli Chattambi is shaping up to be one of the most awaited theatrical releases of April.

Athreyapuram Brothers Launched with Grand Puja, Concept Poster Sparks Curiosity



With audience tastes evolving rapidly, filmmakers are increasingly focusing on fresh, relatable narratives that resonate with today’s viewers. Director Rajesh Jagannadham is stepping into this space with Athreyapuram Brothers, a film that promises a distinctive story tailored for the new-generation audience. The project was officially launched in a grand manner, with its

intriguing concept poster unveiled at the same time.

The film is being produced under the banners of S2S Cinemas and The Fervent Indie Productions by VSK Sanjeev, Vangapalli Sandeep, Vangapalli Sankeerth, Praveen Gadde, Rajesh Gadde, and Rakesh Gadde. Athreyapuram Brothers features a notable ensemble cast that includes Rajeev Kanakala, Ga-

vireddy, Sunny Patsa, Raghu Babu, Geeth Sayini, Neha Pathan, and Siddharth Gollapudi in key roles.

The puja ceremony was held grandly at Anapurna Studios in Hyderabad, marking the formal commencement of the film. Several prominent filmmakers attended the event as chief guests, adding to the occasion’s significance. Director Vassishtha gave the

clap for the auspicious first shot, while Vijay Kanakamedala switched on the camera. Directors Praveen Kandregula and Aditya Hassan handed over the script, and director Anudeep provided honorary direction for the opening shot, wishing the team success.

A major highlight of the launch was the release of the film’s concept poster, which immediately caught the

attention of those present. Carrying the tagline “A Sweet Rivalry,” the poster visually depicts two individuals locked in a test of strength. At first glance, it hints at an unusual and engaging narrative, suggesting that Athreyapuram Brothers will move away from routine storytelling and offer a refreshing cinematic experience. The poster has already sparked curiosity and discussion, raising expectations around the film’s theme and treatment.

The technical crew backing the film is equally promising. Cinematography is handled by Ramiz Naveeth, while Santhu Omkar serves as the music director. Editing responsibilities are taken up by Anil Pasala. With a strong creative and technical team in place, the makers aim to deliver a film that balances entertainment with a contemporary sensibility.

More details about Athreyapuram Brothers, including its storyline and release plans, are expected to be announced soon.

Krithi Shetty Bags a Mega Opportunity in Chiranjeevi’s Upcoming Film

Young and talented actress Krithi Shetty has reportedly secured a major breakthrough in her career by landing a key role in megastar Chiranjeevi’s upcoming film. The development has generated considerable buzz in Tollywood, as the project is expected to be one of the most high-profile ventures in recent times. Industry circles believe this opportunity could mark a turning point for the actress, who is looking to regain strong momentum in mainstream Telugu cinema.

Krithi Shetty shot to fame with her impressive debut and quickly became a household name. However, despite her popularity and acting potential, she faced a mixed run at the box office in the subsequent phase of her career. While she continued to receive appreciation for her performances, a major commercial success elud-

ed her. The latest development, therefore, comes as a much-needed boost and places her back in the spotlight.

According to sources, the upcoming Chiranjeevi starrer is being directed by Bobby, known for his commercial sensibilities and emotional storytelling. The film is said to revolve around strong emotional elements, with a narrative that highlights family relationships. Krithi Shetty is expected to play a crucial role with substantial screen presence, giving her ample scope to display her acting range alongside the legendary actor.

The project is likely to go on floors in the coming months, with pre-production work progressing at a brisk pace. Reports also suggest that the makers are assembling a powerful ensemble cast, with a few prominent names from South Indian cinema expected to be part of

the film. Though official confirmations are awaited, the anticipation surrounding the cast and technical crew continues to grow.

For Krithi Shetty, sharing screen space with Chiranjeevi is not just a prestigious opportunity but also a chance to reinvent herself in the industry. Films featuring the megastar often enjoy massive reach across generations, offering young actors a rare platform to connect with a wide audience. Trade analysts believe that a strong performance in this film could open doors to bigger and more diverse roles for the actress in the future.

Fans of both Chiranjeevi and Krithi Shetty are eagerly waiting for an official announcement from the production team. As expectations soar, all eyes are now on how this promising collaboration will shape up. If the project lives up to the hype, it could well be-



come a milestone film in Krithi Shetty’s career and add another memorable chapter to Chiranjeevi’s illustrious journey in cinema.