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Case Registered Against YouTuber Anvesh for Allegedly Hurting Religious Sentiments

Hyderabad TPN Bureau | December 31

Hyderabad police have registered a case against popular Telugu YouTuber Anvesh, also known as Prapancha Yatrikudu, following allegations that his remarks in a recent video hurt religious sentiments and insulted Hindu deities. The case was registered at the Panjagutta Police Station based on a complaint filed by actress and BJP leader Karate Kalyani. In her complaint, she alleged that certain comments made by Anvesh in a video shared on social media platforms were objectionable, inflammatory and disrespectful to Hindu beliefs.

The video reportedly went viral, triggering widespread outrage among sections of the public and religious organisations. Police officials said a case has been booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and provisions of the Information Technology Act. They added that notices would be issued to Anvesh soon, directing him to appear before the police for questioning as part of the investigation. According to the complaint, Anvesh's remarks were made while responding to a public debate related to comments by a film actor on women's attire. However, portions of the video were interpreted as derogatory towards Hindu gods, leading to strong protests and demands for legal action against the YouTuber.

In addition to the case in Hyderabad, police sources confirmed that another case has been registered against Anvesh in Khammam following a separate complaint alleging that his statements hurt social and religious sentiments. Investigations are currently underway in both cases, and authorities are examining the content of the video as well as its impact on public order. Several Hindu organisations have expressed anger over the remarks and staged protests, demanding strict action against the YouTuber. They have alleged that social media influencers should be held accountable for content that may disturb communal harmony or offend religious beliefs.

Police officials stated that the investigation will focus on whether the remarks were made with deliberate intent to insult religious sentiments or incite disharmony. Based on the findings, further legal action may be initiated. This is not the first time Anvesh has faced legal scrutiny. Earlier, a separate case was reportedly registered against him by cybercrime police over alleged misinformation shared in a different video. Meanwhile, police have appealed to the public to maintain calm and refrain from spreading or reacting to provocative content on social media. They emphasised that appropriate action will be taken strictly in accordance with the law after a thorough investigation.



Hyderabad Cracks Down on Encroachments at Durgam Cheruvu, Clears 5 Acres

Hyderabad TPN Bureau | December 31

Hyderabad City authorities have undertaken a major anti-encroachment drive around the scenic Durgam Cheruvu area in Hyderabad, successfully clearing nearly five acres of land encroached upon by illegal structures, officials said on Wednesday. The operation was carried out by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) in coordination with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and local law enforcement. The drive aimed to reclaim public land and protect the ecological and recreational value of the Durgam Cheruvu reservoir, a popular tourist spot and important water body in the city. Officials said that in recent years, several unauthorised constructions had proliferated around the periphery of Durgam Cheruvu, including makeshift buildings, illegal shops, boundary walls and other structures that violated land use regulations. These encroachments not only impeded the free movement of water and

drainage but also posed a threat to the environment and natural landscape of the area. During the operation, employees of HMDA and GHMC, supported by police personnel, identified and dismantled encroachments spreading over roughly five acres. Bulldozers and other machinery were deployed to remove temporary structures, clear debris and restore the land to its original open condition. Authorities said the move was taken after repeated notices and warnings failed to yield compliance from encroachers. Residents and activists welcomed the action, describing it as a positive step toward preserving one of Hyderabad's iconic natural landmarks. Many citizens had raised concerns about illegal constructions affecting the beauty and ecological balance of Durgam Cheruvu, urging authorities to act decisively. Officials emphasised that the drive was conducted in a peaceful and coordinated manner, with efforts made to minimise inconvenience to the public. Notices had been served in advance to those occupying the encroached land, and local representatives

were involved in overseeing the process. The HMDA also reiterated its commitment to protecting water bodies, open spaces and green zones across the city. Authorities said that similar anti-encroachment operations would continue in other identified areas to prevent unauthorised land occupation and ensure better urban planning and environmental conservation. A senior official noted that preserving water bodies like Durgam Cheruvu is crucial, not only for maintaining ecological balance but also for enhancing urban resilience in the face of climate challenges. The reclaimed land will now be earmarked for public use and beautification, including landscaped walkways and recreational spaces for residents and visitors. The anti-encroachment action at Durgam Cheruvu aligns with broader efforts by city-level agencies to safeguard Hyderabad's natural assets and curb unauthorised expansion, officials said. They called on citizens to cooperate with authorities and report any suspected encroachments in their neighbourhoods.

New Angle Emerges in Police Probe into I-Bomma Piracy Case



TPN Bureau | December 31: The investigation into the high-profile I-Bomma online piracy case has taken a new turn, with Hyderabad Cyber Crime Police uncovering a fake identity angle linked to the prime accused, officials said on Wednesday. According to investigators, the main accused, identified as Immandi Ravi, who allegedly operated the notorious I-Bomma and related piracy platforms, is suspected to have used forged identity documents to run his illegal operations and financial transactions. During the course of the probe, police found that Ravi allegedly obtained a PAN card and driving licence using the identity of another individual without consent.

Police sources said the identity used by the accused belongs to a Bengaluru-based software professional. During interrogation, Ravi initially claimed that the person was his former roommate and had voluntarily shared his documents. However, further verification revealed that the claim was false. When the individual was summoned and confronted with the accused, he reportedly told investigators that he had never met Ravi and was unaware that his personal documents were being misused. Officials believe the accused may have stolen or illegally accessed the documents to open bank accounts and route funds generated through the piracy network. Several bank accounts linked to the fake identity are now under scrutiny, and financial

trails are being analysed to establish the full scale of the operation. The I-Bomma case came to light after complaints from the Telugu film industry regarding large-scale online piracy of newly released movies. During raids and seizures, cybercrime police recovered hard drives and digital storage devices allegedly containing tens of thousands of pirated films. Authorities also froze bank accounts suspected to be linked to the illegal activities. Investigators are also probing claims made by the accused regarding foreign citizenship, which police believe may have been used to evade law enforcement and complicate jurisdictional issues. Digital forensics teams are examining servers, laptops and

mobile devices seized during the investigation to identify associates and international links, if any. Police officials said the emergence of the fake identity angle could lead to additional charges related to forgery, cheating and identity theft, apart from offences under cybercrime and copyright laws. The accused is currently in judicial custody, and further questioning is expected as the probe progresses. Authorities said the investigation is being expanded to identify others involved in the piracy network and to recover proceeds generated through illegal online activities. The case has highlighted the organised nature of digital piracy and the challenges faced by enforcement agencies in tackling cyber-enabled crimes.

KTR Slams Congress Government During Sircilla Visit, Accuses Ruling Party of Failed Promises and Poor Governance

TPN Bureau | Sircilla December 31

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) working president K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Tuesday criticised the state Congress government during a public event in Sircilla, alleging that the administration has failed to deliver on key promises and mismanaged governance since taking office. Addressing party workers and supporters, KTR accused the Congress leadership of indulging in "frustration politics" instead of focusing on

development. He challenged the government to prove its claim of public support through by elections, asserting that recent local election results reflected widespread discontent with the ruling party. KTR highlighted that citizens were frustrated with the government's performance, pointing to delays in rural development, farmers' welfare, and welfare schemes. He said that despite repeated assurances, many projects and schemes had not been implemented effectively, leaving a majority of the population dissatisfied. The TRS leader also

alleged that the state government had stalled completion of key irrigation and water projects, including the Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, which had been nearly finished under the previous TRS administration. He accused the Chief Minister of avoiding accountability on issues such as agricultural welfare, water management, and rural infrastructure. KTR criticised the Congress government for prioritising political rhetoric over concrete governance and urged party cadres to remain united and committed to address-

ing public grievances. He said that the public was closely watching government actions and that any failure to deliver services would further erode citizens' trust. The Sircilla visit comes amid rising political tensions in Telangana, with opposition parties intensifying scrutiny of the state government's record ahead of upcoming local and assembly elections. KTR's remarks are widely seen as part of a broader strategy to consolidate support for the TRS and highlight the Congress government's alleged shortcomings in governance and development.



National Road Safety Month to Begin from January 1; Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar Calls for Public Participation

TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, December 31, 2025: Transport and Backward Classes Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar has called upon citizens across Telangana to actively participate in the National Road Safety Month celebrations, which will be observed from January 1 to January 31, with the aim of reducing road accidents and promoting responsible driving habits.

Addressing the initiative, the Minister said that the National Road Safety Month will be conducted extensively across

all districts, mandals and villages in the state under the aegis of the Telangana Transport Department. He urged people from all sections of society to take part in the month-long awareness programmes and make road safety a shared responsibility.

Emphasising the role of students in creating awareness, Ponnamp Prabhakar appealed to every student to give a written pledge along with their parents, committing to follow road safety rules. He also stressed that every school should ensure the



formation and active functioning of Road Safety Clubs to inculcate traffic discipline and safety awareness from a young age.

The Minister reiterated the importance of strictly adhering to traf-

fic regulations issued by the Transport Department. He said wearing helmets while riding two-wheelers must be made compulsory, and warned against drunken driving, wrong-route driving and over-speeding, stating that such violations are major contributors to fatal road accidents. "Following traffic rules is not just a legal obligation, but a moral responsibility to protect our own lives and the lives of others," he said.

Citing official data, Ponnamp Prabhakar noted that road accidents remain one of the leading causes of deaths in the state. He expressed concern over the increasing number of fatalities and injuries due to negligent driving and lack of awareness, and said the Road Safety Month is aimed at reversing this trend through education, enforcement and community participation.

He called upon public representatives, government officials, students, educational institutions and the general public to actively associate themselves with the programme and spread awareness in their respective areas. Awareness rallies, pledge-taking programmes, workshops and interactive sessions will be organised throughout the month to highlight the importance of safe road behaviour.

The Minister concluded by stating that collective participation and consistent adherence to road safety norms can significantly reduce accidents and save thousands of lives. "Only when every citizen treats road safety as a personal responsibility can we build safer roads for Telangana," he added.

TGSRTC to Run Special Buses from BHEL Depot for Medaram Jathara 2025

warangal, December 31, 2025 (TPN Bureau): The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has announced special bus services from the BHEL Depot in Hyderabad to facilitate devotees travelling to the Medaram Jathara 2025, officials said on Wednesday.

With the much-awaited Medaram Jathara — one of the largest tribal and religious festivals in Telangana — set to draw lakhs of devotees, TGSRTC has planned extensive transport arrangements to ensure smooth and comfortable travel for pilgrims from various parts of the state. The special buses flagged off from BHEL Depot will directly connect devotees to the festival venue in Mulugu district, reducing travel hassles and supporting the massive movement of people expected during the four-day event.

According to TSRTC officials, the special services will operate on scheduled timings from early morning to evening to accommodate devotees at different times of the day. Both ordinary and deluxe buses will be deployed, offering options for affordable travel. Officials said that priority will be given to safety and convenience, with adequate rest stops, drinking water facilities and helpful staff assigned along the routes.

The corporation has also announced that additional buses will be arranged based on demand and expected rush. Devotees have been urged to purchase tickets in advance at TSRTC counters or through the official mobile app to avoid last-minute inconvenience. TSRTC service super-

visors have been instructed to manage crowds and ensure orderly boarding at the depot.

Local transport authorities said the special bus services are part of a broader strategy to manage the movement of pilgrims to Medaram, which traditionally witnesses an enormous turnout. They noted that proper transport planning is crucial to preventing overcrowding on regular bus services and to providing a comfortable journey experience for devotees coming from Hyderabad and neighbouring districts.

The TGSRTC initiative received praise from several pilgrim groups and local organisations, with many expressing relief that organised transport has been made available for the long journey to Medaram. Several devotees said that direct bus services from BHEL Depot would facilitate easier pilgrimage plans and help many senior citizens and families travel without stress.

Officials have also coordinated with district police and traffic management authorities to streamline boarding and departure processes, ensuring that buses leave on schedule and that traffic congestion in and around the depot is minimised during peak pilgrimage periods. As the festival approaches, TGSRTC has reiterated its commitment to making the pilgrimage journey safe and efficient for all devotees. The corporation advised passengers to follow safety guidelines, carry valid tickets, and arrive at boarding points well in advance to avoid any last-minute rush.



Over 200 Government Workers Arrested for Taking Bribes in 2025: Telangana ACB



TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, December 31, 2025 — In a major anti corruption drive this year, the Telangana Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) registered a total of 199 graft cases and arrested 273 people, a majority of whom were government servants caught taking bribes, officials said on Wednesday. The intensified crackdown reflects the state's renewed focus on curbing corruption and promoting transparency in public service.

According to ACB Director General Charu Sinha, of the total 273 individuals arrested in 2025, 224 were government servants caught accepting bribes in trap cases. In addition, 15 cases involved disproportionate assets held by public officials, and 26 cases were related to criminal misconduct by government employees, resulting in the detention of another 34 accused.

The anti graft agency unearthed immovable and movable assets worth over Rs 96 crore

during the year while acting on graft complaints. In the trap cases linked to bribery, officials seized cash totalling approximately Rs 57.17 lakh, of which more than half has already been reimbursed to complainants.

To strengthen its legal actions, the ACB obtained 115 sanction orders from the government authorising prosecution of the accused and filed charge sheets in those cases. The bureau also intensified preventive and monitoring efforts throughout the year. It conducted 26 regular enquiries into allegations of corruption and carried out 54 surprise inspections at various government offices, including sub registrar offices, Road Transport Authority (RTA) check posts, welfare hostels, and other public institutions.

Officials said the bureau's efforts were not limited to traps and arrests. Capacity building measures included specialised training programmes for personnel

in areas such as surveillance techniques, financial investigation, tracing digital transaction footprints, the Benami Properties Act, and preparation of profiles on accused officials.

The ACB's proactive stance has been complemented by public awareness campaigns encouraging citizens to report instances where bribes are demanded by public servants. With an emphasis on confidentiality and protection for complainants, the ACB has urged people to come forward if they encounter corrupt practices.

Authorities said that the 2025 anti corruption results represent one of the most comprehensive crackdowns in recent years, signalling a stronger enforcement trajectory against graft in Telangana's public administration. The ACB said it would continue to monitor government offices closely and take swift action against those involved in corrupt practices to restore public trust.

Sundar Kalluri Appointed as State Vice-President of Telangana Journalists Welfare Association

TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, December 31, 2025 — The Telangana Journalists Welfare Association (TJWA) has appointed Sundar Kalluri as its State Vice-President, reinforcing the organization's commitment to championing journalists' welfare and ensuring accountability in government functioning.

The appointment was formally announced by TJWA President Anam Chinni Venkateswara Rao, who highlighted Kalluri's extensive experience in public service, including his tenure as a Public Relations Officer (PRO) in two state governments after the formation of Telangana. This experience, according to the President, equips Kalluri with the necessary insights and expertise to contribute effectively to the association's objectives and advocate for journalists' interests across the state.

Expressing gratitude to the association's leadership, Kalluri said he was honored to be entrusted with such a key role. "I sincerely thank

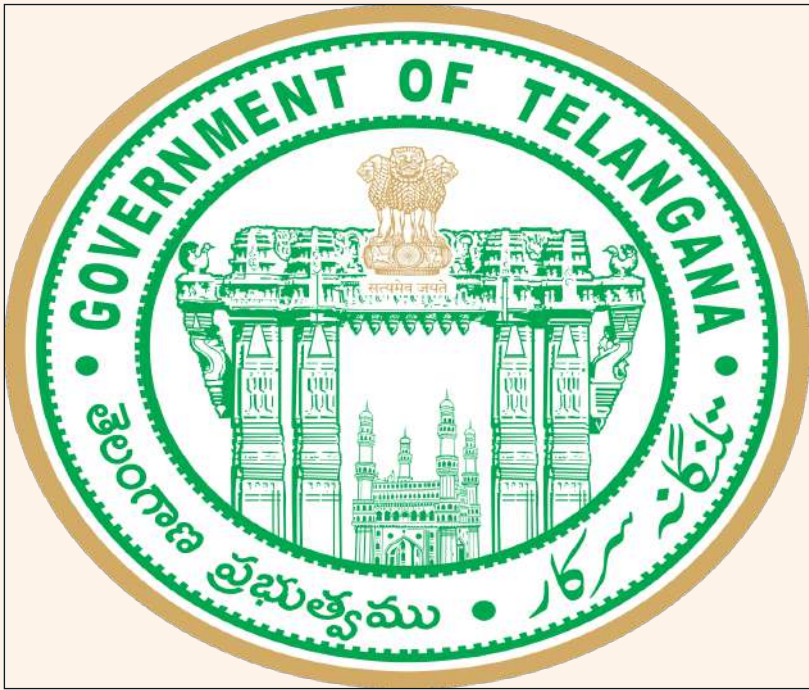


President Anam Chinni Venkateswara Rao and the executive committee for this opportunity. I will dedicate myself fully to the welfare of journalists and ensure that their voices are heard in matters of governance and policy," he stated.

He emphasized that he will actively engage in questioning government actions, representing journalists' concerns, and working tirelessly to address issues related to professional rights and social security for media personnel. Kalluri assured that he will carry out his responsibilities with integrity, diligence, and transparency, ensuring that the trust placed in him is fully honored.

The TJWA leadership described the appointment as a strategic step to strengthen its organizational framework and enhance its ability to serve journalists across Telangana. By appointing experienced professionals like Kalluri, the association aims to create a robust platform that not only safeguards journalists' welfare but also promotes accountability, transparency, and professional development within the media community. With this appointment, the TJWA continues its mission to empower journalists and reinforce its role as a vital advocate for their rights and interests throughout Telangana.

₹713 Crore Released Towards Pending Employee Bills



Hyderabad, December 31, 2025 (TPN Bureau): In a major relief to government employees, the Telangana government has released 713 crore towards pending bills payable for the month of December. The release was ordered by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, following which the Finance Department issued the necessary instructions and cleared the bills on Wednesday.

According to official sources, the released amount covers a wide range of long-pending employee-related dues, including gratuity payments, General Provident Fund (GPF) settlements, surrender leave encashment and various admissible advances. The move is expected to benefit thousands of serving and retired government employees across the state.

Officials said the decision reflects the government's commitment to addressing the financial concerns of employees in a systematic and timely manner. The Deputy Chief Minister had directed the Finance Department to prioritise the clearance of employee bills, particularly those that had been pending for several months, in view of the financial obligations faced by employees and pensioners.

It may be recalled that the Praja Government had earlier assured employee unions that at least 700 crore would be released every month towards the clearance of pending bills. In line with this assurance, the government has been steadily increasing monthly releases. By the end of June, an amount of 183 crore was released. Subsequently, from August onwards, the government ensured that a minimum of 700 crore was consistently released every month, signalling a more disciplined approach to bill clearance.

Employee unions have been repeatedly raising concerns over delays in the settlement of retirement benefits, provident fund withdrawals and leave encashment, stating that such delays were causing financial hardship to employees and their families. The latest release of 713 crore is seen as a positive step towards restoring confidence among employ-

ees and addressing long-standing grievances. Finance Department officials stated that efforts are being made to streamline the bill processing system to avoid accumulation of arrears in the future. Measures are also being taken to improve coordination between departments to ensure timely submission and verification of bills.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu has reiterated that the welfare of government employees remains a priority for the state government. He emphasised that regular and predictable release of funds is essential not only for employee morale but also for maintaining administrative efficiency.

The latest release, officials said, underscores the government's resolve to honour its commitments to employees while balancing overall fiscal management. With the consistent monthly releases now in place, employees and pensioners are hopeful that pending dues will be cleared in a phased and timely manner in the coming months.

Former MP V. Hanumantha Rao Slams Modi Government at Gandhi Bhavan Press Meet

Hyderabad, De-
cember 31 — TPN
Bureau:

Former Member of Parliament V. Hanumantha Rao on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led Union government, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has failed to protect the interests of Indians living abroad, particularly in the United States, and is undermining the country's constitutional and secular values.

Addressing a press meet at Gandhi Bhavan, Hanumantha Rao claimed that Indians residing in the US are facing serious injustice and harassment. He alleged that former US President Donald Trump was conspiring to send Indians back and exerting severe pressure even on Green Card holders. "When In-

dians with valid visas and Green Cards are being harassed, the Prime Minister of India must respond firmly. Why is Modi silent on the difficulties faced by Indians in America?" he questioned. The senior Congress leader accused the Prime Minister of attempting to trample upon the Constitution in the name of nationalism. He alleged that the Modi government was deliberately sidelining the legacy of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and was even attempting to dilute the global stature of Mahatma Gandhi. "If the world respects Mahatma Gandhi as the Father of the Nation, it is shameful that Modi is trying to insult and erase his legacy," Hanumantha Rao said.

Referring to recent Congress Working Committee (CWC) decisions,



he called upon party cadres to organise protests against the Modi

government in every village and at every mandal centre. He par-

ticularly opposed any move to change the name of the Mahatma

Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS),

urging Congress workers to strongly resist such attempts at the grassroots level.

Hanumantha Rao also raised concerns over the safety of minorities, alleging that incidents of violence were increasing under the BJP rule. "When people are being killed in the name of religion, what is the Modi government doing?" he asked, accusing the Centre of dividing the country under the guise of Hindutva politics.

Questioning the Prime Minister's commitment to backward classes, the former MP asked whether Modi had ever seriously spoken about the issues faced by Backward Classes (BCs) despite serving three terms as Prime Minister. He alleged that social justice was being sidelined in favour of divisive poli-

tics. On the state front, Hanumantha Rao expressed confidence that Telangana would emerge as the number one state in the country, citing the Congress government's welfare-oriented approach. He said the party would continue to fight both at the Centre and in the state to safeguard constitutional values, secularism and the rights of common people.

Concluding his remarks, he demanded that Prime Minister Modi clearly explain why the Union government was not making adequate efforts to protect Indians living in the United States. "The country deserves answers," he said, reiterating that the Congress would intensify its struggle against what he described as the anti-people policies of the BJP government.

Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy Counters Harish Rao on River Water Issues

Hyderabad, Decem-
ber 31 — TPN Bureau

Bhongir Member of Parliament Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Wednesday strongly countered senior BRS leader and former minister T. Harish Rao, accusing him of deliberately misleading the people of Telangana on river water-sharing issues for political mileage.

Speaking to the media, Kiran Kumar Reddy said Harish Rao was behaving as if he alone had complete knowledge of TMCs and cusecs, and was projecting himself as the ultimate authority on water management. He alleged that Harish Rao was trying to revive Telangana water sentiment with the sole aim of returning to power, despite the failures of the BRS government during its decade-long rule.

The Congress MP accused Harish Rao of spreading false propaganda by claiming that



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy was acting at the behest of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. "Creating a narrative that Revanth Reddy and Chandrababu Naidu are working together is nothing but a calculated lie to confuse people," he said.

Kiran Kumar Reddy pointed out that during the 10 years of BRS rule, not a single Krishna river project initiated by the earlier Congress government under Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy was completed in South Telangana. He questioned why KCR and Harish Rao agreed to accept

only 299 TMCs for Telangana out of 812 TMCs of Krishna river water, despite 69 percent of the river flowing through Telangana territory after state bifurcation.

"Why didn't Harish Rao stage a dharna before the Central Water Commission then? What did you achieve in ten years?" he asked, alleging that old contractors were sidelined and new tenders were floated only to earn commissions. He further alleged that the Kaleshwaram project was built on the Godavari instead of Tummidihatti purely for commissions.

The MP accused the BRS of now creating confusion among people over Godavari, Banakacharla, Palamuru-Rangareddy and other irrigation projects. He asserted that as per international water-sharing principles, Telangana should receive over 500 TMCs of Krishna water.

Referring to Banakacharla, he said the matter is scheduled for hearing in the Supreme Court on January 5. He alleged that BRS leaders were exploiting the issue by portraying it as a Telangana sentiment, even though no discussion on Banakacharla took place in the meeting with the Union Jal Shakti Minister. "I was present in that meeting as an MP. Harish Rao was not," he said.

He added that the meeting resolved issues related to telemetry systems, formation of a joint committee of officials from both states, repairs to the Srisaillam

project, and the location of river management boards, with the Godavari board in Telangana and the Krishna board in Andhra Pradesh.

Kiran Kumar Reddy reiterated that the Congress government has genuine commitment towards securing Telangana's rightful share of Krishna and Godavari waters. He said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is fighting for water allocation proportionate to Telangana's catchment area, while Congress MPs are also demanding national project status for Palamuru-Rangareddy and fulfillment of bifurcation promises in Parliament.

He concluded by stating that the people of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are closely watching what he termed as "BRS dramas" and would not be misled again on the issues of water, funds and employment.



Kavitha Demands Government Fulfil Promises Made to Telangana Movement Activists

Hyderabad, Decem-
ber 31, 2025 | TPN
Bureau:

Telangana Jagruthi president and former BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has intensified her campaign demanding that the state government fulfil promises made to activists of the Telangana statehood movement and other key sections of society. Her comments come amid widespread discussions about unfulfilled pledges since the formation of the state.

Addressing supporters during her ongoing Janam Baata (People's Path) yatra, Kavitha highlighted the sacrifices made by those who fought for the creation of Telangana. She said that thousands of activists endured hardships and even laid down their lives for statehood, and it was now the responsibility of the government to ensure that the commitments made to them were honoured. She questioned whether the ideals for which the martyrs had struggled had truly been fulfilled, particularly in terms of promised welfare support and recognition.

Kavitha emphasised that the government

must take concrete steps to address the needs of activists and their families, many of whom continue to await the benefits that had been assured during and after the agitation. She said that promises such as financial assistance, job support and other benefits had been reiterated during the movement, but their implementation had been slow or incomplete.

In addition to addressing the concerns of movement activists, Kavitha also criticised the state government for not fully implementing several welfare commitments made to women and other economically marginalised groups. She noted that various schemes and support measures had been announced as part of election manifestos and popular pledges, but many of these had not been operationalised within the expected time frame. She warned that continued delays would fuel frustration among citizens and could lead to renewed protests.

Kavitha's remarks reflect growing public scrutiny over the pace of welfare and development implementation

in Telangana. She called on the ruling dispensation to act swiftly and responsibly, saying that fulfilling promises was essential to maintaining public confidence and honouring the legacy of those who had struggled for statehood.

Her campaign has drawn attention from multiple quarters, with supporters urging the government to respond positively to the demands. Kavitha reiterated that her push for accountability was not just political posturing but a sincere effort to ensure justice for those who had contributed to the movement and to everyday citizens who had expectations based on official commitments.

As part of the ongoing mobilisation, she urged people across districts to join in raising their voices and holding the government accountable for keeping its promises. The Janam Baata yatra continues to traverse the state, with Kavitha meeting various community groups and activists to highlight issues related to employment, social justice, and welfare implementation.

BJP Objects to GHMC Delimitation Draft, Alleges Irregularities in Expansion Plan

Hyderabad, Decem-
ber 31, 2025 | TPN
Bureau:

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday raised strong objections to the state government's proposed GHMC delimitation draft, which seeks to expand the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits by merging surrounding municipalities and increasing the number of divisions from 150 to 300.

As part of its oversight of the delimitation process, members of the BJP Delimitation Monitoring Committee met the GHMC Commissioner and held detailed discussions on what the party described as serious flaws and inconsistencies in the draft proposal.

The BJP delegation included former MLA Dr N.V.S.S. Prabhakar, state general secretary Dr Goutham Rao, former mayor Banda Karthika Reddy, and party leaders Srikanth, Bhanu Prakash, Mahender, and Radha Dheeraj Reddy. The leaders said they highlighted multiple errors in the final list of 300

divisions released by GHMC officials.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Dr Prabhakar alleged that the delimitation draft lacked clarity on fundamental criteria. He pointed out that some divisions extend across two Assembly constituencies, while others span two revenue districts, raising serious administrative concerns. He questioned whether population, geographical area, or voter count was used as the basis for increasing the number of divisions, stating that officials failed to provide

clear answers.

The BJP leader further alleged that the delimitation maps did not appear to have been prepared by GHMC itself, but resembled proposals drafted by a private survey agency, allegedly operating from Darussalam and Gandhi Bhavan. He claimed that even GHMC officials appeared uncertain when questioned about the origins of the draft.

Dr Prabhakar also criticised the handling of public objections, stating that nearly 10,000 suggestions and objections were re-

ceived from citizens but were largely ignored. He alleged that only cosmetic changes, such as renaming of divisions, were made, while critical aspects like natural geographical boundaries, population balance, and voter proportionality were left unaddressed.

The BJP accused the government of expanding GHMC limits primarily to justify raising thousands of crores in foreign loans, rather than to improve civic governance. The party claimed the move was aimed at placing GHMC under political control

rather than serving public interest.

Citing recent incidents, including a child being injured in a dog bite, the BJP questioned the government's ability to provide basic civic administration even now, let alone after expanding GHMC to 300 divisions.

The party announced plans to launch a public movement against what it termed an anti-people and unscientific delimitation process, vowing to expose alleged irregularities and resist the GHMC expansion proposal.



Young India Skills University Reaches Key Milestone in Telangana Skill Development

Hyderabad , December 31, 2025:

Young India Skills University (YISU), a pioneering skill development institution in Telangana, has achieved a significant milestone in its efforts to empower youth with industry-aligned skills and enhance employment opportunities across the region.

Officials said that since its inception, YISU has successfully trained a large number of students and young professionals through its innovative curriculum designed to bridge the gap between academic

knowledge and practical industry requirements. The university focuses on equipping learners with vocational and technical expertise in high-demand sectors, contributing to the state's broader goal of creating a skilled workforce for the future.

A senior university representative said that YISU's curriculum is developed in collaboration with industry partners to ensure relevance and effectiveness. The courses range from information technology and digital services to advanced manufacturing, health-care, hospitality, and other emerging sectors.



Students undergo rigorous training programmes that combine classroom learning with real-world project exposure, internships and

hands-on experience.

The institution has also partnered with leading companies and employers, enabling students to gain direct ac-

cess to internships, apprenticeships and placement opportunities. These collaborations, the university said, have helped many

graduates secure jobs immediately after completing their training, while others have chosen to start entrepreneurial ventures in their chosen fields.

YISU officials highlighted that the university's training model emphasises not only technical knowledge but also soft skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving, which are essential for workplace success. Special focus is given to digital literacy and emerging technologies, preparing students to excel in a rapidly evolving job market.

The recent milestone

marks a major achievement for YISU in its mission to transform the skill ecosystem in Telangana and beyond. With increased enrolments and expanding industry linkages, the university aims to further scale up its programmes and reach more youth from rural and urban areas alike.

Leaders associated with Young India Skills University expressed gratitude to the Government of Telangana and industry stakeholders for their support in strengthening the institution's infrastructure, training facilities and placement networks.

They emphasised that such partnerships are crucial in realising the vision of a skilled and employable young workforce that can contribute effectively to the nation's growth.

As part of its future plans, YISU is expected to introduce additional specialised courses, international collaborations and advanced training modules to keep pace with global standards. The university reaffirmed its commitment to champion skill development and enable youth to become competitive in both national and international job markets.

Family Escapes Fire as Fridge Catches Flames in Qutbullapur

Qutbullapur, December 31, 2025:

A family in Papeddy Nagar, B Block, Road Number 4, had a narrow escape from a potentially devastating fire on Tuesday after a short circuit in their refrigerator caused flames to erupt inside their home. The incident, which took place in the evening, startled the entire household as the fire quickly spread to nearby household items.

According to local residents, the fire originated from the refrigerator, which suddenly ignited due to an electrical short circuit. The family, witnessing the sudden blaze, reacted promptly, removing the fridge from the house and attempting to control the flames. Their swift action ensured that the fire did not engulf the entire home, averting a serious accident.

Despite the intensity of the flames, no one was injured during the incident. However, household items and belongings stored near the refrigerator were completely damaged. Officials noted that the family was understandably shaken but grateful that the fire was contained without any loss of life.

Police from Jagadrigutta Police Station reached the scene shortly after the incident was reported. Officers registered a case of accidental fire and have launched a formal investigation to determine the exact cause and the extent of the property damage. Early reports indicate that the fire was limited to the refrigerator and nearby items, and there were no signs of negligence beyond the short circuit.

Fire safety experts said that electrical appliances such as refrigerators, air conditioners, and water heaters are common sources of domestic fires if not maintained properly. Short circuits, faulty wiring, or overloading electrical outlets can trigger sudden fires, posing a significant risk to families. Authorities have therefore urged residents to exercise caution, including regularly inspecting appliances, ensuring proper grounding, and avoiding overloading circuits.



The incident has served as a reminder of the importance of vigilance in household safety. Quick thinking and timely action by the family prevented what could have escalated into a severe disaster. Police officials confirmed that while property damage was incurred, the priority remained ensuring the safety of all family members.

Investigators continue to examine the site to determine whether there were any underlying issues in the electrical wiring of the house that may have contributed to the short circuit. Meanwhile, local authorities are advising residents in Qutbullapur and surrounding areas to stay alert and implement preventive measures to avoid similar accidents.

The incident underscores how rapid response and calm under pressure can save lives during household emergencies, even when flames erupt suddenly and unexpectedly.

Hyderabad to Get Daily Drinking Water Supply by End of 2027 Under Godavari Phase 2 and Phase 3 Projects

Hyderabad: The Greater Hyderabad region is set to achieve a major breakthrough in water supply with plans underway to provide every household with daily drinking water by the end of 2027. The ambitious initiative hinges on the accelerated implementation of the Godavari Drinking Water Supply Scheme Phases 2 and 3, aimed at addressing the city's growing water demand and securing long term water sustainability. Currently, Hyderabad's water needs are met from multiple sources, including the Krishna, Godavari, Singur and Manjeera rivers, with supplies often delivered only every other day due to limited capacity. To change this, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) has initiated work on the next

stages of the Godavari water project, which envisages bringing an additional 20 thousand million cubic feet (TMC) of water from the Godavari basin to the city.

The Rs 7,360 crore project, recently inaugurated by Telangana's Chief Minister, aims to significantly boost Hyderabad's potable water availability. Once completed, the scheme will not only help meet the city's projected demand of 835 million litres per day (MLD) by 2027, but also lay the groundwork for handling future growth, with projections estimating needs to reach 1,114 MLD by 2047. Under the plans, an extensive network of infrastructure will be constructed, including master balancing reservoirs, water treatment facilities and a major pipeline system. The additional Godavari water



will also support the rejuvenation of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar reservoirs and the Musi River, long plagued by pollution and declining water levels.

Officials clarified that out of the 20 TMC of Godavari water allocated for these phases, the majority will go toward potable water supply, with a portion dedicated to replenishing key water bodies to aid environmental restoration. This

is part of a broader master plan designed to eventually deliver 24/7 water supply to the entire Greater Hyderabad area. The water board is also simultaneously advancing wastewater treatment efforts. Projects under the AMRUT 2.0 programme are underway to expand sewage treatment capacity, with 39 treatment plants capable of handling 972 MLD expected to be operational by 2026. These

efforts aim to protect local water bodies from contamination and improve overall water quality in the region.

As Hyderabad braces for further urban expansion and climate related water challenges, the successful implementation of these schemes could transform the city's water landscape and improve quality of life for millions of residents by the close of 2027.

Residents Suffocate as Fire Breaks Out in Dundigal Dumping Yard

Hyderabad, December 31, 2025:

Residents of Dundigal Tanda were left struggling for breath on Tuesday after a sudden fire broke out at the Dundigal dumping yard, filling the surrounding area with thick, black smoke. The blaze, reportedly caused by chemical and plastic waste, created severe air pollution, affecting local communities and disrupting traffic. According to eyewitnesses, the fire started in accumulated garbage, including chemical waste brought in from several industrial units in Kajipalli. The flames quickly spread, and the dense smoke enveloped

nearby residential areas. Residents, particularly children and the elderly, experienced breathing difficulties due to the hazardous fumes. Drivers in the vicinity also faced difficulties navigating the roads as visibility dropped significantly. Local residents expressed frustration over the recurring nature of such incidents at the dumping yard. "These fires happen frequently, yet the authorities fail to take effective action. Every time it happens, our health and safety are at risk," said one resident. They also called for strict action against the companies responsible for trans-

porting hazardous chemical waste to the site. The community claimed that despite filing complaints with Pollution Control Board (PCB) officials over the past three months, no meaningful action has been taken. Residents warned that if authorities did not respond by tomorrow, they would collectively stage a protest on the streets, demonstrating their determination to hold responsible parties accountable. The Dundigal dumping yard has long been criticized for poor waste management practices. The mixing of chemical and plastic wastes accelerates com-

bustion and increases the risk of hazardous fires, according to environmental experts. Repeated incidents have raised concerns about the health impacts on nearby populations and the need for stricter monitoring of industrial waste disposal.

Residents demanded that municipal authorities and PCB officials immediately take action against those responsible for dumping chemical waste and igniting the fire. They emphasized that proactive measures, regular inspections, and strict enforcement of environmental regulations are crucial to prevent such

incidents in the future.

Authorities have not yet released an official statement regarding the cause of the fire or potential enforcement actions. Meanwhile, the residents of Dundigal Tanda continue to call for urgent intervention to ensure the safety of the community and prevent further environmental hazards.

The incident highlights ongoing challenges in urban waste management, particularly in areas receiving industrial chemical waste, and underscores the need for better regulation, enforcement, and public safety measures.

BTech Final-Year Student Dies in Road Accident While Going for Exam

Hyderabad, December 31, 2025:

A tragic road accident in the Abdullapurmet area of Hyderabad claimed the life of a BTech final-year student and left several others injured on Tuesday morning, police said. The young woman was on her way to sit for an examination when the collision occurred, leaving her family, classmates, and the local community in shock.

According to authorities, the accident took place near Batasimgaram, under the jurisdiction of the Abdullapurmet Police Station, at around 9:40 am. The victim, identified as Hamsalekha (22), a final-year engineering student at Brilliant Engineering College, was travelling on a motorcycle with friends to reach the exam centre in Kothaguda when the incident occurred. Police said that as the

motorcycle attempted to overtake a lorry on the service road, it collided with another two-wheeler coming from the opposite direction. The impact caused Hamsalekha and her companions to fall onto the road. A passing lorry then ran over Hamsalekha, killing her instantly. Several others who were with her on two different bikes — including classmates Deepthi, Sai Ganesh, and Bhanu Prakash — sustained varying degrees of injuries. Local residents rushed to a nearby hospital, while police reached the scene shortly after being alerted. The police have regis-

tered a case and taken the lorry driver into custody as part of the ongoing investigation into the circumstances that led to the collision. Officials stressed that reckless overtaking and negligent driving are common causes of such deadly accidents. The tragic loss has left Hamsalekha's family and friends devastated, especially as she was preparing to complete her engineering degree and pursue her career ambitions. Community members urged greater road safety awareness and stricter enforcement of traffic rules to prevent similar incidents in the future.



GHMC Records Major Gains in Urban Infrastructure, Sanitation and Digital Governance in 2025

TPN Bureau | Dec 31 | The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has reported significant progress across civic administration, infrastructure development, public health and digital governance during 2025, reaffirming its focus on clean, sustainable and citizen-centric urban management. In sanitation and solid waste management, GHMC achieved 6th rank in the Swachh Survekshan 2025, secured a 7-Star Garbage Free City rating and received Water+ ODF re-certification. Major infrastructure additions included the commissioning of a 24MW RDF-based Waste-to-Energy Plant (Phase-II) and a 1,000 TPD RDF manufacturing unit at Jawaharnagar. A 300 TPD bio-methanation plant is currently under construction, further strengthening waste processing capacity. Enforcement efforts resulted in over 10,700 challans being issued, while sanitation-related grievance redressal exceeded 99 percent. To improve city cleanliness, GHMC also launched a Mega Special Sanitation Drive focusing on bulk garbage removal, legacy waste clearance and abandoned vehicle disposal. Environmental sus-



tainability remained a priority, with GHMC reporting a steady reduction in PM10 air pollution levels from 110 µg/m³ in 2017-18 to 81 µg/m³ in 2024-25. Sustainable mobility initiatives included the implementation of 400 adaptive traffic signals under the Intelligent Traffic Management System and the establishment of 150 electric vehicle charging stations across TGSRTC depots in coordination with the state energy department. Public health enforcement intensified during the year, with nearly

9,700 food safety inspections conducted across the city. Penalties were imposed for violations, while awareness programmes and training sessions were carried out extensively. The Standing Committee also sanctioned funds for setting up a Basic Food Testing Laboratory at KPHB Colony to strengthen food safety monitoring. On the infrastructure front, GHMC undertook nearly 10,000 engineering works during FY 2025-26 at an estimated cost of over 2,700 crore. These included large-

scale road works, storm water drainage projects and nala development programmes aimed at flood mitigation. Key traffic infrastructure projects such as the PJR Flyover, Falaknuma Road Over Bridge and Aramgarh Flyover were completed and opened to the public, easing congestion in critical corridors. Digital governance and revenue augmentation recorded notable gains. Drone-based GIS mapping covered 650 square kilometres, identifying more than one lakh new and under-assessed properties. Prop-

erty tax collections between April and December 2025 crossed 1,500 crore, reflecting an 8 percent increase compared to the previous year. Highlighting urban biodiversity efforts, GHMC achieved its target of planting 25 lakh saplings, developed 40 new parks and expanded greenery along medians and flyovers. GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan said citizen participation remains crucial, noting that collective responsibility is key to building a cleaner, healthier and better-managed Hyderabad.

Minister Seethakka Leads Tributes at Poet Ande Sri's Funeral



TPN Bureau | Nov 11 | Adilabad District Collector Rajarshi Shah on Wednesday emphasised that every citizen must have a clear understanding of the Indian Constitution, stating that the rights and protections enjoyed by people from all sections of society are guaranteed through it. The Collector was speaking at a programme organised at Bokkalaguda in Adilabad district on the occasion of Civil Rights Day. He was accorded a traditional welcome by local residents with drum beats, followed by special prayers to the village deity. Later, Rajarshi Shah, along with officials, paid floral tributes to the portrait of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Addressing the gathering, the District Collector said awareness of the Constitution is essential for building an inclusive and just society. He noted that constitutional values ensure equality, dignity and justice for all citizens, irrespective of caste, creed or gender. He urged people to respect the law and

work with a sense of social responsibility. Highlighting the importance of education, Rajarshi Shah said education brings dignity and empowerment. He advised students to cultivate good habits from an early age and strive for discipline and character. He also appealed to parents to give equal importance to the education and future of girl children, stating that no restrictions should be imposed on them and that they should be encouraged to achieve their full potential. Expressing concern over the growing menace of alcohol and substance abuse, the Collector said many youths were being led astray due to addiction. He informed that the district administration has been conducting awareness programmes to educate people about the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs. He called upon the community to cooperate with authorities in preventing substance abuse and safeguarding the younger generation. The Collector further appealed to citizens to give up harmful habits such as

consuming gutkha and other cancer-causing products. He urged people to focus on their health and take positive resolutions with the beginning of the new year, adopting a lifestyle that promotes physical and mental well-being. As part of the programme, walking sticks and monkey caps were distributed to elderly persons, symbolising care and respect for senior citizens. Several officials and dignitaries attended the event, including SC Corporation Executive Director Manohar, Urban Tahsildar Srinivas, Sub-Inspector Ashok, MEO Somayya, District Vigilance Monitoring Committee members Shashikanth and Thota Vijay, Senior Citizens Association president Devidas, revenue staff Prakash, along with colony residents, officials, teachers, students and social activists. The programme concluded with a call for collective effort to uphold constitutional values and contribute positively to society through service and responsible citizenship.

Woman Dies After Fatal Fall While Fleeing Fear of Monkey Attack in Karimnagar

TPN Bureau | Dec 31 | A tragic incident was reported in Karimnagar district on Wednesday when a woman lost her life after falling from height while attempting to escape from a group of monkeys, police and local sources said. According to the initial account, the woman, identified as a resident of Mallapur village, was walking near her home when a group of monkeys unexpectedly approached her. Startled and frightened by their aggressive behaviour, she tried to run away in panic. In the process, she reportedly slipped and fell from a raised structure, sustaining serious injuries. Locals immediately rushed to help and took her to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared her brought-dead. The exact circumstances surrounding the incident, including the height from which she fell, are being investigated by police officials. Residents of the vil-

lage expressed shock and grief over the unusual and unfortunate sequence of events. Many said that the area has been witnessing increasing monkey activity, causing distress to people, especially women, children and the elderly. Some locals claimed that wild monkeys have been entering residential areas frequently in recent weeks, creating fear among residents who feel vulnerable while moving outdoors. Police officials confirmed that a case has been registered and that preliminary enquiries are underway to establish the full details of the incident. Authorities said they are recording statements from eyewitnesses and family members to piece together the exact sequence of events leading to the fatal fall. Officials also acknowledged that human-animal conflict involving monkeys has been on the rise in several parts of the district,



as urban expansion and habitat encroachment push animals closer to residential localities. Municipal and forest department representatives said they have received numerous complaints about nuisance caused by monkeys, including incidents of foraging in homes and public spaces. In response to recurring issues, local author-

ities have been exploring measures to control monkey populations and reduce risky encounters between humans and animals. Proposed steps include intensified awareness campaigns, installation of deterrent systems in identified hotspots, and coordinated drives to manage monkey movement. The tragic death has reignited calls from residents for urgent ac-

tion to address the human-wildlife conflict, with many urging both forest officials and civic authorities to implement long-term solutions to prevent similar incidents in the future. Police said a full report will be submitted once the investigation is complete, and appealed to the public to remain cautious when navigating areas prone to wild animal presence.

Jangaon Farmer Appeals to Collector Over Broken Transformer; Immediate Action Ordered

TPN Bureau | Dec 31 | A farmer in Jangaon district received swift relief after appealing directly to the District Collector regarding a broken electricity transformer affecting his farmland. The incident has drawn attention to infrastructure challenges faced by farmers in the region. The farmer, Azmeera Ravi from Erragolla Pahad village, had been struggling for over a month as the transformer supplying power to his fields malfunctioned. With irrigation disrupted, his crops faced potential damage,

and repeated requests to the electricity department had gone unanswered. On Wednesday, Ravi approached Collector Rizwan Basha Shaik during an official visit, pleading for immediate intervention. In a dramatic appeal, he knelt and held the collector's feet, emphasizing the urgency of restoring electricity for irrigation. Moved by the farmer's situation, Collector Shaik directed officials to repair the transformer immediately and ensure that similar problems are resolved promptly in the future.



He stressed the importance of proactive monitoring and timely action to prevent hardships for farmers due to infrastructural lapses. The incident has sparked local discussions about administra-

tive responsiveness and rural infrastructure maintenance. Authorities have assured that the transformer will be operational soon and that measures will be taken to support farmers and prevent such is-

sues from recurring. This episode highlights both the resilience of farmers in pursuing their rights and the role of effective governance in addressing critical challenges in rural areas.

“For the People, On the Path of Progress”: Minister Ponguleti Honors Newly Elected Pallettu Leaders



Khammam TPN Bureau | Dec 31 | Telangana Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy felicitated newly elected sarpanches, deputy sarpanches, and ward members of the Palleru constituency at a grand ceremony held at S.R. Gardens on Vaira Road, Khammam. The event celebrated the overwhelming public mandate in the local body elections and recognized leaders from the Congress party and allied groups. Addressing the gathering, Minister Ponguleti emphasized that the victory reflects strong public support but urged elected leaders to remain humble and accountable. “The winners must serve the people's needs, but even those narrowly defeated are, in my eyes, sarpanches,” he said. He stressed the importance of safeguarding party workers and maintaining a people-centric approach in governance. Highlighting

development initiatives, the minister announced the construction of Indiramma houses across the state with a total allocation of Rs 22,500 crore, including 3,500 homes for the Palleru constituency in the first phase. He noted that over the past two years, the government has implemented numerous infrastructure projects such as CC roads, BT roads, drainage systems, and agricultural connectivity, aiming to bring visible development to every village. The minister also cited schemes like free rice distribution and public transportation benefits for women as milestones in inclusive governance. Ponguleti also warned opposition parties against complacency, stating, “The previous government wasted time with rhetoric and inaction. Power may have shifted, but those who act arrogantly will face consequences. Our government is not partisan, but we will

not tolerate obstruction.” He encouraged leaders to maintain close contact with constituents and ensure that welfare programs reach every household. MP Raghuram Reddy assured full cooperation in implementing development projects and urged elected sarpanches to uphold public trust. He highlighted the importance of ensuring that government schemes benefit the poorest and committed to working with the minister for the holistic development of every village. During the visit to Kalluru mandal, Minister Ponguleti, along with the District Collector Anudeep Durishetti and local MLA Matta Raghayya Dayanand, laid the foundation for BT road projects worth approximately Rs 15 crore. He announced that the second phase of Indiramma house allocations would begin in April, with continuous funding support to beneficiaries for construction.



IN ITS 12TH
YEAR, MODI
GOVERNMENT
SET NEW
BENCHMARKS

AKHILESH MISHRA

In Its Twelfth Year, The Modi Government Continues To Defy Political Fatigue

As 2025 draws to a close, Prime Minister Narendra Modi enters his twelfth year in office — a rarity in modern democracies. Typically, such longevity brings caution, risk aversion, and an obsession with legacy preservation. Governments that last this long often turn defensive, managing decline rather than pursuing new ambition.

The Modi government, however, has charted a markedly different course. From the outset in 2014, the administration signalled its intent to pursue structural transformation rather than incremental change. The Jan Dhan Yojana fundamentally altered India's financial landscape by bringing millions of previously unbanked citizens into the formal system. This was not merely a welfare initiative but the backbone for future reforms such as direct benefit transfers and subsidy rationalisation.

Digital India followed, redefining governance delivery, citizen services, and business operations. Startup India further reinforced this shift by encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, moving India's youth from job-seeking to job-creating mindsets. In 2017, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) marked one of the most ambitious economic reforms since Independence, unifying the national market and strengthening cooperative federalism, despite early disruptions.

Healthcare reform through Ayushman Bharat placed India at the forefront of public health insurance coverage, offering protection to millions of vulnerable families. Infrastructure expansion — roads, railways, ports, and digital connectivity — has remained a constant theme, reflecting a long-term vision of capacity building rather than short-term populism.

What sets this prolonged tenure apart is the government's sustained appetite for politically risky decisions. Whether applauded or criticised, the administration has consistently chosen decisiveness over inertia. The ability to maintain electoral relevance while pushing disruptive reforms underscores a leadership model built on narrative clarity and political conviction.

As the Modi government enters its twelfth year, the central question is no longer about endurance but impact. History will debate outcomes, but it cannot deny that this administration refused to slow down when convention suggested it should.

A Year Of Deferred Accountability And The Opposition's Missed Moment

Weddings are supposed to be celebrations of love, commitment, and the beginning of a shared life. But in recent times, particularly in India, they have become something else entirely: elaborate displays of wealth, status, and social performance. The recent trend highlights how extravagant celebrations may actually distract from the very purpose of marriage, turning a sacred rite of passage into a spectacle consumed by optics rather than meaning.

Two high-profile weddings in Delhi, reportedly costing over ₹150 crore each, have become symbols of what some describe as "festival-scale nuptials" that outshine even the most lavish corporate events. These weddings, featuring stadium concerts and celebrity performers, dominate social media feeds and set new benchmarks for grandeur. But what does it say about society when people feel compelled to hire arenas and celebrities to mark an intimate personal union?

There's a distinct cultural shift embedded in these trends. Weddings once symbolised a transition from one stage of life to another — much like birth and death. They were occasions for family, community, and affection, marked by tradition, blessing, and restraint. Today, they have increasingly become performances — meticulously curated events meant to generate social media attention and public approval. The social pressure isn't unique to the wealthy elite; the desire to "keep up" has trickled into middle-class aspirations as well. Average wedding spending has climbed signif-

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icantly, with families routinely shelling out ₹30-35 lakh on basic ceremonies, and luxury additions pushing costs even higher.

There is also a booming wedding industry behind all this, projected to generate more than ₹6.5 lakh crore in 2025 alone. These figures reflect not only rising incomes but also how deeply weddings are woven into cultural and economic life. The market now includes destination venue packages, high-end entertainment, culinary experiences, and even wedding insurance — a sign of financial risks tied to these expensive events.

But the moral of the story is not

just about inflated bills; it's about misplaced priorities. When weddings become about lavish receptions, celebrity performances, exotic destinations, and designer outfits, the fundamental purpose of marriage can get lost. The messy but real work of building a life together, facing challenges, and nurturing emotional bonds isn't showcased in a two-day celebration. In fact, when a wedding becomes overwhelmingly spectacular, the inevitable mundanity of married life can feel underwhelming — and that's precisely the irony critics point out.

Another troubling aspect is the social and economic pressure

these expectations create. Many families, anxious to present an image of success, take on debt or redirect funds that might otherwise support education, housing, or long-term financial security. Many young couples express frustration about societal expectations, advocating for smaller, simpler ceremonies that focus on personal values rather than social performance. These voices reveal a growing sentiment that true fulfilment doesn't come from ornate trousseaus or large guest lists, but from meaningful shared experiences and financial prudence.

A wedding should be joyous, but it should not be a spectacle that

consumes resources far beyond what is purposeful or sustainable. At its heart, marriage is about partnership — resilience, compromise, understanding, and growth. Extravagance can create dazzling memories, but it is not a guarantee of a successful partnership. Recognising this distinction is key to reclaiming the essence of what weddings, and marriage itself, truly signify.

In a world where the wedding industry grows bigger every year, perhaps the bigger challenge is not the glitz, but reminding ourselves what we are celebrating — two lives coming together, not a contest of consumption.

2025 Was The Year Indian Women Redefined Sporting Excellence

The year 2025 marked a decisive turning point for Indian women's sports — not through isolated triumphs, but through sustained excellence across disciplines. It was a year when women athletes moved beyond symbolic representation to redefine performance, resilience, and ambition.

Cricket naturally commanded attention, but it did not stand alone. From Tambalhatti village in Andhra Pradesh emerged T C Deepika, captain of India's Blind Women's Cricket Team, who led her side to a historic T20 World Cup title. Her journey from poverty to international glory reflected the transformative power of sport when talent meets opportunity.

Weeks earlier, Harmanpreet Kaur's Indian women's cricket team clinched its first major ICC title, finally converting years of near misses into long-awaited success. The victory was not just about silverware but recognition after decades of living in the shadow of men's cricket.

Beyond cricket, athletes shattered physical and social barriers. Sheetal Devi, an armless archer from Jammu and Kashmir, became a Para World Champion, redefining what sporting excellence looks like. In chess, 19-year-old Divya Deshmukh defeated legend Koneru Humpy to win the Women's Chess World Cup, symbolising both generational transition and continuity.

Olympic sports also offered hope. Shooting emerged as a strength, with young talents like Suruchi Phogat signalling a strong future. Wrestling and boxing saw promise through athletes such as Antim Panghal and Preeti Pawar. In football, while the men's game struggled, India's women's Under-17, Under-20, and senior teams all qualified for AFC Asian Cups — a quiet but powerful indicator of grassroots growth.

In 2025, Indian women did more than win medals. They changed expectations. And that shift may prove to be their most lasting victory.

Cabinet Freezes ₹87,695-Crore AGR Dues In Major Relief For Vodafone Idea



In a major policy intervention, the Union Cabinet has approved a relief package for Vodafone Idea by freezing 87,695 crore of its adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues as of December 31. The decision offers breathing space to the debt-hit telecom operator and aims to maintain competition in India's telecom sector.

Under the decision, the frozen dues will not require immediate payment and will instead be repaid over a 10-year period from FY32 to FY41. The Department of Telecommunications will reassess the frozen amount at a later stage, potentially reducing Vodafone Idea's long-term burden. However, AGR liabilities related to FY18 and FY19 remain unchanged and must be paid between FY26 and FY31.

The move is intended to protect the government's nearly 49 per cent stake in Vodafone Idea, ensure stability in the telecom sector, and safeguard services for around 20 crore subscribers. Despite the relief, Vodafone Idea shares fell sharply, reflecting investor concerns over the company's financial health and execution challenges.

Experts say the decision provides temporary relief but does not eliminate structural issues facing Vodafone Idea, including high debt, intense competition, and the need for fresh capital infusion. The coming years will be critical in determining whether the company can turn around its fortunes.

Faridabad Horror: Woman Gang-Raped In Moving Van For Hours, Brutal Crime Shocks Nation

A horrifying case of sexual violence has shaken the country after a 28-year-old woman was gang-raped inside a moving van in Faridabad for more than two hours before being thrown onto the road. The brutal incident occurred on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday and has once again highlighted serious concerns over women's safety in urban India.

According to police, the woman was waiting for a vehicle to return home late at night when two men offered her a lift in a van, claiming they would drop her safely. Instead, the vehicle was driven towards Gurgaon Road, where the accused allegedly raped her repeatedly for nearly two and a half hours. Despite her resistance and repeated pleas, the men continued the assault and threatened her with harm.

Around 3 am, the accused threw the woman out of the moving van near Raja Chowk in SGM Nagar. She suffered severe facial injuries and was bleeding heavily when she was found. The woman managed to contact her sister during the ordeal, repeatedly calling for help. Her family rushed to the spot and immediately admitted her to a hospital, where doctors treated her critical injuries and applied 10 to 12 stitches to her face.

The victim, who is married and has three children, is currently in shock and recovering. Her statement has not yet been recorded due to her fragile mental and physical condition. Her sister informed police that the woman had earlier mentioned a domestic dispute and had planned to stay with a friend for a few hours before returning home.

Police have arrested both accused and recovered the van used in the crime. Authorities say a detailed investigation is underway and strict action will be taken. The case has sparked widespread outrage and renewed calls for stronger policing, faster trials, and stricter punishment for sexual crimes. Activists argue that such incidents underline the urgent need for systemic reforms to ensure women's safety, especially during night hours.



New Year's Eve Security Alert As Explosives-Laden Car Seized In Rajasthan

A major security scare was averted on New Year's Eve after Rajasthan Police seized a car loaded with illegal explosive material in Tonk district. The explosives-laden vehicle, a Maruti Ciaz, was found carrying nearly 150 kg of ammonium nitrate concealed inside bags of urea fertiliser, along with explosive cartridges and safety fuse wires.

Police officials said the seizure was made following a specific intelligence tip-off. The car was intercepted in the Baroni police station area, and two accused — Surendra Mochi and Surendra Patwa — were arrested on the spot. Apart from ammonium nitrate, the vehicle contained around 200 explosive cartridges and nearly 1,100 metres of fuse wire, indicating the material could have been used for large-scale illegal or dangerous activities.

According to investigators, the explosives were being transported from Bundi to Tonk, possibly for illegal mining operations. However, officials have not ruled out other possibilities, including criminal or terror-related use. "We are probing all angles. Given the quantity and nature of the explosives, this was a serious threat," said DSP Mrityunjay Mishra.

The seizure comes in the backdrop of heightened security concerns following a recent blast near Delhi's Red Fort, where ammonium nitrate was used in an improvised explosive device. That incident had resulted in multiple casualties, making the Tonk seizure particularly alarming.

Ammonium nitrate is a commonly used fertiliser but has been repeatedly misused in terror attacks worldwide due to its high explosive potential when improperly handled. Authorities have intensified checks across Rajasthan to prevent illegal transport and storage of such materials, especially during the festive season.



Congress Goes Solo With Massive 528-Seat Push In Maharashtra Civic Polls



The Congress has made a bold political move by deciding to contest 528 seats across major municipal corporations in Maharashtra for the January 15 civic body elections. This marks the party's largest solo civic contest in the state since 1999 and signals a decisive break from its traditional allies in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

The decision comes amid a complete breakdown of the alliance with Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar's NCP faction. Congress will contest 167 seats in Mumbai, 101 in Thane, 100 each in Pune and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, and 60 in Pimpri-Chinchwad. It will also go solo in several other cities, including Nagpur, Akola, Amravati, and Chandrapur.

Political observers say the move reflects Congress's attempt to reassert its independent organisational strength after years of alliance politics. The recent re-

union of the Thackeray cousins — Uddhav and Raj Thackeray — further complicated seat-sharing talks, pushing Congress to adopt a "lone-wolf" strategy.

While the move carries risks of vote fragmentation, Congress leaders believe fighting independently will help rebuild the party at the grassroots level. The civic polls are seen as a crucial test ahead of future assembly and parliamentary elections, making this decision strategically significant.

Bangladesh Student Leader Murder Case Takes Dramatic Turn As Prime Accused Claims He Is In Dubai



The murder case of Bangladeshi student leader Osman Hadi has taken a dramatic and controversial turn after the prime accused, Faisal Karim Masud, publicly denied any involvement and claimed he is currently in Dubai. His statement directly contradicts earlier claims by Bangladeshi authorities, who had suggested that Masud was in India following the killing. A viral video message attributed to Masud has reignited debate and raised fresh questions about the investigation.

In the video, Masud categorically denied killing Osman Hadi and alleged that the case against him was fabricated. He claimed that he was forced to flee Bangladesh due to false accusations and harassment of his family. According to Masud, despite holding a valid five-year multiple-entry visa for Dubai, leaving the country was extremely difficult because of the pressure he was facing. He further alleged that his family members, who he claims are innocent, are being harassed and tortured by authorities.

Masud acknowledged that he had visited Osman Hadi's office prior to the murder but insisted that their relationship was strictly professional. He stated that he had gone to Hadi regarding a job opportunity and had paid him 500,000 taka as an advance after being assured of assistance. Masud also admitted to donating money to Hadi's programmes on multiple occasions, including shortly before the murder. However, he maintained that these financial interactions were legitimate and not connected to any violent act.

In a significant allegation, Masud accused Jamaat-linked elements of orchestrating the murder. He described Hadi as a "product of Jamaat" and claimed that internal political rivalries within the group led to his killing. Masud strongly denied that he or his younger brother were involved and said they were deliberately framed to divert attention from the real perpetrators.

The emergence of Masud's alleged UAE visa photo on social media has added another layer of complexity to the case. While the authenticity of the video and documents has not been independently verified, the claims have triggered public debate and criticism of the investigation process. The case has now evolved into a politically sensitive matter, highlighting deep divisions within Bangladesh's student politics and raising concerns over cross-border narratives involving India.

Indian-Origin Adviser Honoured In US Amid Controversy Over India–Pakistan Ceasefire Claims



Credit: @robertcobrien on X

Ranjit “Ricky” Singh Gill, an Indian-origin adviser in the Trump administration, has drawn attention after receiving the US National Security Council’s Distinguished Action Award for his role in internal coordination and diplomatic outreach related to the India–Pakistan ceasefire following Operation Sindoor.

The recognition was presented by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and is among the highest internal honours within the US national security establishment. American media reports said Gill was acknowledged for his contribution to shaping the ceasefire framework during 2025.

However, the award has stirred controversy in India, as New Delhi has repeatedly rejected claims of US mediation in the India–Pakistan truce. Since May 10, President Donald Trump has publicly claimed more than 70 times that Washington brokered a “full and immediate” ceasefire between the two countries. Indian officials have categorically denied these assertions, maintaining that the understanding was

reached through direct military-to-military communication.

Gill’s recognition does not explicitly claim mediation, but the timing and wording have fuelled speculation. Indian officials remain cautious, noting that internal US coordination does not equate to mediation accepted or requested by India.

Gill’s background reflects a long career in US public service. Born in New Jersey to Indian-origin parents, he studied at Princeton University and UC Berkeley. He previously served in the first Trump administration as Director for Russia and European Energy Security at the NSC and now oversees South and Central Asia portfolios, including India and Pakistan.

The episode underscores the gap between US political messaging and India’s diplomatic position. While Washington may view its behind-the-scenes engagement as stabilising, India remains firm that its decisions during Operation Sindoor were sovereign and independent.

UAE Withdraws Forces From Yemen As Rift With Saudi Arabia Deepens



The United Arab Emirates has announced the withdrawal of its remaining forces from Yemen, marking a significant escalation in tensions between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. The decision followed Saudi-led coalition airstrikes on the southern Yemeni port city of Mukalla, which Saudi Arabia said targeted a UAE-linked weapons shipment.

The airstrike has exposed growing fractures within the coalition that has been fighting Yemen’s civil war since 2015. Saudi Arabia accused the UAE of backing the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a separatist group seeking autonomy in southern Yemen, and of encouraging the group to push towards

Saudi borders — a move Riyadh described as a national security “red line”.

The UAE’s withdrawal signals a strategic recalibration. While Abu Dhabi has gradually reduced its military presence in Yemen over recent years, the latest decision underscores the widening divergence between the two Gulf powers over Yemen’s future.

The development raises concerns about further instability in Yemen, where years of conflict have already triggered one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises. Analysts warn that fractures within the coalition could embolden armed groups and complicate peace efforts.

India Rejects China’s Mediation Claims, Reasserts No Third-Party Role In India–Pakistan Truce



India has firmly rejected China’s claim that it played a mediating role in brokering peace between India and Pakistan following the military confrontation earlier this year. The clarification came after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi echoed US President Donald Trump’s repeated assertions that external powers helped facilitate a ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed neighbours after Operation Sindoor.

Sources in the Indian government reiterated New Delhi’s long-standing

and unambiguous position: there was no third-party intervention of any kind. According to Indian officials, the cessation of hostilities occurred only after Pakistan’s Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) formally reached out to his Indian counterpart requesting a truce. The communication was handled strictly through established military channels, consistent with bilateral protocols.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infra-

structure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians. The operation marked a sharp escalation in tensions, prompting intense international attention. However, New Delhi has consistently maintained that its actions and decisions were sovereign and not influenced by external pressure.

Chinese claims of mediation have been viewed in New Delhi as an attempt by Beijing to pro-

ject itself as a global peacemaker amid multiple international conflicts. Indian officials argue that such statements distort the facts and undermine India’s diplomatic stance, which rejects third-party involvement in bilateral disputes with Pakistan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also addressed Parliament on the issue, stating clearly that no world leader asked India to halt Operation Sindoor. The government’s pushback reflects broader concerns about interna-

tional narratives that could dilute India’s strategic autonomy or legitimise Pakistan’s attempts to internationalise bilateral disputes.

The episode highlights growing geopolitical competition, with major powers seeking diplomatic credit in regional conflicts. For India, countering such claims is not merely about historical accuracy but about safeguarding a core foreign policy principle that disputes with Pakistan must be resolved bilaterally, without mediation.

Tatiana Schlossberg, Granddaughter Of John F Kennedy, Dies At 35 After Leukemia Battle

Tatiana Schlossberg, the granddaughter of former US President John F Kennedy, has died at the age of 35, just a month after publicly revealing her diagnosis with a rare form of leukemia. Her passing was announced by the John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

Schlossberg was the daughter of Caroline Kennedy, the US ambassador to Australia, and was known for her work in journalism and environmental advocacy.



Her death has prompted tributes from political leaders, public institutions, and admirers of the Kennedy family legacy.

In November, Schlossberg had spoken openly about her illness, drawing attention to the challenges of cancer treatment and the importance of medical research. Her passing adds another poignant chapter to the Kennedy family’s long history marked by both public service and personal tragedy.

Iran Sees Third Day Of Protests As Cost-Of-Living Crisis Intensifies

Iran has witnessed a third consecutive day of protests as public anger over soaring living costs and currency collapse spills onto the streets. Demonstrations, which began with shopkeepers and bazaar merchants in Tehran, have spread to universities and other urban centres.

Iran’s currency, the rial, has lost nearly half its value against the US dollar in 2025, hitting a record low of 1.4 million rials per dollar. Inflation has surged to over 42 per cent, severely eroding purchasing power and fuelling widespread discontent.

Videos verified by international media show protesters chanting slogans critical of the Islamic Republic, including references to the pre-revolution monarchy. State media has acknowledged protests but downplayed their scale.



Analysts say the unrest reflects deep-seated economic frustration

exacerbated by sanctions, mismanagement, and declining public

confidence. The protests pose a significant challenge to Iranian au-

thorities as economic pressures continue to mount.

Indian Stock Markets End 2025 Strong As Sensex, Nifty Extend Decade-Long Rally

India’s primary capital markets witnessed an exceptional year in 2025, as companies across sectors tapped public markets like never before, marking one of the most active initial public offering (IPO) cycles in the country’s history. Fundraising remained robust, driven by strong interest from both domestic and institutional investors, with new age companies and financial services firms dominating the landscape.

Data from market analysts show that hundreds of companies launched IPOs in 2025, with listed issues collectively raising nearly two trillion rupees. Financial services emerged as the dominant segment, accounting for the largest share of capital raised. This category featured significant participation from non banking financial companies (NBFCs), asset managers, insurers and digital financial platforms, highlighting investor confidence in India’s expanding financial ecosystem.

Among the prominent mainboard offerings during the year were large ticket issues from marquee financial players that ranked among the biggest funds mobilised in India’s public markets. These large cap entries helped propel overall IPO fundraising totals to record levels, underscoring the appeal of established financial names and the depth of investor appetite for growth oriented businesses.

Beyond financial services, other segments such as manufacturing, industrials, technology, healthcare and consumer products also attracted substantial interest. Technology and digital platforms, including several new age internet



and consumer technology firms, contributed significantly to total issuance, reflecting sustained investor enthusiasm for innovation led growth stories. Healthcare and consumer durable companies further diversified the market, indicating broad structural demand across economic sectors.

Small and medium enterprise (SME) listings also played a critical role in the fundraising environment, with a substantial number of smaller companies choosing to list on specialized platforms. This proliferation of SME issues reflects broader participation across the economic spectrum, where early stage and mid tier enterprises are increasingly

using public equity to support expansion and growth ambitions.

Looking ahead to 2026, analysts expect the IPO pipeline to remain strong, supported by a healthy roster of companies at various stages of preparation for market entry. Financial services, manufacturing and infrastructure linked sectors are expected to continue dominating new issuances, while consumption oriented and technology led firms are likely to sustain investor interest.

However, experts also note that IPO activity in 2026 could be more calibrated compared to the peak enthusiasm seen in 2025. With market conditions evolving, issuers may focus on

valuation discipline and quality of fundamentals to attract long term investors. Nonetheless, the strong momentum built this year has laid the groundwork for continued engagement with primary markets, positioning India’s IPO ecosystem for another active year.

Overall, 2025 proved to be a milestone year for India’s IPO market, with diverse sectors raising unprecedented capital and new age companies emerging as major contributors. As the country enters 2026, the combination of a rich pipeline and sustained investor interest suggests continued vibrancy in public market fundraising.

India Vs Global Markets: Can Indian Equities Reclaim Leadership In 2026?

After underperforming global markets in 2025, Indian equities are entering 2026 with cautious optimism. While benchmark indices delivered positive returns, India lagged emerging markets by nearly 25 per cent and global equities by around 15 per cent, largely due to a sharp slowdown in corporate earnings growth.

Analysts attribute the underperformance to a collapse in India Inc’s earnings growth from over 20 per cent CAGR between 2020 and 2024 to just 5-6 per cent in 2025. In contrast, global markets—especially the US—benefited from an AI-led rally, with the Nasdaq Composite surging over 22 per cent during the year.

Looking ahead, experts believe India’s relative performance in 2026 will depend on two key factors: a recovery in earnings growth and a cooling of the global AI frenzy that has driven capital toward developed markets. Domestic reforms, infrastructure spending, and consumption recovery could help India regain its appeal as a growth destination.

Valuations remain another critical variable. While Indian



equities are not cheap, analysts argue that stable inflation, improving demand, and supportive fiscal policies could justify

premium valuations if earnings rebound meaningfully.

Overall, 2026 is expected to be a year of selective opportuni-

ties rather than broad-based rallies, with investors closely tracking earnings momentum and global capital flows.

PSU Bank Stocks Outshine Market With Fifth Straight Year Of Outperformance

Public sector bank (PSB) stocks emerged as standout performers in 2025, with the Nifty PSU Bank index surging 31 per cent—far outpacing the Nifty 50’s 10 per cent gain. This marked the fifth consecutive year of PSU banks outperforming the broader market, reflecting a dramatic turnaround in the sector’s fundamentals.

Major PSU lenders such as Canara Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, Punjab National Bank, and State Bank of India posted strong gains, with several hitting multi-year highs. Analysts attribute this sustained rally to improved asset quality, declining non-performing assets, and stronger balance sheets following years of deleveraging.

Looking ahead to H2FY26, profitability is expected to improve further, supported by festive demand, steady credit growth, lower CRR requirements, and easing stress in unsecured and microfinance



portfolios. Additionally, corporate deleveraging post-Covid has strengthened borrower profiles, reducing credit risk for banks.

The strong performance of PSU banks signals renewed investor confidence in state-owned lenders, once considered structurally weak. If

earnings momentum continues, analysts believe PSU banks could remain a key pillar of India’s equity market performance in 2026.

Zomato And Swiggy Raise Gig Worker Payouts Amid New Year’s Eve Strike Threat



Food delivery platforms Zomato and Swiggy announced higher payouts and incentives for delivery partners ahead of New Year’s Eve, aiming to ensure uninterrupted services amid a nationwide strike call by gig workers’ unions. The move comes as demand for food delivery and quick commerce peaks during year-end celebrations, making operational continuity critical for platform companies.

According to industry sources, Zomato offered delivery partners payouts ranging between 120 and 150 per order during peak hours from 6 pm to midnight on December 31. The company also indicated that delivery executives could earn up to 3,000 over the course of the day, subject to order volumes and availability. Additionally, penalties for order denials and cancellations were temporarily waived, a measure companies describe as standard practice during festive or high-demand periods.

The strike call was issued by the Telangana Gig and Platform Workers’ Union (TGPWU) and the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT), which claimed that lakhs of workers across the country may participate. Their demands include higher

base payouts, transparent incentive structures, and improved working conditions for app-based delivery workers.

Industry experts warned that disruptions could impact not just food delivery giants but also quick-commerce platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Instamart. These companies rely heavily on gig workers, particularly during high-demand windows like New Year’s Eve, when order volumes surge sharply.

The episode highlights the growing tension within India’s gig economy, where rapid platform growth has not always translated into stable earnings for workers. While platforms argue that dynamic incentives offer flexibility and earning potential, worker unions continue to push for minimum guarantees and social security benefits.

As gig work becomes a permanent feature of India’s urban economy, experts believe regulatory clarity and structured dialogue between platforms and workers will be essential. The New Year’s Eve incentives may provide short-term relief, but the broader debate over fair compensation and worker protection is likely to intensify in 2026.

Vodafone Idea Shares Crash As AGR Dues Resurface Investor Concerns



Vodafone Idea (Vi) shares plunged nearly 15 per cent on December 31, hitting the lower circuit, after reports suggested the telecom operator may need to clear its Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues for FY18 and FY19 over the next five years. The sharp fall came despite broader market strength, underscoring persistent investor anxiety over Vi’s financial stability.

According to reports, the Union Cabinet has approved a framework to reassess and restructure Vodafone Idea’s past AGR liabilities. Under the reported plan, Vi has been granted a five-year window from FY26 to FY31 to pay dues related to FY18 and FY19. For post-FY19 liabilities, the total amount has reportedly been capped at ₹87,695 crore, with repayments scheduled over FY32 to FY41, subject to reassessment by a government-appointed committee.

Earlier, Vodafone Idea had approached the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) seeking recalcula-

tion of AGR dues, citing arithmetical errors and duplication. The company also sought a one-time waiver of penalties and interest on penalties, estimated at ₹45,000-50,000 crore. Similar arguments were raised before the Supreme Court, where Vi urged a comprehensive review of dues up to FY17.

Despite these efforts, the market reacted negatively, reflecting skepticism over Vi’s long-term ability to service its obligations amid intense competition from stronger rivals. Analysts note that while restructuring offers temporary breathing space, the company’s survival hinges on sustained revenue growth, tariff hikes, and continued government support.

The episode highlights the fragile state of India’s telecom sector, where legacy policy disputes continue to cast long shadows over corporate balance sheets. For investors, Vodafone Idea remains a high-risk stock, sensitive to regulatory decisions and capital infusion timelines.

A Birth In A Cab And A Decade Of Unexpected Legacy



Ten years after a dramatic cab ride in Delhi captured global attention, Uber co-founder Travis Kalanick marked the 10th birthday of a boy whose life story remains one of the most unusual intersections of technology and humanity. The child, officially named Nitansh Sharma but affectionately known as “Uber Sharma,” was born in December 2015 after his mother went into labour while travelling in an Uber cab.

The incident unfolded after repeated attempts to arrange an ambulance failed. In desperation, the family booked a cab. The driver, Shah Nawaz Khan, initially hesitant, agreed to take them. During the journey, labour intensified, prompting Khan to stay calm, provide water,

and alert hospital staff ahead of arrival. Though the baby was ultimately delivered moments after reaching the hospital, the timing was so close that the birth became inseparable from the ride itself.

In a light-hearted moment after the incident, Khan jokingly suggested naming the child Uber. To his surprise, the family embraced the idea, officially naming their son Uber Sharma. The story quickly went viral, symbolising how digital platforms sometimes step in when traditional systems fail. A year later, Travis Kalanick visited the family and announced a scholarship fund worth \$12,000 to support the child’s education.

Now, a decade later, Kalanick’s tweet revisiting

the story resonated widely online, reminding audiences of the human narratives behind everyday tech services. Beyond its novelty, the story highlighted the role of ordinary individuals—like the driver—whose presence of mind turned a crisis into a safe outcome.

The milestone also prompted reflection on how urban infrastructure gaps, such as emergency healthcare access, force citizens to rely on alternative solutions. What began as an emergency became a symbol of improvisation, kindness, and the unintended social impact of technology. Uber Sharma’s story remains a rare example of how a moment of crisis can evolve into a lasting legacy.

Blinkit Billboards Turn Consumer Data Into Cultural Commentary



As 2025 drew to a close, quick-commerce platform Blinkit captured public attention with a billboard campaign that transformed mundane shopping data into viral cultural commentary. Titled 2025 in a Blink, the campaign used real customer order statistics to highlight India’s everyday habits with humour, nostalgia, and sharp social insight. The result was a series of hyper-local, meme-driven hoardings that resonated instantly with urban audiences.

One of the most shared billboards declared that India ordered over 1 crore kilograms of ghee in 2025, followed by the tongue-in-cheek line, “Ab bas bhi karo mummy.” Others included references to karela consumption, shampoo orders,

Maggi purchases, and even tipping amounts paid to delivery riders. Each message paired hard numbers with culturally familiar phrases, turning raw data into storytelling.

What set the campaign apart was its relatability. Rather than focusing on brand promotion, Blinkit highlighted shared behaviours—overstocking comfort food, health fads, hostel lifestyles, and last-minute shopping panic. Comparisons between campuses like XLRI and IIM-Calcutta added playful rivalry, while tipping data underscored appreciation for gig workers.

Marketing professionals praised the campaign for achieving what many brands attempt but few succeed at: making data feel personal. Compari-

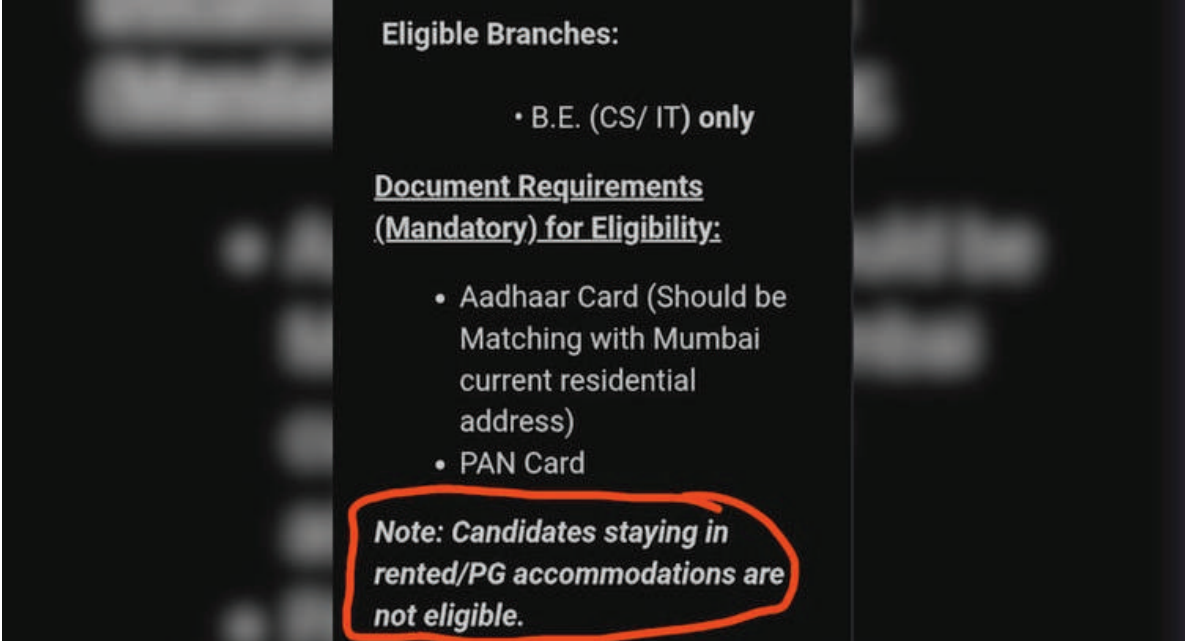
sons to Spotify Wrapped were inevitable, as both rely on reflective, year-end storytelling rooted in user behaviour. Social media users lauded the campaign as “brilliant marketing,” noting that it sparked conversation without appearing forced.

Beyond humour, the billboards subtly reinforced Blinkit’s core value proposition—speed, convenience, and integration into daily life. By showcasing how deeply embedded the platform is in Indian routines, the campaign positioned Blinkit not just as a service, but as a cultural mirror. In doing so, it demonstrated how consumer data, when handled creatively and ethically, can evolve into powerful narrative marketing.

Hiring Bias And Housing Status Spark Debate On Workplace Ethics

A Mumbai-based company recently found itself at the centre of a nationwide online backlash after a job application form explicitly barred candidates living in rented flats or paying guest accommodations. The placement, aimed at B.E. Computer Science and IT graduates, included a clause stating that applicants residing in PGs or rented homes were “not eligible” for the role. Once screenshots of the form began circulating on social media, the hiring policy was widely condemned as discriminatory, regressive, and ethically questionable.

Critics argued that housing status has no bearing on a candidate’s professional capability, especially in a city like Mumbai where renting is the norm rather than the exception. Many users labelled the condition a “red flag” indicating problematic work culture, exploitative salary practices, or an attempt to restrict mobility among employees. A commonly voiced concern was that the company might be targeting candidates living with parents to justify offering salaries below market standards, assuming



lower living expenses would reduce bargaining power.

Legal experts and commentators also raised constitutional concerns. Several users cited Article 16 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees equality of opportunity in public employment and prohibits discrimination based on residence. While the company operates in the private sector, critics noted that similar residence-based hiring restrictions imposed by

state governments in the past have faced judicial scrutiny. The policy was seen as reinforcing class and migration bias, particularly against young professionals who relocate to cities for better career prospects.

Others pointed out the broader implications for workplace diversity and inclusion. Excluding candidates based on housing effectively filters out migrants, early-career professionals, and those from less privileged backgrounds.

Some argued that such practices undermine meritocracy and further concentrate opportunity among a narrow demographic. Former students and professionals shared experiences of rejecting similar placements collectively, calling such criteria early warning signs of toxic management and poor work-life balance.

The controversy also reignited discussions about ethical hiring practices in India’s private sector, where regu-

lation is often lighter but consequences for unfair policies can still be reputationally severe. While the company has not publicly clarified or withdrawn the condition, the episode serves as a reminder that recruitment decisions are no longer private processes. In an era of viral screenshots and public accountability, hiring policies are increasingly judged not just by legality, but by fairness, inclusivity, and common sense.

A Traveller View Reveals South India Through Fresh Eyes



A viral video by travel content creator Rory Porter has reignited online appreciation for South India’s diversity, hospitality, and scenic beauty. Having visited India twice in a year, Porter recommended South India as the ideal starting point

for first-time visitors, describing the experience as relaxed, welcoming, and visually stunning.

In the video, Porter shared candid ratings of destinations including Goa, Kerala’s backwaters, Munnar, and Kochi. He praised Goa’s laid-

back atmosphere, scenic coastline, friendly locals, and ease of travel, rating it nine out of ten. His reflections highlighted practical aspects often overlooked in travel content, such as road conditions and ease of renting vehicles.

Porter’s experience in Alleppey stood out, where he stayed overnight on a houseboat, enjoyed freshly prepared seafood, and interacted with fellow travellers. He described the experience as tranquil and immersive, again awarding a

high rating. In Munnar, he admired the lush greenery, tea plantations, and cultural experiences like martial arts demonstrations, though limited time prevented deeper exploration.

His final stop, Kochi, impressed him with its colonial architecture and cultural blend, reinforcing the region’s layered history. Viewers appreciated Porter’s balanced tone—enthusiastic yet grounded—and his emphasis on human interaction rather than curated luxury.

The video resonated widely because it reflected an outsider’s genuine curiosity rather than promotional tourism. Many Indian users welcomed the positive portrayal, while others shared their own recommendations. The response highlighted how authentic travel narratives can shape global perceptions more effectively than official campaigns, reaffirming South India’s appeal as a culturally rich and traveller-friendly destination.

Wolf Supermoon Opens 2026 With A Rare Celestial Alignment

The first full moon of 2026, known as the Wolf Supermoon, is set to rise on January 3, offering skywatchers a visually striking and scientifically notable event. The term “Wolf Moon” originates from historical accounts of wolves howling during cold winter nights, while “supermoon” refers to the Moon appearing larger and brighter due to its proximity to Earth.

What makes this lunar event especially rare is its coincidence with Earth’s perihelion—the point at which Earth is closest to the Sun in its orbit. Though the two phenomena are unrelated in cause, their overlap adds astronomical significance. According to NASA, supermoons occur when a full moon aligns closely with perigee, making it appear up to 14 percent larger and 30 percent brighter than a typical full moon.

The Wolf Supermoon will be visible globally,



with the best viewing opportunities shortly after sunset on January 2 and 3. Observers won’t need special equipment, though binoculars or telescopes can enhance surface detail. Adding to the excitement, Jupiter

will reach opposition a week later, shining at its brightest point of the year.

This Wolf Supermoon also marks the final event in a supermoon sequence that began in October 2025, which includ-

ed the Harvest, Beaver, and Cold Moons. The next full moon, known as the Snow Moon, will occur on February 1, 2026.

Beyond aesthetics, lunar events like this continue to captivate public

imagination, blending science, folklore, and shared experience. The Wolf Supermoon serves as a dramatic and symbolic opening to the year, reminding observers of the rhythms that quietly shape life on Earth.

Deepti Sharma World Record Crowns India Women Perfect Series Sweep



India Women capped a dominant home season with a commanding 5-0 T20I series sweep over Sri Lanka, sealing the final match by 15 runs in Thiruvananthapuram. While the whitewash itself underlined India's depth and consistency, the series finale carried

added significance as Deepti Sharma etched her name into cricket history by becoming the leading wicket-taker in women's T20 internationals. Deepti achieved the milestone in the 14th over of Sri Lanka's chase, trapping Nilakshika Silva leg-before to claim her 152nd

T20I wicket, surpassing Australia's Megan Schutt. The record reflects Deepti's remarkable longevity and adaptability across conditions, formats, and leadership phases of Indian women's cricket. Her ability to control the middle overs with accuracy and calm has made her

indispensable in high-pressure matches. The match itself was shaped by India captain Harmanpreet Kaur's timely resurgence with the bat. Walking in with India struggling at 77 for five, Harmanpreet played a captain's knock of 68 off 43 balls, anchoring the in-

nings while accelerating at crucial moments. Her partnership with Amanjot Kaur stabilised the innings, and a late cameo from Arundhati Reddy pushed India to a competitive 175. Sri Lanka's chase showed promise early, with Hasini Perera and Imesha Dulani building a solid second-wicket stand after the early loss of Chamari Athapaththu. However, their inability to clear the ropes consistently meant the required rate steadily climbed. Once wickets fell in clusters, India's spinners tightened the noose, denying Sri Lanka the finishing burst they needed. Beyond the result, the series symbolised India's growing dominance in women's T20 cricket. With a World Cup-winning year behind them, the team displayed bench strength, tactical discipline, and adaptability. Deepti's record-breaking achievement added historical weight to a performance that was already comprehensive. For Sri Lanka, the tour exposed gaps in finishing ability and bowling depth, while for India, it reaffirmed their position as one of the most formidable teams in the format.

Shreyas Iyer Recovery Delayed As Fielding Fitness Remains Concern

Shreyas Iyer's return to international cricket has suffered another setback, with the batter ruled out of the upcoming ODI series against New Zealand due to incomplete recovery from a serious spleen injury. The injury occurred during an India-Australia ODI in October when Iyer sustained internal bleeding after a diving effort in the field, requiring immediate hospitalisation and surgical intervention. Although Iyer has resumed batting practice and skill training, medical assessments indicate that he has not regained sufficient strength for the physical demands of a 50-over match. Reports suggest he lost nearly six kilograms during recovery due to muscle mass reduction, impacting his agility and fielding endurance. The BCCI has taken a cautious approach, emphasising long-term health over rushed returns. While Iyer may feature in domestic matches if progress continues, his



participation will hinge on how his body responds to sustained workload. Iyer's absence high-

lights the often-overlooked physical toll of modern cricket, where fielding intensity ri-

vals batting and bowling in importance. His recovery timeline underscores why selec-

tors increasingly prioritise all-round fitness rather than batting alone.

Melbourne Test Pitch Sparks Debate On Balance And Responsibility

The Melbourne Cricket Ground pitch has come under intense scrutiny after the fourth Ashes Test concluded in just two days, with 36 wickets falling across six sessions. Former England opener Geoffrey Boycott delivered a scathing assessment, stating that the surface "failed the standard expected for a five-day Test" and turned batting into a lottery. With excessive grass aiding seam movement, neither England nor Australia managed a single half-century, raising concerns about pitch preparation and intent. Boycott placed responsibility squarely on the curator, dismissing explanations related to weather conditions and stressing that Test cricket demands a fair contest between bat and ball. The ICC later deemed



the pitch "unsatisfactory," issuing the MCG a demerit point. While some praised the drama

and bowler-friendly conditions, critics argued that such extremes undermine the integrity of

Test cricket. The episode reignites a long-standing debate about balance in the

longest format—where competitiveness should challenge skill, not negate it.

Smriti Mandhana Rest Ends Record Chase But Highlights Team First Approach



Smriti Mandhana's absence from the fifth and final T20I against Sri Lanka brought an unexpected pause to what could have been a historic personal milestone. Entering the match, Mandhana required just 62 runs to surpass Shubman Gill as the highest international run-scorer across men's and women's cricket in 2025. Instead, team management opted to rest her, prioritising workload management and squad rotation over individual records. Mandhana had already enjoyed an extraordinary year, amassing 1,703 runs across ODIs and T20Is, underlining her status as one of the most consistent batters in world cricket. The decision to sit her out sparked debate, but captain Harmanpreet Kaur made it clear that maintaining momentum and assessing bench strength took precedence. With India already leading the series 4-0, the match offered an opportunity to test new combinations and provide exposure to debutants. The move also reflected a broader

shift in Indian team culture, where personal milestones are increasingly subordinated to collective goals. Mandhana's rest allowed G Kamalini to make her debut and Sneha Rana to return, reinforcing India's emphasis on squad depth ahead of major tournaments. From a historical perspective, Mandhana's near-miss does little to diminish her achievements. Records often follow opportunity, and her consistency suggests future chances are inevitable. More importantly, the episode highlighted how elite teams balance player welfare with competitive intensity. In a packed international calendar, strategic rest is no longer a luxury but a necessity. While fans may lament the missed record, Mandhana's year remains one of the most prolific in international cricket. The decision serves as a reminder that longevity and team success often matter more than single-season statistics, especially in an era where burnout and injuries loom large.

Mohammed Shami Comeback Gains Momentum As Selectors Reconsider



Mohammed Shami's prolonged absence from India's white-ball squads may finally be nearing an end, with selectors signalling a possible rethink as the 2027 ODI World Cup enters long-term planning. Once considered indispensable in global tournaments, Shami has not represented India since the Champions Trophy in March 2025, despite finishing that event as India's joint-highest wicket-taker. The fast bowler's continued exclusion has puzzled many, particularly given his impressive domestic returns. Shami's recent performances across the Ranji Trophy, Vijay Hazare Trophy, and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy demonstrate that his wicket-taking instincts remain intact. His 17 wickets in six limited-overs domestic games and 20 wickets in four Ranji matches have reignited debate about his omission. The sticking point has never been skill, but fitness. Recurring ankle and knee injuries since the

2023 World Cup led to surgeries and prolonged rehabilitation, creating uncertainty around workload management. That uncertainty strained relations earlier this year, when Shami publicly questioned the selection logic after being overlooked despite playing domestic cricket. Selectors, led by Ajit Agarkar, have maintained that fitness clearance remains the only barrier. Recent comments suggest that stance is softening as Shami continues to bowl regularly and recover rhythm. A return as early as the New Zealand ODI series is now being discussed, with the longer-term lure of World Cup experience hard to ignore. For India, the equation is simple but delicate. Younger pacers offer athleticism and durability, but Shami offers proven excellence on the biggest stage. His potential recall reflects a pragmatic approach—experience, when fit, still carries immense value in tournament cricket.



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POINT

