



PAGE 02

TRUE POINT

PRGI REGISTRATION NO. "TGENG/25/A2485"

HYDERABAD | VOL-1 | ISSUE-75 | 08th JANUARY 2025 | THURSDAY | PAGES 12 | PRICE: ₹ 5 PUBLISHED FROM: VIJAYAWADA • HYDERABAD • DELHI • BENGALURU

BUZZ POINTS

TSRTC Prepares
Special Services for
Sankranti Festival

PAGE 02

Telangana
Minister Ponnam
Prabhakar Slams
Former Minister
KTR Over Rahul
Gandhi Remarks

PAGE 03

TS Police Seize
1.412 kg of Cannabis,
Three Arrested
in Dholpet
Operation

PAGE 04

CM Cup Torch
Rally Launched
in Manuguru,
Minister Vakiti
Srihari Calls
for Nurturing
Rural Sports
Talent

PAGE 05

BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao Holds Key Meetings in Khammam Ahead of Elections

Khammam /
Hyderabad, January 7, 2026 — TPN
Bureau

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President Kalvakuntla Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) visited Khammam district on Wednesday for a series of high-level meetings with party leaders and elected representatives, focusing on strengthening the party ahead of upcoming local and state elections. The visit comes at a politically crucial time as the district witnesses significant electoral developments and increased activity by opposition parties.

During his visit, KTR interacted with party workers and cadres, emphasizing the need to reinforce grassroots networks and maintain close engagement with voters across rural and semi-urban areas. He also met newly elected BRS-backed sarpanches and deputy sarpanches, highlighting the importance of community outreach and the implementation of welfare and development programmes. His discussions included district-level strategies to ensure effective voter mobilization and party coordination.

The visit follows re-



cent political shifts in Khammam, where several former BRS corporators have defected to the Congress party, creating additional challenges for the party in the urban political landscape. In response to these developments, KTR stressed the need to strengthen local party units and consolidate support among cadres and the public.

KTR's presence also coincided with active public outreach campaigns and rallies across Khammam district. During one of the gatherings, the event drew large crowds, reflecting the heightened interest of citizens in political developments and the party's plans for the region. KTR used these opportunities to reinforce the party's vision for

Khammam, focusing on development projects, welfare initiatives, and the promotion of transparent governance. In his remarks, KTR reiterated the party's stance on accountability and governance, criticizing opposition parties for what he described as misleading narratives on key issues such as irrigation, water allocation, and public welfare schemes. He highlighted the BRS's commitment to implementing development programs in both urban and rural areas, and encouraged local leaders to actively engage with citizens to address their concerns. Political analysts note that KTR's visit is part of a broader strategy by the BRS leadership to consolidate the par-

ty's position in key districts, maintain an active presence on the ground, and counter opposition influence ahead of elections. Khammam, being a politically dynamic district with recent shifts in loyalties, is likely to play a critical role in shaping electoral outcomes in the region. KTR concluded his visit by urging local leaders to continue working closely with communities, ensure effective communication of the party's development agenda, and prepare for upcoming elections with unity and discipline. The visit reflects the party's proactive approach to strengthening its organizational base and sustaining voter engagement across Telangana.



Khammam Corporators Join Congress in Presence of CM Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad (Jubilee Hills), Jan 7, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Several corporators from the Khammam Municipal Corporation on Tuesday formally joined the Congress party in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at Jubilee Hills, marking a significant political development in the district.

The joinings took place under the leadership of State Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, who played a key role in facilitating the transition of local leaders from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) to the Congress. The corporators who joined the Congress from BRS include Daniyala Radha, Thota Umarani, and Rudragami Sridevi.

In addition, corporators CH Lakshmi, G. Chandrakala, D. Saraswathi, Amruthamma, and M. Sravani, who had recently joined the Congress after leaving the BRS, met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy as a courtesy. They expressed their commitment to strengthening the Congress party at the grassroots level and working towards the implementation of welfare and development programmes of the state government.

Welcoming the new entrants, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said

the growing support for the Congress reflected public confidence in the government's governance model and its focus on development, transparency, and social justice. He assured the corporators of full support from the government in addressing civic issues and accelerating development works in Khammam. Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said the Congress government was committed to empowering local bodies and ensuring inclusive growth across urban and rural areas.

He stated that leaders from various parties were voluntarily joining the Congress, inspired by the leadership of the Chief Minister and the people-centric policies being implemented by the state government.

Several corporators from the Khammam Municipal Corporation, along with Con-



Uttam Kumar Reddy Appointed Congress Observer for Tamil Nadu and Puducherry Elections

TPN Bureau |
January 07:

In a significant organizational move ahead of the upcoming legislative assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, the Congress Party has appointed Minister Captain N. Uttam Kumar Reddy as the official election observer for both states. The appointment was formalized through directives issued by the Congress Party's National General Secretary, K.C. Venugopal, highlighting the party's intent to ensure strategic planning and coordination in these crucial elections. As the official observer, Minis-

ter Uttam Kumar Reddy will play a central role in supervising the party's preparations and strategies across Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. His responsibilities include analyzing the electoral landscape, advising on campaign management, and coordinating between various state-level party units to ensure that the Congress organization functions efficiently during the election period. The role also involves monitoring the implementation of campaign strategies, ensuring adherence to party policies, and guiding the party's state leadership teams to achieve optimal results

in the elections.

In addition to Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy, the Congress leadership has appointed senior party leaders Mukul Wasnik and Khazi Mohinoddin Nizamoddin as additional observers for the two states. Together, this team will coordinate with the local Congress cadres, streamline communication between state and central units, and monitor election preparedness at every level. Their presence aims to ensure that the Congress Party maintains a cohesive and disciplined approach, especially in states where the political competition is intense and multi-dimen-

sional. Speaking on the occasion, sources from the party emphasized that observer appointments are critical to maintaining the party's organizational integrity and electoral performance. Observers like Uttam Kumar Reddy are expected to provide timely feedback, identify potential challenges, and suggest corrective measures to strengthen the party's campaign efforts. This proactive approach reflects the Congress Party's strategic focus on consolidating its position and enhancing coordination between the central leadership and state-level teams. The appointment



of a senior minister such as Uttam Kumar Reddy, who has vast administrative and political experience, underscores the importance of the Congress

Party places on these elections. His familiarity with grassroots-level political dynamics, combined with a proven track record in managing party affairs and public outreach, makes him well-suited to guide the campaign machinery and oversee the effective mobilization of resources and manpower. By assigning this team of observers, the Congress Party aims to strengthen organizational discipline, ensure consistency in messaging, and maintain voter engagement, particularly in constituencies where electoral contests are highly competitive. Observers will also work closely with party functionaries to resolve disputes, monitor polling arrangements, and ensure that election-related directives are im-

plemented efficiently. With the legislative assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry drawing near, the Congress Party's leadership believes that these appointments will provide strategic oversight, enhance coordination, and maximize the party's chances of electoral success. Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with senior leaders Mukul Wasnik and Khazi Mohinoddin Nizamoddin, is expected to commence active inspections and consultations with local units immediately, preparing the party for an organized and focused campaign.

Grand Kite and Sweet Festival to Begin in Hyderabad from January 13



TPN Bureau |
January 07:
The city of Hyderabad is
gearing up for a vibrant

celebration of Sankranti with the much anticipated International Kite and Sweet Festival, scheduled to begin on January 13 at the Parade Ground in Secunderabad. The festival, which forms an integral

part of Telangana's Sankranti festivities, is being organized by the Telangana Tourism and Culture

Department and has been designed to attract residents, tourists and kite enthusiasts from across India and abroad. This year's edition of the festival promises to be bigger and more colorful than ever before. Telangana Minister Jupally Krishna Rao has announced that the celebrations will continue till January 17, extending the traditional event into a multi-day cultural and recreational gathering. The Kite and Sweet Festival will feature spectacular displays of kites, a diverse range of traditional and regional sweets, cultural performances, and special attractions aimed at promoting local tourism and showcasing the state's rich heritage.

One of the major highlights of this year's festi-

ties will be the participation of international kite flyers from nearly 19 countries, along with skilled kite enthusiasts from various Indian states. Massive and intricately designed kites, including special shapes and traditional motifs, are expected to fill the Hyderabad sky, creating a breathtaking visual spectacle for attendees. Alongside, the festival will host stalls featuring sweets and delicacies from different regions, allowing visitors to savor a wide variety of flavors while celebrating the joyous spirit of Sankranti.

To add to the excitement, the event will include hot air balloon displays, night time drone shows, and other entertainment programmes, offering a complete cultural experience for families

and visitors. These attractions are expected to draw large crowds and enhance the festival's appeal as a major tourist and community event during the winter season.

Officials have stated that the event's expanded schedule and diverse offerings are part of a broader initiative to promote Telangana as a cultural destination and to encourage communal participation in traditional festivals in a safe and engaging environment. Along with kite flying and sweets, visitors can look forward to live performances, handicraft exhibitions, and interactive entertainment options that reflect the state's artistic heritage.

The Kite and Sweet Festival also aims to bring people together from all walks of life under the

spirit of Sankranti. Families, children, youth and senior citizens alike are expected to participate, flying kites, tasting delicacies, and enjoying the cultural presentations. Organizers are also working closely with city authorities to ensure safety measures, crowd management, and smooth logistics throughout the festival's duration. With its blend of tradition, color, and community participation, the International Kite and Sweet Festival is set to become one of Hyderabad's most celebrated cultural events of the year. As the city prepares for the skies to fill with kites and the air to be filled with the aroma of sweets, residents and visitors can look forward to a memorable and joyous Sankranti celebration.

MP Chamala Felicitates Newly Appointed DRDL Director Dr Ankathi Raju

Hyderabad, Jan 7, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

Bhuvanagiri Member of Parliament Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Tuesday met and felicitated Dr Ankathi Raju, who has been appointed as the 17th Director of the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), marking a proud moment for the Alair Assembly segment and the Bhuvanagiri Parliamentary constituency. Dr Ankathi Raju, a native of Rajapet village in Alair constituency, hails from a modest farming family. His elevation to one of the most prestigious scientific leadership positions in the country has been widely hailed as an in-

spiring achievement, especially for rural youth aspiring to careers in science and technology.

During the courtesy meeting, MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy honoured Dr Ankathi Raju by presenting a shawl as a mark of respect and appreciation. Speaking on the occasion, the MP said it was a matter of immense pride that a person from his parliamentary constituency had risen to head DRDL, an institution of national importance under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

He recalled that the post of DRDL Director was earlier held by re-



owned scientist and former President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, and said it was truly

remarkable that Dr Ankathi Raju, born into a

simple farmer's family, had reached such an em-

inent position through dedication, perseverance, and academic excellence. The MP noted that Dr Raju's journey would serve as a powerful source of inspiration for countless young men and women across Telangana, particularly those from rural backgrounds. Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy congratulated Dr Ankathi Raju on his appointment and expressed confidence that under his leadership, DRDL would further strengthen India's missile development capabilities and contribute significantly to national security.

Earlier, Dr Ankathi Raju reciprocated the gesture by felicitating

MP Chamala with a shawl and presented him with a DRDL missile model as a token of goodwill. As part of the visit, the MP was given an overview of DRDL's achievements through a detailed video presentation highlighting the laboratory's role in missile design, development, and critical defence technologies.

The interaction underscored the importance of encouraging scientific talent from rural India and reaffirmed the shared commitment of public representatives and scientific institutions towards nation-building through innovation and excellence.

Indiramma Housing Scheme to Cover Every Eligible Poor Family: Minister Ponguleti Srinivas



Suryapet, Jan 7, 2026 | TPN Bureau: State Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Wednesday reaffirmed that it is the responsibility of the state government to provide an Indiramma house to every eligible poor family across Telangana. He announced that another phase of house allotments would be taken up in April, followed by two more phases over the next two years to ensure statewide coverage of all deserving beneficiaries.

The Minister inspected the construction

works of the Indiramma Model Housing Colony being developed at Ramaswamy Gutta near Huzurnagar in Suryapet district, where 2,160 houses are under construction. He stated that all houses in the colony would be completed by March 31 and directed officials to ensure timely completion without compromising quality.

Addressing a meeting later, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said the Indiramma Housing Scheme aims to provide security, dignity, and confidence to the poor. He alleged that the previous government focused on large

projects like Kaleshwaram while neglecting housing for the poor, leaving the housing department in disarray. Despite financial challenges, he said the present government sanctioned 4.5 lakh Indiramma houses in the first phase with an allocation of 22,500 crore, covering about 3,500 houses per Assembly constituency.

The Minister said houses are being constructed at a cost of 5 lakh each, and beneficiaries are being paid bills in a phased manner by March 31. Officials were instructed to identify beneficiaries and finalize the list by Sankranti or by the end of the month. The district collector was directed to accept applications from the poorest sections and

have requested additional houses and completion of pending houses sanctioned under earlier schemes, and the government is considering these requests.

He announced that the Huzurnagar Indiramma Housing Colony would be developed as a model colony, with all houses at Ramaswamy Gutta completed by March 31. Officials were instructed to identify beneficiaries and finalize the list by Sankranti or by the end of the month. The district collector was directed to accept applications from the poorest sections and

ensure house allotment strictly as per housing policy norms.

Earlier, the Minister reviewed construction progress with Housing Department Secretary Gautham, District Collector Tejas Nand Lal Pawar, engineers, and contractors. He directed officials to immediately assess pending works, submit proposals, and complete not only houses but also infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and drinking water. A special officer will be appointed to monitor progress, and approvals for pending estimates will be cleared by January 15.

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy said the Huzurnagar housing project was originally sanctioned in 2012 but remained stalled for nearly a decade under the previous government. He said the colony would emerge as a model housing project not only in Telangana but across the country, with facilities like schools, anganwadi centres, health centres, community halls, and playgrounds.

The programme was attended by Miryalaguda MLA Bathula Laxma Reddy, senior officials, public representatives, and department heads.

National Under-17 Kabaddi Championship Inaugurated at Yedulla Bayyaram



Yedulla Bayyaram (Bhadradri Kothagudem District), Jan 7, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

The 69th SGF Under-17 Boys National Kabaddi Championship was inaugurated on Wednesday at Yedulla Bayyaram in Bhadradri Kothagudem district, highlighting the growing popularity of kabaddi at national and international levels.

The championship was formally launched by State Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari, along with Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka, amid vibrant festivities and large public participation.

The tournament is being organised under the aegis of Kandi Charitable Trust and Mauri Tech Organisation.

Teams from across the country have gathered in Bayyaram, turning the venue into a hub of sporting enthusiasm. A total of 33 teams from different states are participating in the championship, reflecting the expanding footprint of kabaddi beyond its rural roots.

Addressing the gathering, Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari congratulated the organisers for hosting the prestigious tournament in an impressive manner.

The Minister noted that kabaddi excites not only players but

also spectators, owing to its fast pace, strategy, and intensity. He explained that the sport requires not just physical strength but also agility, presence of mind, concentration, and discipline to outsmart opponents within seconds.

Drawing a comparison with cricket, Vakiti Srihari said kabaddi now enjoys popularity on par with cricket in India. He pointed out that leagues such as the Pro Kabaddi League, similar to the Indian Premier League in cricket, have helped the sport gain massive visibility and provided players with opportunities for recognition and professional growth.

The championship was formally opened with an inaugural match between Madhya Pradesh and Haryana teams.

The event was attended by Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka, MLAs Payam Venkateswarlu and Tellam Venkata Rao, District Collector Jitesh Sri Patel, Superintendent of Police Rohit Raj, Project Officer Rahul, and organiser Viswa Bharat Reddy, along with sports officials and kabaddi enthusiasts, powering India's rural population.

TSRTC Prepares Special Services for Sankranti Festival

TPN Bureau

Hyderabad, January 07, 2026 — The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has announced full preparedness to ensure safe and comfortable travel for passengers during the upcoming Sankranti festival. In view of the anticipated rush, the corporation has planned to operate 6,431 special buses across the state to accommodate travelers heading to their hometowns and other destinations.

TSRTC officials highlighted that the peak travel dates are expected to be January 9, 10, 12, and 13, with return journeys likely to be crowded on January 18 and 19. To address this, special buses will be deployed on busy routes, ensuring that passengers do not face inconvenience due to high demand.

In Hyderabad, the buses will operate from major congestion points including MGBS, JBS, Uppal Cross Roads, Aranghur, LB Nagar Cross Roads, KPHB, Boyinapalli, and Gachibowli. At these locations, facilities such as



shelters, seating arrangements, public address systems, drinking water, and mobile toilets will be provided to enhance passenger convenience.

TSRTC emphasized that special buses will remain available even on return journeys, and empty buses will be quickly redirected to high-demand routes to prevent overcrowding. This approach is intended to provide seamless

travel for passengers during the festival.

Regarding fares, TSRTC has clarified that ticket prices for special festival buses can be adjusted up to 1.5 times the regular rates, as per State Government G.O. No. 16 issued in 2003. This applies only to special buses operating during Sankranti and other major festivals, including services to destinations outside Telangana. Regular buses will

continue to charge standard fares.

As part of the State Government's Mahalakshmi Scheme, women passengers will continue to enjoy free travel on Palle Velugu, Express, City Ordinary, and Metro Express buses during the festival.

Passengers are encouraged to make advance reservations via the TSRTC website, www.tsrtconline.in, to avoid last-minute rush.

For further information regarding special Sankranti bus services, TSRTC has advised contacting their call centers at 040-69440000 or 040-23450033.

TSRTC officials assured the public that all arrangements have been made to manage the festival rush efficiently, providing a safe, comfortable, and convenient travel experience for all passengers.



Telangana Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Slams Former Minister KTR Over Rahul Gandhi Remarks

Hyderabad, January 07 — TPN

Bureau:

In a fiery political exchange, Telangana Minister Ponnam Prabhakar criticized former minister and TRS leader K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) for his remarks targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Minister Prabhakar accused KTR of using inappropriate language and showing intolerance while commenting on Rahul Gandhi, urging him to exercise restraint in political discourse. Speaking to the media, Prabhakar said, "Criticizing Rahul Gandhi in such a language reflects KTR's loss of patience amidst his party's electoral setbacks.

Resorting to personal attacks does not make anyone 'great'—it only diminishes respect." He emphasized that Rahul Gandhi hails from a family renowned for sacrifices for freedom, independence, and national unity, and therefore deserves dignity in public debates.

Prabhakar further cautioned KTR against using offensive language as a tool to vent political frustration, noting that political criticism should remain civil and issue-based. "There are differences and debates in politics, but using language to express personal annoyance is unacceptable," he said.

Highlighting public sentiment, the minister warned, "If such remarks continue against Rahul Gandhi, the



people themselves will respond. Citizens have already expressed their disapproval of such behavior by KTR on multiple occasions."

The minister's remarks come amid escalating political tensions in Telangana, where both ruling and opposition parties are engaging in verbal sparring ahead of upcoming local elections. KTR, a prominent leader of the ruling party and son of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, has in the past openly criticized Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party over various political issues.

Prabhakar's statement underscores growing concerns over the tone of political discourse in the state. Experts note that personal attacks

and inflammatory language can exacerbate political polarization and shift focus from policy and governance to personality clashes.

As the debate unfolds, Prabhakar urged all political leaders to prioritize decorum and respect, even while engaging in criticism. He reiterated that democracy thrives on constructive dialogue and warned against rhetoric that could alienate citizens or undermine public trust in political institutions.

The exchange between the leaders signals heightened scrutiny over political rhetoric in Telangana, with citizens and observers closely watching how party leaders balance criticism with civility in public discourse.



AICC Secretary Sampath Kumar Criticizes KTR Over Remarks on Rahul Gandhi, Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad, January 7, 2026 | TPN Bureau

All India Congress Committee (AICC) Secretary Sampath Kumar has sharply criticized TRS leader K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) for his recent remarks targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Telangana Congress President Revanth Reddy. Speaking on Wednesday, Sampath Kumar accused KTR of losing political temper and crossing the limits of decorum in public discourse.

Addressing the media, Kumar said that KTR's statements in Jangaon were not only excessive but also reflected a loss of judgment. "He is speaking against Rahul Gandhi and Revanth Reddy in a reckless manner, letting personal bias and envy dictate his words," he said. The AICC secretary warned that if KTR continues to speak in such a manner, the party would take strong action to counter these statements.

Sampath Kumar urged the Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly to take note of KTR's remarks and initiate appropriate

action to safeguard the integrity of the House. He stressed that personal attacks against opposition leaders should not be allowed to tarnish the credibility of the legislative forum.

The AICC secretary also reiterated Congress's commitment to raising issues and holding the ruling party accountable through proper legislative channels, rather than responding in kind to inflammatory rhetoric. He called upon all political leaders to maintain respect for parliamentary traditions and uphold the democratic process.

KTR's recent comments have intensified political tensions in Telangana, drawing criticism from opposition leaders who accuse him of using personal bias to delegitimize elected representatives and the legislature itself.

Sampath Kumar urged the Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly to take note of KTR's remarks and initiate appropriate

action to safeguard the integrity of the House. He stressed that personal attacks against opposition leaders should not be allowed to tarnish the credibility of the legislative forum.

The AICC secretary also reiterated Congress's commitment to raising issues and holding the ruling party accountable through proper legislative channels, rather than responding in kind to inflammatory rhetoric. He called upon all political leaders to maintain respect for parliamentary traditions and uphold the democratic process.

KTR's recent comments have intensified political tensions in Telangana, drawing criticism from opposition leaders who accuse him of using personal bias to delegitimize elected representatives and the legislature itself. The remarks have sparked a wider debate on decorum and conduct within the state Assembly.

Sampath Kumar urged the Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly to take note of KTR's remarks and initiate appropriate

BRS Assembly Whip KP Vivekananda Criticizes Telangana Government Over Legislative Conduct

Hyderabad, January 7, 2026 – TPN Bureau: BRS Assembly Whip KP Vivekananda held a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Wednesday, sharply criticizing the state government for its handling of the Telangana Legislative Assembly proceedings. He alleged that the government repeatedly violated legislators' rights and conducted the Assembly in a manner that resembled self-praise rather than democratic deliberation.

Vivekananda highlighted that policy matters were presented without proper discussion, with the Assembly frequently starting sessions without an agenda, resulting in the hasty approval of 13 bills. "The Assembly has been run like a display of self-congratulation rather than a forum for legislative debate," he said, accusing the government of



undermining parliamentary procedures.

The BRS whip claimed that the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) had recommended 15 days of sessions, but the minutes were never made public, and the government allegedly tampered with BAC re-

cords. He said the Speaker had reportedly

stated that the number of session days was at the discretion of the Chair, effectively bypassing BAC's recommendations.

Vivekananda also criticized the government for denying opposition parties a fair

chance to present their points. He said the Congress had previously submitted presentations (PPTs) in the Assembly, but the current government seems reluctant to allow debates, fearing scrutiny of its policies. Members were reportedly prevented from speaking, and microphones were withheld, according to him, leaving legislators frustrated.

He accused some ministers of saying one thing and doing another, which contributed to public disillusionment and disengagement in the Assembly. "Members are forced to remain idle or even sleep during sessions due to procedural irregularities," he said. He likened the running of the Assembly to events at Gandhi Bhavan or Jubilee Hills Palace, rather than a structured legislative forum.

Vivekananda also addressed remarks made

by opposition leader Revanth Reddy, claiming that while Reddy's language was sometimes sharp, the government attempted to suppress criticism of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao. Notices were issued and procedural tools used to deflect attention from administrative shortcomings, he said. Concluding his remarks, Vivekananda urged the government to respect legislative traditions, ensure orderly debate, and allow members to raise public issues without obstruction. He stressed that democratic practices and transparency must take precedence over political theatrics in the Assembly.

The press conference highlights growing tensions in the Telangana Legislative Assembly, as ruling and opposition parties clash over procedure, accountability, and the tone of legislative discourse.

Congress MLC Dr. Balmoor Venkat Targets KTR, BRS Leadership at CLP Press Meet

Hyderabad, January 7, 2026, TPN Bureau: Congress MLC Dr. Balmoor Venkat on Wednesday launched a sharp political attack on BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) and the KCR family during a press meet held at the CLP Office. He asserted that the political rise of the KCR family was made possible only due to the Congress party and accused the BRS leadership of arrogance despite electoral setbacks. Dr. Venkat said that the Congress party led the first Telangana movement, delivered the statehood during the second phase, and is now focused on rebuilding Telangana after what he termed a decade of "misgovernance." He claimed that despite losing power, KTR had failed to change his attitude and continued to make irresponsible statements against constitutional institutions and national leaders.

Referring to allegations raised by BRS MLC Kavitha in the Legislative Council, Dr. Venkat challenged her to submit documentary evidence. He said the Congress government was ready to order a thorough inquiry if credible proof was pre-



sented. "Allegations must not remain political statements. If there is sincerity, evidence should be submitted to authorities," he stated.

The Congress MLC pointed out that the BRS had suffered defeats not only in the Assembly elections but also in subsequent by-elections and local body polls. He said these verdicts reflected public dissatisfaction with the BRS leader-

ship's conduct and governance record. According to him, repeated electoral losses should have led to introspection within the party.

Dr. Venkat also alleged internal turmoil within the BRS family, stating that public allegations made by family members had raised serious questions about the party's credibility. He accused the previous BRS government of pushing

Telangana into heavy debt, mortgaging state resources, and prioritizing personal gains over public welfare. Strongly defending Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, he said Telangana's formation was the result of decades of sacrifice by the Congress leadership and cautioned KTR against making disparaging remarks about national leaders. Conclud-

ing his address, Dr. Balmoor Venkat urged the BRS leadership to first respond to allegations concerning its decade-long rule before attacking the present government. He said the Congress administration was committed to transparent governance, accountability, and correcting the damage caused to the state's finances and institutions over the past ten years.

TS Police Seize 1.412 kg of Cannabis, Three Arrested in Dhoolpet Operation

Hyderabad, January 7, 2026, TPN Bureau:

In a significant crackdown on illegal drug activities, the Anti-Smuggling Task Force (ASTF) along with Dhoolpet police officials seized 1.412 kilograms of cannabis from a house in the Imleebagh area of Lower Dhoolpet. The operation, conducted on credible intelligence, has resulted in the arrest of three individuals, while three others remain at large.

According to ASTF A

Team officials, information had been received that cannabis was being sold from house number 14-10-492 in Imleebagh. Acting on this tip-off, a joint team of ASTF and Dhoolpet police conducted a thorough search of the premises and recovered 1.412 kilograms of cannabis.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Arti Bai, Gautam Singh, and Sabita Bai. The remaining suspects, Sarik, Avinash Singh, and Kailash Singh, are currently absconding. ASTF A Team leader Anjireddy confirmed that



efforts are underway to trace and apprehend the fugitives.

Following the seizure, the accused and the recovered narcotics were handed over to the Dhoolpet Excise Station for further investigation and legal proceedings. Police have registered a case against the six individuals involved under the relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. Officials highlighted that the coordinated operation reflects the state's continued focus on curbing the sale and distribution of illegal drugs, particularly in residential areas. "We urge citizens to cooperate and provide any information about drug activities in their neighborhoods," said Anjireddy. "Such intelligence is crucial for preventing the spread of narcotics in the city."

This operation comes amid growing concerns over drug abuse and trafficking in urban areas of Hyderabad. Law enforcement agencies have been intensifying surveillance in hotspots known for narcotics distribution, aiming to dismantle networks that pose a

threat to public health and safety.

Residents of the Imleebagh area expressed relief over the action, noting that such raids help maintain safety and security in their locality. Authorities have assured that more such operations will continue across the city to keep illegal substances off the streets.

The Dhoolpet police and ASTF have appealed to the public to report suspicious activities through official helplines to aid in curbing the menace of drug trafficking.

19th Rajiv Gandhi Under-19 All India Cricket Championship Kicks Off in Amberpet

Amberpet, January 7, 2026 – TPN Bureau: The 19th Rajiv Gandhi Under-19 All India Cricket Championship was inaugurated with great fanfare on Wednesday at the Amberpet Water Works Grounds. The event, organized under the leadership of V. Hanumantha Rao, Chairman of the Cricket Federation of India, was hosted by the Cricket Federation of Hyderabad, with President Adi Avinash and General Secretary Shambhu Srikant Goud overseeing the proceedings.

The tournament was formally inaugurated by Minister of State for Minority Welfare, and former India cricket captain, Mohammed Azharuddin, while TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud attended as the chief guest.

Addressing the gathering, V. Hanumantha Rao highlighted the tournament's legacy, noting that it has been conducted continuously for the past 19 years to promote young cricketing talent across the country. He also announced that the final match of the championship will be held at the LB Stadium on January 10, and will be inaugurated by State Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari. In addition, he stated that



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will personally distribute awards to the standout players. Rao lauded the CM's announcement of the CM Sports University, emphasizing the positive impact it will have on nurturing sporting talent in Telangana.

Speaking at the event, Mahesh Kumar Goud praised V. Hanumantha Rao for his dedication to successfully conducting the tournament over nearly two decades. He recalled Rao's close association with the late Rajiv Gandhi and stressed the importance of sustaining initiatives that promote youth participation in sports.

The inauguration ceremony saw participation from several dignitaries and sports officials, including Amberpet Congress in-charge Dr. C. Rohin Reddy, MLAs Naveen Yadav and Ganesh, Telangana Sports Authority Chairman K.

Shamshabad Police Bust Alcohol Adulteration Gang, Seize Rs. 8 Lakh Worth of Liquor

Hyderabad, January 7, 2026, TPN Bureau:

In a major crackdown on illegal liquor operations, the Shamshabad Excise Police along with the District Task Force (DTF) dismantled a gang involved in mixing low-cost alcohol into expensive liquor bottles and selling it at premium prices. The operation, conducted on Wednesday, led to the seizure of 139 adulterated liquor bottles, 136 empty high-value bottles, and three screw taps, with five suspects arrested in the operation.

According to Shamshabad AES Srinivas Reddy, DTF CI Praveen Kumar, and SI Srikant Reddy, the team—including officers Prakruthi, Mallesh, Nehru, Ganesh, Sai Shankar, and Shekhar—carried out targeted raids around Gachibowli Flyover and Indiranagar. Two individuals were intercepted while transporting 15 bottles of liquor



in a screw tap. Laboratory tests confirmed that premium liquor bottles contained mixed lower-quality liquor.

The initial arrests were of Desini Prakash Goud and Gadwal Bharat, who revealed that the adulterated liquor was being supplied by Aravind, residing in Kukatpally Housing Board. A subsequent search of Aravind's residence recovered 46 bottles of high-value liquor. During interrogation, Aravind dis-

closed that B. Mahanti from Odisha was producing the mixed liquor bottles. Raids at Mahanti's location yielded 54 bottles, while another associate, Vikram, was found with 24 bottles.

Investigations revealed that the gang adulterated expensive brands, including Royal Stag, by mixing cheaper liquor and selling bottles worth Rs. 20,000 at inflated prices for Rs. 10,000, making substantial illegal profits. The gang distribut-

ed these bottles to bars and other outlets across the city, exploiting unsuspecting consumers. Authorities estimate the total value of liquor and materials seized to be around Rs. 8 lakh.

Shamshabad Excise Superintendent Krishna Priya warned the public not to trust individuals offering high-value liquor at low prices, stressing that such adulterated liquor poses severe health risks. The operation received commendation

from Rangareddy Deputy Commissioner P. Dasharath. The seized liquor and materials, along with the arrested suspects, were handed over to the Sharelgampally Excise Station for further legal proceedings. This successful operation highlights the ongoing efforts of Telangana Excise authorities to curb illegal liquor trade and protect consumers from dangerous adulterated alcohol.

Pet Basheerabad Police Advise Public on Safety Measures During Sankranti Festival

Qutbullapur, January 7, 2026, TPN Bureau:

In a strong initiative to As the Sankranti festival approaches, the Pet Basheerabad Police Station has issued key safety guidelines to the public to prevent thefts and other criminal activities during the celebrations. With many people traveling to their hometowns or other destinations to celebrate, the police have urged residents to

remain vigilant and take necessary precautions. Officials noted that festivals often create opportunities for criminals to exploit unattended homes and public spaces. To address this, the police have intensified awareness campaigns across residential colonies, apartments, and public areas within the jurisdiction of Pet Basheerabad. Residents

are being educated directly on preventive measures, including securing their homes, locking doors properly, safeguarding valuables, and reporting any suspicious activity immediately.

The police have also installed informational posters in colonies, apartments, and public areas to remind residents of essential safety tips. Mobile public announcements via

vehicles equipped with loudspeakers are being used to reach a broader audience, emphasizing vigilance during the festival period.

Authorities specifically advised those leaving their homes vacant during travel to inform the nearest police station, notify neighbors, and ensure that CCTV cameras and other security systems are operational. They also high-

lighted the importance of staying alert in public areas and reporting suspicious individuals without delay.

Pet Basheerabad Police Station officials, including CI Vijayvardhan, along with SI officers and staff, actively participated in the awareness initiatives. They stressed that public cooperation is critical to preventing crimes and maintaining community safety during festival times.

Residents were reminded that in case of any emergency or suspicion, they should immediately contact Dial 100 or their local police station. Police officers emphasized that proactive precautions and timely reporting can significantly reduce incidents of theft and ensure that the festival remains safe and enjoyable for everyone.

The initiative reflects the police department's continued commitment to public safety, particularly during festive periods when travel and celebrations increase the risk of criminal activity. Citizens are urged to follow these guidelines carefully to ensure their personal safety, as well as the security of their property, while enjoying the Sankranti festivities with family and friends.

Telangana Police Introduce Charge Sheets in Telugu: A Landmark Step in Policing



Qutbullapur, January 7, 2026 – TPN Bureau: In a groundbreaking initiative aimed at making legal processes more accessible to the public, the Dundigal Police Station in Telangana has pioneered the preparation of charge sheets in Telugu, marking a historic moment in the state's policing history. Traditionally, police reports, charge sheets, and legal documents in Telangana have been drafted in English, often leaving rural residents and those unfamiliar with the language unable to fully comprehend case proceedings. Recognizing this long-standing barrier, the Telangana State Police Department has taken a novel step to bridge the gap between law enforcement and citizens.

The initiative was led by Head Constable Swaroop, a dedicated female officer at Dundigal Police Station, who successfully drafted two complete charge sheets entirely in Telugu for cases assigned to her in 2025. By doing

so, she ensured that both victims and accused could clearly understand the charges and details of the case, without the need for intermediaries or translations. Her meticulous approach eliminated errors and ambiguities, allowing the charge sheets to be submitted directly to senior officials in compliance with legal standards. State DGP B. Shashidhar Reddy lauded the initiative, emphasizing its significance in promoting transparency and accessibility in policing.

Swaroop's efforts have been seen as a model for the entire police department, inspiring officials to consider drafting reports and legal documents in Telugu across various divisions. By providing citizens with charge sheets in their mother tongue, the police department ensures that the legal process is inclusive and comprehensible,



CM Cup Torch Rally Launched in Manuguru, Minister Vakiti Srihari Calls for Nurturing Rural Sports Talent



Manuguru (Bhadradri Kothagudem District), Jan 7, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

The Chief Minister's Cup Torch Rally was formally inaugurated in Manuguru of Bhadradri Kothagudem district on Tuesday by State Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari, who lit the ceremonial torch and flagged off the rally amid enthusiastic participation from students and local youth.

The event was held at the Government Junior College in Manuguru, where the Minister attended as the chief guest. Addressing the gathering, Vakiti Srihari said

he felt privileged to take part in the torch rally as a sportsperson himself, describing the occasion as a moment of pride and responsibility.

Explaining the vision behind the CM Cup, the Minister said the initiative was launched with the objective of identifying talented sportspersons from rural and remote areas and grooming them to compete at national and international levels. He emphasized that grassroots-level talent often remains unnoticed and assured that the CM Cup would serve as a strong platform to bring such athletes into

the spotlight.

Highlighting the government's commitment to sports development, Vakiti Srihari stated that after the formation of the people's government, a budget of 800 crore had been allocated to the sports sector. The funds are being utilized to improve playgrounds, sports infrastructure, and basic facilities across the state. He further announced that an even larger allocation would be made for sports in the upcoming budget, underlining the government's focus on nurturing sporting excellence.

Referring to the legacy

of the Khammam region, the Minister remarked that it has historically been known as a land of struggle and resilience, with a fighting spirit ingrained in its people. He urged students and athletes to carry the same spirit into the field of sports, striving for excellence with determination and discipline.

Vakiti Srihari assured young sportspersons that the government would extend full support at every stage of their sporting careers, irrespective of the level they reach. He advised students to focus on hon-

ing their skills, maintaining physical fitness, and upholding sportsmanship. Expressing optimism, the Minister said he hoped that athletes from Manuguru would make their mark at the international level through the CM Cup competitions this year.

The programme was attended by Pinapaka MLA Payam Venkateswarlu, Bhadrachalam MLA Tellam Venkata Rao, Bhadradri Kothagudem District Collector Jitesh Sri Patel, along with officials, educators, and a large number of students and sports enthusiasts.

DCA Raids Quack's Clinic in Hanumakonda, Seizes Unlicensed Drugs

Hanumakonda, Jan 7, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

The Drugs Control Administration (DCA), Telangana, conducted a raid on a quack's clinic in Damera Village of Elkathurthi Mandal, Hanumakonda district, and seized medicines illegally stocked for sale, officials said on Tuesday.

Acting on credible information, DCA officials raided the premises of an unqualified practitioner, identified as Swargam Sathish Babu, on January 6, 2026. The accused was running a "First Aid Clinic" and allegedly conducting clinical practice without possessing the required medical qualifications or a valid drug licence.

During the inspection, officials detected 30 varieties of medicines stocked at the clinic without authorization. The seized drugs included antibiotics, steroids, analgesics, anti-ulcer medicines, antihypertensive drugs, and other formulations that are re-

quired to be sold only through licensed medical establishments. The total value of the seized stock was estimated at 21,650.

DCA officials expressed serious concern over the presence of antibiotics at the clinic. They warned that the indiscriminate sale and use of antibiotics by unqualified persons could have disastrous consequences on public health, particularly by accelerating the emergence of antimicrobial resistance, which poses a major global health threat.

The raid also revealed the stocking of steroids at the unlicensed clinic. Health officials cautioned that misuse of steroids can lead to severe health complications, including suppression of the immune system, hormonal imbalance, muscle and bone weakness, cardiovascular issues, and psychological disorders. The uncontrolled and unsupervised use of

such drugs, they said, poses significant risks to the public.

The raid was carried out by Sri J. Kiran Kumar, Drugs Inspector, Hanumakonda, under the supervision of Dr G. Rajyalakshmi, Assistant Director, Warangal. Samples of the seized medicines were collected and sent for analysis. Officials stated that further investigation is underway and legal action will be initiated against all those found responsible, in accordance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Issuing an advisory, the Drugs Control Administration warned wholesalers and dealers against supplying medicines to quacks, unqualified practitioners, and unlicensed shops. Such suppliers will face stringent penal action for their involvement in illegal and unauthorized drug supply chains.

The DCA reiterated



that stocking or selling medicines without a valid drug licence is a punishable offence, carrying imprisonment of up to five years. Wholesalers and dealers have been directed to ensure medicines are supplied only to licensed entities after verifying and maintaining proper records.

The public has been urged to report complaints related to illegal drug activities through the DCA Telangana toll-free number 1800-599-6969, available on all working days from 10.30 am to 5 pm.

Congress Leader Ade Gajender Visits Pipri Village Panchayat in Adilabad

Adilabad, January 7, 2026, TPN Bureau: In a significant interaction aimed at reviewing local development initiatives, Ade Gajender, the Congress Party in-charge for Both constituency, visited the Pipri Village Panchayat in the Bazar Hatnur Mandal of Adilabad district on Friday. The visit was undertaken at the invitation of Pipri Village Sarpanch Yell Krishna Kanth, who welcomed Gajender to the Pan-

chayat office. The event provided an opportunity for open dialogue between party leaders and residents, allowing local concerns to be voiced directly to a senior Congress official.

Several Congress leaders and prominent community members attended the programme, including Bazar Hatnur Mandal President Jelke Pandurang, Nandu Kumar, former PACS Chairman Mandula Ramesh, former PACS Director Gavvala Raju Yadav, Bommetha Narayya, Suresh, Ganesh Jadhav, Suryavamsi Pandurang, Ramulu, and youth leaders including Badam Potaredy, Yandi Saddam, and Ram Lakshman. Their presence underscored the party's em-



phasis on connecting with grassroots leaders and local residents. The visit also focused on understanding the challenges faced by villagers in accessing government schemes and resources. Discussions covered topics such as infrastructure development, welfare program implementation, and strategies to enhance participation in local governance.

Ade Gajender's visit to Pipri Village Pan-

Students Explore Nature and Wildlife at Ali Sagar Nature Camp in Adilabad



Adilabad, January 7, 2026, TPN Bureau

Peddapalli MP GIn an effort to instill environmental awareness among young students, a group of students from Saraswati Shishu Mandir schools in Ichod, Mudhol, Nirmal, and Neradigonda are participating in a three-day Nature Camp at Ali Sagar, a popular tourist and ecological site in Nizamabad district. The camp, organized by the Telangana government, aims to provide students with hands-on experiences of forest ecosystems and wildlife.

Expressing his satisfaction with the initiative, Santosh Kumar, Principal of Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Ichod, said, "We are delighted that our students are participating in this nature camp. It provides them with valuable opportunities to understand and appreciate the environment. Through such experiences, they can develop a lifelong commitment to preserving nature and inspiring future generations."

During the camp, students explored a variety of forest plants, observed bird calls in their natural habitats, and studied the agricultural fields under the Ali Sagar irrigation system. They also participated in canoe rides on the reservoir and observed wild animals in the area, gaining firsthand exposure to the beauty and diversity of local flora and fauna.

To deepen their un-

SIT Issues Notice to Telangana CM Revanth Reddy's Brother in Phone-Tapping Case



Hyderabad, Janu-

ary 7, 2026 — TPN Bureau: In a significant development in the ongoing phone-tapping investigation in Telangana, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has issued a notice to Kondal Reddy, the brother of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, asking him to appear for questioning as part of the probe. The notice marks a fresh phase in the high-profile case that has unfolded over the past two years and continues to draw political and public attention.

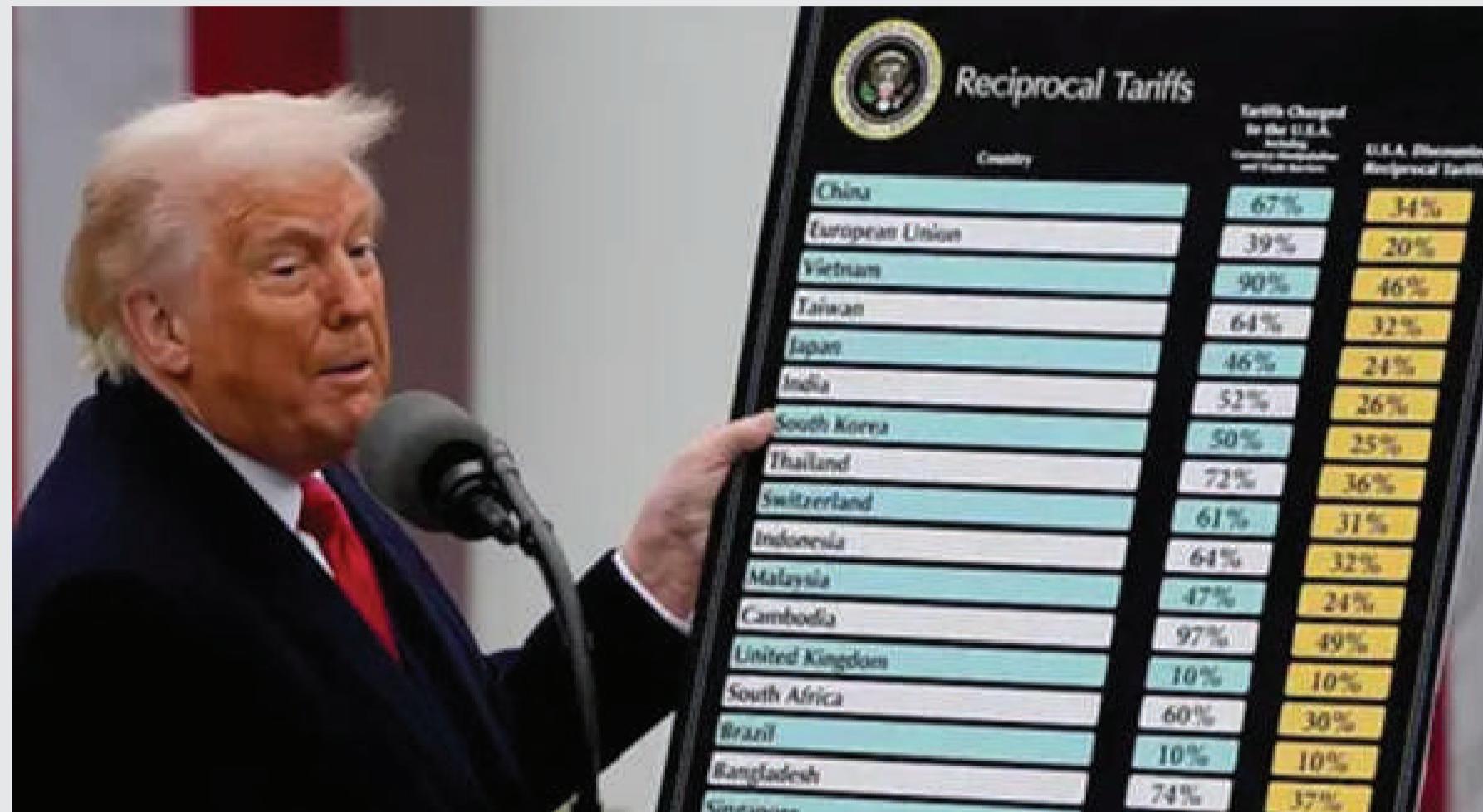
According to police sources, the SIT has directed Kondal Reddy to present himself before officials at the Jubilee Hills Police Station at 11 a.m. on Thursday for examination and recording of his statement. The development comes amid allegations that his phone was among those allegedly tapped during the period when the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) was in power in Telangana. At that time, Revanth Reddy was serving as the President of the state Congress party — a period marked by heightened political tension and accusations of illegal surveillance.

Investigators have reportedly discovered evidence suggesting that a network of phone numbers, including several belonging to political figures, were subject to unauthorized interception. Phones allegedly tapped in the network include those of political leaders, relatives and others connected to public figures. The inclusion of a family member of the current Chief Minister underscores the broad scope of the investigation and its potential impact on the political landscape.

The broader case emerged in early 2024 after allegations surfaced that unauthorized surveillance was carried out on hundreds of mobile phones, including those of opposition leaders, journalists and others. The controversy has since evolved into a major legal and political issue in the state, prompting multiple rounds of questioning, evidence gathering, and court interventions.

Authorities say that the SIT is intensifying its investigation and that further notices may be issued as new leads are evaluated. The inquiry has reached a crucial stage, with law enforcement officials indicating that they will continue to pursue all credible evidence and testimony.

Why Trump's Tariffs Failed to Stop the World From Trading



Last year was meant to be a turning point for the global economy. With President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs returning to centre stage, many analysts predicted that international trade would enter a period of rapid decline. The scale and ambition of the tariff regime, it was argued, would be enough to fracture global supply chains, choke cross-border commerce, and possibly reverse decades of globalisation. Some even suggested the world was witnessing the beginning of a new economic isolationism reminiscent of the 1930s.

But in 2026, the data tells a strikingly different story.

According to the latest figures from the United Nations Conference on

Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the total value of global trade in 2025 likely surpassed \$35 trillion for the first time in history—an increase of roughly 7 per cent over the previous year. This growth came despite heightened trade barriers, tariff uncertainty, and persistent geopolitical tension. Far from collapsing, global trade has shown a stubborn resilience that defies both political rhetoric and economic pessimism.

This is not to say tariffs had no effect. They clearly did. In the first half of 2025, global trade patterns were distorted by a wave of panic-buying and front-loaded orders. Importers rushed to move goods across borders before new duties took effect, while export-

ers scrambled to secure contracts ahead of possible restrictions. For a time, it appeared as though companies were desperately racing against politics itself, trying to outrun an approaching shutdown of the global marketplace.

Yet this short-term turbulence masked a deeper reality: the structure of global trade has changed fundamentally. This is no longer an economy defined solely by shipping containers, steel slabs, or factory floors. Goods still matter, but they are no longer the whole story—or even the most dynamic part of it.

Trade in services grew by 9 per cent in 2025, outpacing merchandise trade and underscoring how rapidly the global economy is dematerialis-

ing. Governments can impose tariffs on washing machines, aluminium, or automobiles, but it is far more difficult to restrict the flow of cloud computing services, software licences, financial products, chip designs, or digital content. In an era of remote work, cross-border data flows, and platform-based commerce, value increasingly moves in forms that customs officials cannot easily tax or block.

Even when tariffs apply to physical goods, their economic effects can be counterintuitive. Higher trade barriers often raise prices, increasing the total value of trade even if the volume of goods exchanged declines. In the first six months of last year, prices for many tradable

goods rose sharply, likely reflecting uncertainty driven by US trade policy. As a result, the dollar value embedded in global trade continued to climb even as friction increased.

This dynamic becomes even clearer if the United States succeeds in reshoring parts of its manufacturing base. Producing T-shirts or basic consumer goods domestically may reduce imports of finished products, but it will not eliminate the need for expensive machinery, specialised components, and advanced intermediate goods. In fact, these inputs often carry higher value than the final products themselves. The paradox of protectionism is that it can shrink trade volumes while inflating

trade values.

Technology only reinforces this reality. Trade policy can be reversed or rewritten, but technological progress moves in one direction. The rise of artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy systems is creating supply chains that no single country can fully internalise. Demand for critical inputs—metals from Africa, semiconductors from Taiwan, precision equipment from Japan, and specialised software from Europe—continues to grow regardless of tariff regimes.

When production is geographically dispersed and demand is both global and urgent, governments cannot simply shut down imports. At best, they can shift bot-

tlenecks from one part of the supply chain to another. More often, they raise costs for domestic consumers while a select group of “trusted partners” adapts and continues to profit. Trade does not disappear; it reroutes.

This is why several export-oriented economies have continued to post record numbers despite US trade pressure. South Korea, though frequently targeted by Washington over tariffs and investment demands, appears to have crossed \$700 billion in exports for the first time. Taiwan estimates that its trade expanded by 7.37 per cent in 2025, its fastest growth rate in more than 15 years. These outcomes would have seemed improbable to those predicting an imminent collapse of global commerce.

Many of those forecasts failed to account for three critical forces: services, technology, and the peculiar mathematics of value addition. But perhaps the most underestimated factor was human behaviour. Entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and traders are remarkably adept at navigating constraints. When one market becomes more hostile, they search for alternatives. When one supply chain becomes risky, they build another.

In recent years, much corporate energy was devoted to reducing dependence on Chinese suppliers. Increasingly, that focus is shifting toward de-risking exposure to US buyers. The pursuit of resilient supply chains is evolving into a search for reliable and predictable markets. UNCTAD's data reflects this shift: South-South trade is growing faster than the global average, while intra-regional trade in East Asia

rose by 10 per cent in 2025. Regional integration is no longer a fallback option; it is becoming a central pillar of global commerce.

None of this diminishes the importance of the United States. It remains the world's largest consumer market and a critical node in global demand. Trade barriers imposed by Washington will have uneven and, in some cases, devastating effects. Certain countries and sectors will lose contracts, factories will close, and workers will bear real costs. But the impact will not be uniform or terminal. Most economies will adapt by diversifying export destinations, building regional partnerships, or finding indirect pathways into the US market.

UNCTAD has cautioned that the full impact of rising trade friction may still lie ahead, warning that a slowdown in 2026 remains possible. There will be difficult moments, disruptions, and painful adjustments. But the lessons of 2025 are already clear. The global economy is far more resilient than it is often given credit for, and the forces pushing nations toward integration—technology, specialisation, and human ingenuity—are stronger than the political impulses pulling them apart.

Even if America chooses to shut its doors, the marketplace beyond its borders will not stand still. New models of trade are emerging, built on regional networks, cross-border services, and technological transformation. Globalisation is not ending; it is evolving. And despite the noise of tariffs and trade wars, the world continues to find ways to do business.

When Arunachal Becomes a “Core Interest”: China’s Quiet Challenge to India’s Sovereignty

The United States Department of Defense's annual report to Congress has sounded a fresh alarm for India by noting that China has expanded its definition of “core interests” to include Arunachal Pradesh. This development is not merely rhetorical. In Chinese strategic thinking, the term “core interests” carries deep political, diplomatic, and military significance, and its expansion has far-reaching implications for India’s territorial integrity, border negotiations, and regional security.

The concept of “core interests” entered Chinese diplomatic vocabulary in the early 2000s. While the term itself is not formally codified, it has been used consistently by Beijing to describe issues on which it claims zero tolerance for compromise. In 2003, then Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan told his US counterpart that Taiwan constituted a core interest for China, warning that any mismanagement of the issue could damage Sino-US relations. The message was unmistakable: challenges to China’s core interests could invite serious consequences.

In the years that followed, Beijing repeatedly invoked the concept to signal red lines. In 2004, when the United States approved the sale of a radar system

to Taiwan, China’s foreign ministry warned that it would not tolerate actions by foreign powers that harmed its core interests.

The term resurfaced in 2008 after French President Nicolas Sarkozy met the Dalai Lama, with Beijing asserting that Tibet was an issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity. By the 2010s, Japanese media reported that China had widened the scope of its core interests to include the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, underscoring its growing assertiveness in territorial disputes.

Against this backdrop, Arunachal Pradesh’s apparent inclusion in China’s core interests represents a troubling escalation rather than a sudden departure.

An Old Dispute, Renewed Aggression

China’s claims over Arunachal Pradesh are not new. However, the intensity and frequency with which Beijing has pressed the issue have increased markedly since the mid-2000s. In 2006, China denied a visa to an Indian bureaucrat from Arunachal Pradesh, triggering a practice that would become emblematic of Beijing’s approach: issuing visas on loose sheets of paper rather than stamping Indian passports, thereby implicitly

questioning India’s sovereignty over the state. In 2009, China went a step further by opposing an Asian Development Bank loan for a water project in Arunachal Pradesh, explicitly challenging India’s right to undertake development activity in the region. These actions were early indicators of a strategy aimed at internationalising the dispute and gradually eroding India’s claims.

The issue has gained even greater salience since the India-China military standoff that began in eastern Ladakh in 2020. Arunachal Pradesh has increasingly featured in China’s diplomatic protests and military signalling. In 2021, Beijing objected to then Vice President Venkaiah Naidu’s visit to the state. Tensions peaked in December 2022 when Chinese troops attempted to alter the status quo in the Yangtse area of the Tawang sector, leading to a physical confrontation with Indian forces.

Concurrently, China has sought to reshape the narrative through language and cartography. Beijing has replaced the term “Tibet” with “Xizang” and now refers to Arunachal Pradesh as “Zangnan,” or South Tibet. Over the past few years, China has repeatedly told her that her Indian passport was invalid

and insisted she obtain a Chinese travel document. This was despite the fact that she had travelled to China without incident just weeks earlier. China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently reiterated that Arunachal Pradesh—referred to as Zangnan—belongs to China and that Beijing has never recognised the “so-called Arunachal Pradesh.” The Chinese ambassador to India echoed this position, linking it to unresolved issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

A similar but less-publicised incident occurred in December 2025, when an Indian-born Tibetan tourist was detained at Shanghai airport. He was subjected to extensive questioning about his Indian citizenship, his family connections, and his travel history. Chinese officials reportedly searched his belongings, scrutinised his social media accounts, accessed his phone, and even photographed his family members. Ultimately, he was escorted out of China on a flight to Bangkok.

These cases suggest a deliberate pattern: using travel and transit as tools to question the legitimacy of Indian nationality for individuals linked to Arunachal Pradesh or Tibet. This represents a low-cost, high-impact tactic that allows China to assert its claims without overt military escalation.

India’s Response and Strategic Dilemmas

New Delhi has responded

ed firmly, reiterating that Arunachal Pradesh is an inalienable part of India and that its residents are entitled to travel on Indian passports like any other citizen. The government has sought assurances from Beijing that Indian nationals will not be selectively targeted while transiting through China and has advised citizens to exercise discretion when travelling there, though it has stopped short of issuing a formal travel advisory.

However, the strategic implications of China elevating Arunachal Pradesh to the status of a core interest are profound. By tying the issue to sovereignty and territorial integrity, Beijing has effectively hardened its negotiating position, making any resolution of the LAC dispute even more complex and protracted.

Compounding India’s concerns is the fact that China’s position on Arunachal Pradesh has found support from Pakistan. This alignment, combined with Beijing’s initiative to convene a trilateral meeting with Pakistan and Bangladesh in June 2025, signals a broader regional strategy aimed at constraining India’s strategic space.

The expansion of China’s core interests to include Arunachal Pradesh is not just a semantic shift—it is a strategic signal. Ignoring it would be a mistake India can ill afford.



and insisted she obtain a Chinese travel document. This was despite the fact that she had travelled to China without incident just weeks earlier.

China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently reiterated that Arunachal Pradesh—referred to as Zangnan—belongs to China and that Beijing has never recognised the “so-called Arunachal Pradesh.” The Chinese ambassador to India echoed this position, linking it to unresolved issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

A similar but less-publicised incident occurred in December 2025, when an Indian-born Tibetan tourist was detained at Shanghai airport. He was subjected to extensive questioning about his Indian citizenship, his family connections, and his travel history. Chinese officials reportedly searched his belongings, scrutinised his social media accounts, accessed his phone, and even photographed his family members. Ultimately, he was escorted out of China on a flight to Bangkok.

These cases suggest a deliberate pattern: using travel and transit as tools to question the legitimacy of Indian nationality for individuals linked to Arunachal Pradesh or Tibet. This represents a low-cost, high-impact tactic that allows China to assert its claims without overt military escalation.

India’s Response and Strategic Dilemmas

New Delhi has responded

ed firmly, reiterating that Arunachal Pradesh is an inalienable part of India and that its residents are entitled to travel on Indian passports like any other citizen. The government has sought assurances from Beijing that Indian nationals will not be selectively targeted while transiting through China and has advised citizens to exercise discretion when travelling there, though it has stopped short of issuing a formal travel advisory.

However, the strategic implications of China elevating Arunachal Pradesh to the status of a core interest are profound. By tying the issue to sovereignty and territorial integrity, Beijing has effectively hardened its negotiating position, making any resolution of the LAC dispute even more complex and protracted.

Compounding India’s concerns is the fact that China’s position on Arunachal Pradesh has found support from Pakistan. This alignment, combined with Beijing’s initiative to convene a trilateral meeting with Pakistan and Bangladesh in June 2025, signals a broader regional strategy aimed at constraining India’s strategic space.

The expansion of China’s core interests to include Arunachal Pradesh is not just a semantic shift—it is a strategic signal. Ignoring it would be a mistake India can ill afford.

Shiv Sena Candidate Stabbed While Campaigning Ahead of Mumbai BMC Elections

Mumbai:

Political tensions in Mumbai escalated sharply on Wednesday after a Shiv Sena candidate was stabbed during campaigning ahead of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections. Haji Salim Qureshi, the official candidate of the Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, was attacked while conducting door-to-door outreach in the Bandra area, police said.

The incident took place in the Dnyaneshwar Nagar locality of Bandra East, a densely populated area that has seen intense political activity in recent weeks. According to preliminary information, Qureshi was interacting with residents as part of his campaign when he was confronted by a group of unidentified individuals. An altercation reportedly followed, during which one of the assailants stabbed him in the stomach with a knife before fleeing the scene.

Qureshi was immediately rushed to Mahatma Gandhi Hospital, where he was admitted for treatment. Hospital sources said his condition is stable, though doctors are keeping him under close observation. The attack has raised serious concerns over the safety of candidates and party workers as the high-profile civic body elections draw closer.



The stabbing triggered tension in Bandra and nearby localities, with supporters of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena gathering in large numbers to protest the incident. Many alleged a major security lapse and demanded swift action against those responsible. To prevent any escalation or retaliatory violence, the police deployed additional personnel across the ward and surrounding areas.

A senior police official said the area was immediately cordoned off and that investigators were examining CCTV footage from nearby buildings to identify the attackers. "The

motive behind the assault is under investigation. We are exploring all possible angles, including political rivalry and personal enmity," the official said, adding that no arrests had been made so far.

The incident comes at a critical time in the BMC election campaign, with polling scheduled for January 15 and the counting of votes set for January 16. Control of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation is considered politically significant, making the campaign particularly intense.

The attack on Qureshi is the latest in a series of violent incidents reported during the election season in Maharashtra. Earlier on Wednesday, tensions flared in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar during the campaign of former Member of Parliament and AIMIM leader Imtiaz Jaleel, after a mob allegedly attempted to attack his vehicle. Jaleel later accused rival political groups of attempting to intimidate voters.

With election day approaching, the police have placed sensitive areas across the state on high alert and appealed to political parties and their supporters to maintain restraint during the final and crucial phase of campaigning.

Thieves Steal Two Sandalwood Trees from Kerala Police Academy Campus

Thrissur: In a shocking incident, thieves managed to steal two sandalwood trees from the Kerala Police Academy campus in Thrissur district, one of the state's most heavily guarded locations. The trees, estimated to be over 30 years old, are believed to be worth several lakhs of rupees.

The theft came to light days after it allegedly occurred, as personnel on the campus were initially unaware of the incident. Sathesh TU, the academy estate officer, filed a complaint with the Viyyur police, prompting the registration of a case and the launch of an investigation.

The location of the crime has raised serious concerns. The Kerala Police Academy is among the most secure premises in the district, with armed personnel stationed around the clock. Hundreds of police officers and trainees are present on the campus daily. Spread over nearly 348 acres, the academy is Kerala Police's largest training facility after the state police headquarters.

Despite the extensive security arrangements, the thieves reportedly managed to enter the campus and cut down two valuable sandal-



wood trees. Investigators said only the core portions of the trees, considered the most valuable, were removed, indicating the operation may have been carried out by individuals with experience handling such high-value wood.

Police believe the theft took place sometime between December 27 and January 2, although no concrete evidence or clues have emerged so far. A large portion of the academy campus is forested, with sandalwood, teak, and rose-

wood trees spread across the estate. Officials acknowledge that monitoring such a vast and partially overgrown area remains a challenge, despite round-the-clock security.

In response to the theft, the academy administration has issued a special circular directing heightened vigilance across the campus. Night patrols are to be intensified, and stricter checks on all individuals entering or exiting the campus have been mandated. The circular, issued by the ad-

ministrative Deputy Superintendent of Police, also emphasizes the need for closer monitoring of the forested sections of the academy grounds.

The incident has prompted police to review security protocols and consider additional measures to protect high-value natural resources within police properties. Investigators are continuing their probe and examining possible leads to identify and apprehend the perpetrators.

Supreme Court Grants Interim Protection to Folk Singer Neha Singh Rathore in Pahalgam Case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted interim protection from arrest to folk singer Neha Singh Rathore in a case related to her social media posts about the Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir. The posts allegedly referenced the killing of 26 tourists in Pahalgam and targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and the BJP.

A bench of Justices J.K. Maheshwari and Atul S. Chandrasekhar issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh government and the complainant in the case, directing that no coercive action be taken against Rathore. The court also instructed the singer to appear before the Investigating Officer and cooperate with the ongoing probe.



Rathore had earlier approached the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court seeking anticipatory bail, but her plea was rejected on December 5 last year. The court had noted that she had not cooperated with the investigation, despite earlier directions

issued by another bench that had dismissed her petition seeking quashing of the FIR.

The First Information Report (FIR) against Rathore was registered at the Hazratganj police station in Lucknow on April 27, 2025. The FIR, filed by one Abhay Pratap Singh, accused Rathore of targeting a specific religious community

and attempting to incite communal tensions, thereby threatening the unity and integrity of the country. Singh alleged that Rathore had "repeatedly attempted to incite one community against another on religious grounds" through her social media posts.

In her legal plea, Rathore

contended that she had been wrongfully implicated under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including charges of promoting communal hatred, disturbing public peace, and endangering India's sovereignty, unity and integrity. She also faces allegations under the Information Technology Act for content shared online.

The Supreme Court's interim protection comes as a relief to Rathore, who continues to face scrutiny over her social media activity. The court's directive ensures that she will not be arrested until further orders, while allowing the investigation to proceed.

The case has drawn significant attention, highlighting the legal challenges faced by artists and public figures in India regarding freedom of expression, social media use, and accountability for comments on sensitive national issues. Investigators continue to examine the content of Rathore's posts as part of the broader inquiry.

MK Stalin Safe After Tyre Issue in Convoy During Return from Dindigul



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had a narrow escape on Tuesday after the vehicle in which he was travelling developed a tyre problem while he was returning to Madurai airport from Dindigul district, police officials said. The Chief Minister was unharmed and was immediately shifted to another vehicle as a precaution.

The incident occurred at the end of a day-long official visit to Dindigul, where Stalin attended a major government function. He was travelling in a Land Rover Defender SUV when the tyre issue occurred. Police sources clarified that the vehicle was not part of the official fleet but belonged to a DMK functionary. While one senior police officer described the incident as a tyre-related issue, another official said it was a routine puncture rather than a tyre burst. Authorities confirmed that there was no threat to the Chief Minister's safety.

Earlier in the day, Stalin presided over a large public programme in Dindigul during which he inaugurated completed development projects, laid foundation

stones for new works, and distributed welfare assistance. According to an official release, the combined value of the projects and schemes unveiled during the event stood at 1,595 crore.

During his address, the Chief Minister launched a sharp political attack on Union Home Minister Amit Shah, particularly over remarks relating to religious rights and temple administration in Tamil Nadu. Responding to Shah's recent allegation that Hindu religious practices were being restricted in the State, Stalin dismissed the charge as "baseless" and said it did not reflect the ground reality.

Stalin said that under the current DMK government, consecration ceremonies, or kumbhabhishekam, had been conducted in nearly 4,000 temples across Tamil Nadu. He also highlighted that temple lands worth approximately 7,701 crore, covering more than 7,600 acres, had been recovered from encroachments. "The Dravidian model government safeguards the rights of all religions and ensures dignity for every faith," he

said. His remarks came against the backdrop of a recent order by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, which upheld a single-judge ruling permitting the lighting of a deepam on a pillar adjacent to the Thiruparankundram hilltop dargah. Without referring directly to the case, Stalin accused sections of the BJP of attempting to politicise religious issues and disrupt communal harmony in the State.

"The people of Tamil Nadu will not allow religious harmony to be disturbed for political gain," the Chief Minister said. He added that the 2026 Assembly election would be a decisive contest over whether Tamil Nadu would continue to be governed from Chennai or be "remote-controlled from Delhi."

Following the convoy incident, Stalin proceeded to Madurai airport and departed as scheduled. Officials said security arrangements were reviewed after the incident, and the situation was brought under control without any disruption to his travel plans.

Fadnavis Pays Tribute to Vilasrao Deshmukh, Assures Development for Latur



Latur: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday emphasized that while the BJP contests elections against the Congress, it respects the legacy of former Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh for his significant contributions to the state. His remarks came amid a controversy triggered by recent comments from state BJP chief Ravindra Chavan, who had said that memories of Deshmukh would be "wiped out" from his hometown, Latur.

Chavan's statement on Monday sparked backlash from the Congress and emotional reactions from Deshmukh's son, Bollywood actor Riteish Deshmukh. The BJP leader later apologized for his remarks. Addressing a 'Vijay Sankalp Sabha' rally in Latur ahead of the January 15 municipal elections, Fadnavis clarified the party's stance.

"Latur has given several prominent leaders to Maharashtra, including former

Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil Chakurkar and former CM Shivaji Patil Nilangekar. Chakurkar served as municipal council chief of Latur and later became Lok Sabha Speaker, which is a rare achievement," Fadnavis said.

He added, "Former Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh, who transformed Latur, is respected beyond political boundaries. His role in shaping Maharashtra is acknowledged by everyone." On Chavan's remarks, Fadnavis explained that there was "confusion and disarray" during his visit, noting that the BJP state president had intended to highlight the party's political ambitions in Latur but had used "wrong words," which he later corrected through an apology.

The CM also recalled former BJP leader Gopinath Munde, noting that though Munde was not from Latur, he worked extensively for the region, highlighting the

district's legacy of producing influential leaders.

Speaking on local development, Fadnavis said Latur faced severe water scarcity in 2016, prompting his government to send trains carrying water. "We turned this challenge into an opportunity through schemes like Jalyukt Shivar," he said.

Fadnavis announced several upcoming projects aimed at modernizing Latur, including the operationalization of the railway coach factory, which will manufacture Vande Bharat trains and provide employment to 10,000 people. He also revealed plans for a new expressway connecting Latur to Mumbai, expected to boost industrial growth in the region.

The BJP is contesting all 70 seats in the Latur Municipal Corporation elections independently, while the Congress is also fielding candidates for all seats, setting the stage for a direct political contest.

Trump Administration Demands Exclusive US Oil Partnership from Venezuela



The United States has reportedly laid down strict conditions for Venezuela's interim government in exchange for access to its crucial oil reserves, according to sources cited by ABC News. The demands, which come after a dramatic US military intervention that ousted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro last week, seek to reshape Caracas's geopolitical alignments and place the country's oil industry firmly under Washington's influence.

At the centre of the US strategy is a call for Venezuela to sever economic ties with key global players including "China, Russia, Iran and Cuba". Washington insists that before Venezuela can be allowed to increase oil production or export more crude, it must end its strategic and economic partnerships with those nations — ties that have historically underpinned Caracas's economy and political support.

In addition, the Trump administration wants Venezuela to "partner exclusively with the United States on oil production" and to favour American buyers when selling its heavy crude. The move is seen as an effort to shift Venezuela's long-standing energy partnerships, especially with China — traditionally one of its largest oil customers — toward the US market.

According to these reports, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has briefed lawmakers in private about

the approach, arguing that Venezuela's oil logistics — including full tankers and limited storage — give Washington leverage to push for compliance. US officials estimate that Caracas could face financial strain in the coming weeks if supplies remain unsold due to a US-imposed export blockade, increasing pressure on the interim government to agree to Washington's terms.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Roger Wicker also confirmed that the broader strategy is focused on gaining control of Venezuela's oil infrastructure without the need for additional US troop deployments. This includes overseeing tankers and shipments to ensure Venezuelan oil flows to markets preferred by the United States rather than rival consumers.

President Trump himself has publicly asserted that Venezuela would turn over "between 30 million and 50 million barrels of oil to the United States", with the proceeds to be managed under US control "to benefit the people of Venezuela and the United States."

The reported demands represent a significant shift in Washington's approach to Venezuelan oil policy and geopolitical positioning, raising questions about sovereignty, global energy markets and the future of Venezuela's relations with long-standing partners such as China, Russia and Cuba.

India Calls for Peaceful Resolution in Venezuela, Emphasises Citizens' Welfare



India has voiced "deep concern over the unfolding political situation in Venezuela", particularly after the United States carried out a military operation that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar emphasised that New Delhi's foremost priority is the well-being and safety of the Venezuelan people as the country navigates a period of intense uncertainty and change.

Speaking at an event in Luxembourg, Jaishankar called on all parties involved in the crisis to come together and work toward a peaceful and constructive resolution. "We are concerned at the developments, but we would really urge all the parties involved to now sit down and sort of come to a position which is in the interest of the well-being and the safety of the people of Venezuela," he said, highlighting India's long-standing diplomatic relations with the South American nation.

India's concern stems from its historic bilateral relationship with Venezuela, a country with which India has maintained good ties for many years, particularly in the energy sector. Jaishankar underlined that whatever direction events take, New Delhi wants to ensure that Venezuelans themselves emerge from the crisis in a safe and positive manner.

The crisis escalated after a dramatic US military operation in early January, during which elite forces entered Caracas and ultimately flew

Maduro and his wife to New York. The couple appeared in a Manhattan court and pleaded not guilty to federal drug trafficking and related charges. Maduro, defiant in court, declared in Spanish that he was "innocent, not guilty, and a decent man." The trial is set to continue, with the next hearing scheduled for March 17.

Following Maduro's removal, Venezuela's vice president, Delcy Rodríguez, was sworn in as interim president by the country's top court, leading to a leadership transition amid significant political upheaval. International reactions have been mixed, with some countries condemning the US action and others calling for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

In its official response to the Venezuela situation, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also reiterated India's support for peace and dialogue. The MEA has been closely monitoring developments and has urged all concerned to address the crisis through diplomatic channels. India has also advised its nationals to avoid non-essential travel to Venezuela and has advised Indians currently in the country to remain in close contact with the Indian Embassy in Caracas for their safety.

As the situation continues to evolve, India's stance reflects "a balanced diplomatic approach", avoiding overt criticism of any single party while emphasising humanitarian concerns and the need for peaceful political dialogue in Venezuela.

Russian Tanker Marinera Seized by US Forces Amid Sanctions Dispute



The United States has seized a Russian-flagged oil tanker in the North Sea, escalating tensions with Moscow and highlighting Washington's continued enforcement of sanctions against vessels linked to illicit oil trade. The tanker, now named Marinera, had been under US surveillance for more than two weeks before the operation was carried out.

Russia responded sharply to the move. In a statement issued through state news agency Tass, the Russian Foreign Ministry urged the United States to ensure the "humane and dignified treatment" of Russian citizens aboard the vessel and to respect their rights and interests. Russia's Ministry of Transport also condemned the seizure, arguing that under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, no country has the right to use force against vessels legally registered under another state's jurisdiction. While the US has not formally ratified the convention, it generally recognises many of its provisions as customary international law.

The US military's European Command confirmed the seizure in a post on X, stating that the tanker was taken over for violating American sanctions. According to the statement, the operation involved multiple US agencies, including the Justice Department, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth later re-shared the post, emphasising

that the US blockade on sanctioned Venezuelan oil remains in force worldwide.

The United Kingdom also acknowledged its role, saying it provided "enabling support" to the operation. The UK Ministry of Defence said British forces assisted US military assets in interdicting the vessel in the UK-Iceland-Greenland gap following a request from Washington. Reports from The New

The tanker was originally named Bella 1 and was sanctioned by the US in 2024. It later changed its name to Marinera and was reportedly transporting oil from Iran to Venezuela. After attempting to evade a US-led blockade near Venezuelan waters, the vessel altered course and headed back into the Atlantic. In December, its crew reportedly resisted a previous boarding attempt near Venezuela. Shortly afterward, a Russian flag was painted on the hull and the ship was added to Russia's shipping registry, prompting Moscow to lodge a diplomatic protest.

US authorities say the seizure is part of a broader crackdown on so-called "ghost fleet" tankers used to bypass sanctions. On the same day, the US Coast Guard boarded the tanker, avoiding a potential confrontation between US and Russian forces. Russian state broadcaster RT released images showing a helicopter approaching the ship and claimed that a boarding operation was underway. Reuters, citing US officials, also confirmed the attempt.

US, Denmark Set Talks on Greenland as Trump Raises Military Option



The United States is set to hold talks with Denmark next week regarding Greenland, amid heightened tensions sparked by renewed statements from President Donald Trump about the strategic importance of the island. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirmed that he will meet with Danish officials to discuss the issue, following weeks of speculation about America's interest in acquiring the territory.

Trump reignited controversy on Tuesday by suggesting that the US could take control of Greenland by force if necessary, stating, "US military is always an option." The remarks have drawn criticism from European leaders and Danish officials, who emphasize the island's status as part of the Kingdom of Denmark and its importance within NATO.

In response, Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said that both the Danish and Greenlandic governments had formally requested a meeting with Rubio. Rasmussen

described the talks as an opportunity to clarify misunderstandings about Washington's intentions. "When we want this, it is of course because we have the impression that part of this discussion is based on a misreading of what is what," he told reporters. "We believe it makes sense to try to arrange a meeting with our American counterparts in order to clear up some of the misunderstandings that may exist."

Greenland's Foreign Minister, Vivian Motzfeldt, echoed this sentiment in a Facebook post, noting that the purpose of the upcoming discussions would be "to discuss the United States' strong statements regarding Greenland." Both officials emphasized the goal of resolving tensions diplomatically rather than escalating the situation.

European leaders have weighed in, issuing a joint statement warning Trump

that administration prefers a diplomatic resolution. According to the Associated Press, Rubio told a select group of lawmakers that the administration's goal is to purchase Greenland rather than resort to military intervention. Trump has repeatedly framed the island as strategically critical for US security, particularly in light of increased Russian and Chinese activity in the Arctic region.

Greenland is a self-governing territory of Denmark and holds significant geopolitical and natural resource value, including minerals, oil, and gas reserves. The island's location also makes it a strategically important outpost in the Arctic. The upcoming meeting between Rubio and Danish officials is expected to focus on addressing misunderstandings, clarifying US intentions, and ensuring that diplomatic channels remain open, in hopes of preventing further escalation in the transatlantic relationship.

US Executes Complex Raid, Captures Venezuelan President Maduro



In a high-stakes operation described as the most complex since the 2011 Abbottabad raid that killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the United States captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. President Donald Trump announced the operation on social media, stating that the US had "successfully carried out a large-scale strike against Venezuela and its leader" and confirmed that both Maduro and his wife had been "captured and flown out of the country" with the operation conducted "in conjunction with US Law Enforcement."

The couple was later taken to New York, where they appeared in court on Monday, pleading not guilty to drug trafficking and other charges. Following the capture, Maduro's former deputy, Delcy Rodríguez, was sworn in as interim president.

The mission involved a significant deployment of manpower, intelligence, and advanced military as-

sets. Among the elite forces engaged was Delta Force, the United States' premier special operations unit specializing in high-risk missions such as counter-terrorism, hostage rescues, and capturing high-value targets.

The Delta Force has a history of covert operations, including the hunt for Osama bin Laden, Operation Gothic Serpent in Somalia, and the raid on

ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Supporting the ground forces was the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), known for its nighttime operational capabilities and expertise in deploying specialized helicopters, including Black Hawks, Chinooks, and Little Birds. Over 150 US warplanes participated in the operation, including B-1

Lancers, F-22 Raptors, F-35 Lightning IIs, F/A-18 Super Hornets, EA-18 Growlers, and E-2 Hawkeyes. The stealth drone RQ-170 Sentinel, operated by the US Air Force for intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance, also played a key role in the mission.

Intelligence from a small CIA team on the ground since August, including an asset close to

Maduro, helped pinpoint his location and monitor his patterns of life, making the operation more precise. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine noted that team members ranged in age from 20 to 49 years old.

After being captured, Maduro was first flown to a US military base and later transported aboard the USS Iwo Jima, a high-capacity amphibious assault ship capable of deploying troops, helicopters, and vehicles directly to shore.

The operation was deadly. Venezuela's military reported that at least 24 of its security officers were killed, bringing the total confirmed death count to 56, including 32 Cuban military and police personnel stationed in Venezuela. Cuban authorities declared two days of mourning, while Venezuela's Attorney General, Tarek William Saab, said prosecutors would investigate the deaths, describing them as a potential "war crime."

Indian Equity Markets Slip as Sensex Drops Around 200 Points, Nifty Near 26,100

Indian equity markets ended lower on Wednesday as benchmark indices came under selling pressure, driven by profit booking, weak global cues, and investor caution ahead of key corporate earnings. The BSE Sensex declined by nearly 200 points, while the Nifty 50 hovered close to the 26,100 mark, reflecting a cautious mood across Dalal Street.

The market opened on a muted note and remained volatile throughout the session. Heavy-weight stocks in the banking, IT, and metal sectors witnessed selling, dragging the indices lower. Although a few defensive stocks provided limited support, it was not enough to offset the broader weakness seen across frontline and mid-cap shares.

Market experts pointed to three major factors behind the decline.

First, profit booking after the recent rally weighed on sentiment. Over the past few sessions, benchmark indices had moved closer to record highs, prompting investors to lock in gains. Banking and IT stocks, which had led the recent uptrend, saw notable selling as traders adopted a short-term cautious approach.

Second, mixed global cues and geopolitical uncertainties played a role in dampening investor confidence. Asian markets showed divergent trends, while global investors remained wary



amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and concerns over global economic growth. This uncertainty reduced risk appetite, leading to cautious participation in domestic equities.

Third, the approaching corporate earnings season added to the wait-and-watch sentiment. With several large companies scheduled to announce their quarterly results in the coming days, investors refrained from taking aggressive positions. Expectations around earnings growth, margins, and manage-

ment commentary have kept traders on the sidelines.

Sector-wise, financial services, information technology, metals, and consumer discretionary stocks ended in the red. On the other hand, select FMCG and utility stocks showed relative resilience, as investors sought safety in defensive segments. Market breadth remained weak, with declining stocks outnumbering advancing ones on both major exchanges.

Despite the day's decline, analysts believe the broader market

structure remains stable. They expect near-term volatility to continue, with indices likely to trade in a range until clearer signals emerge from corporate earnings, inflation data, and global central bank policy outlooks.

Going forward, investors are advised to remain selective, focus on fundamentally strong stocks, and closely track global developments and earnings announcements, which are expected to set the tone for market direction in the coming weeks.

Morgan Stanley Predicts Sensex Could Rise to 107,000 by End-2026 on Macro, Valuation and Growth Drivers

Global brokerage Morgan Stanley has reiterated a highly optimistic outlook for the Indian equity market, forecasting that the BSE Sensex could climb to as high as 107,000 by December 2026 under its bull-case scenario. This projection implies a significant upside from current levels and reflects improving valuations, supportive macroeconomic trends, and an anticipated rebound in corporate earnings.

According to Morgan Stanley analysts, the Indian market is positioned for a broad recovery after underperforming global peers in 2025. Relative valuations, which have been subdued for several years, are now attractive compared with short-term interest rates, laying the groundwork for a potential market re-rating. The modified earnings yield gap—a key valuation indicator—is signaling a renewed upside for equities, a phenomenon not seen in nearly five years.

Under its base-case scenario, Morgan Stanley projects the Sensex to reach around 95,000 by the end of 2026, still reflecting a healthy gain from current levels. This outlook is underpinned by expectations of a sharper earnings growth trajectory, driven by policy support and economic momentum. The brokerage highlights a combination of monetary easing by the Reserve Bank



of India, cuts in the cash reserve ratio, deregulation of banking, enhanced liquidity, front-loaded government capital expenditure, and substantial goods and services tax (GST) rate reductions as key growth catalysts.

Analysts also point to structural macroeconomic shifts that favor a more stable and lower-risk environment for investors. A declining oil intensity of GDP, a rising share of services exports, ongoing fiscal consolidation, and reduced inflation volatility are all factors expected to

contribute to lower real interest rates and sustainable growth dynamics. These trends could further bolster investor confidence and support a sustained upward move in equity valuations.

Morgan Stanley's sector strategy favors domestic cyclical such as financials, consumer discretionary, and industrial companies, which are seen as better positioned to benefit from a rebound in economic activity. In contrast, the firm remains underweight on sectors such as energy, materials, utilities, and

healthcare.

While the bull case assumes supportive conditions continue, the brokerage acknowledges downside risks. Adverse developments such as a sharp rise in crude oil prices, tightening of monetary policy, or a global economic slowdown could temper market gains. However, overall, the firm's outlook reflects a constructive stance on India's long-term growth potential and the equity market's ability to recover and outperform over the coming years.

Defence Stocks Attract Investor Attention Ahead of Budget 2026; BEL, HAL, GRSE Among Top Picks

Mumbai, Jan 7: Indian defence sector stocks have come into sharp focus among equity investors as anticipation builds around possible increased budgetary allocations in the upcoming Budget 2026. Analysts and brokers are highlighting select defence companies as potential outperformers, driven by strong order books, government indigenisation initiatives, and technical price signals.

In the early days of 2026, several listed defence names have already recorded gains of up to 5 per cent, reflecting pre-Budget optimism among traders and long-term investors. Market watchers point out that expectations of higher defence spending, continued modernisation initiatives, and improved execution by public and private defence firms are key reasons behind the renewed interest.

Among the top recommended stocks, Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) and MTAR Technologies are highlighted for potential upside in the near term. Technical ana-



lysts suggest that these names could deliver returns in the range of 10 to 12 per cent from current levels, especially if positive momentum continues in the weeks following the budget announcement.

HAL, a major defence electronics manufacturer, has attracted buying interest as its share price stabilises above key moving averages, signalling renewed strength. HAL, one of In-

dia's largest aerospace and defence firms, also shows signs of sustained demand, supported by robust volumes and solid technical patterns on price charts. GRSE, a leading naval shipbuilder, has rebounded from recent lows and is trading above long-term support levels, indicating improving market sentiment.

BDL, a key producer of guided missiles and defence equipment,

and MTAR Technologies, a precision engineering firm catering to defence and space customers, are also on analysts' radar owing to their technical breakthroughs and healthy momentum.

Broader sector trends point to a strong pipeline of defence contracts signed by the government in the current financial year, covering weapons systems, missiles, aircraft, and naval platforms. The expectation that these will feed into higher capital expenditure in Budget 2026 is central to bullish views on the sector.

While valuations in parts of the defence space have become rich following recent gains, many analysts remain constructive on the medium-term outlook, citing India's ongoing push for self-reliant defence manufacturing, export potential, and strategic geopolitical positioning.

Investors are advised to combine technical signals with fundamental strengths, monitor global cues, and track official budget announcements to capitalise on opportunities in this structurally significant segment of the market.

Analysts note that expectations of improved revenue growth and operational efficiency are key factors driving the rally. The company has shown resilience in maintaining sales momentum despite rising competition in the organised retail segment. Its focus on cost control, efficient supply chain management, and value pricing continues to support margins, even in a challenging

Avenue Supermarts Shares Jump 5% in Sharpest Intra-Day Rally in Five Months



Mumbai, Jan 7:

Shares of Avenue Supermarts Ltd, the operator of the D-Mart retail chain, surged nearly 5 per cent on Wednesday, registering their strongest intra-day rally in about five months. The stock outperformed the broader market, which remained under pressure amid weak global cues and cautious investor sentiment.

The sharp rise came as investors turned positive ahead of the company's upcoming quarterly earnings announcement. Market participants expect Avenue Supermarts to report stable performance, supported by steady consumer demand and continued store expansion. This optimism triggered strong buying interest during the session, lifting the stock to its highest levels in several weeks.

Market experts believe that while short-term volatility cannot be ruled out, the medium- to long-term outlook for Avenue Supermarts remains constructive. India's organised food and grocery retail sector continues to offer significant growth opportunities, driven by rising urbanisation, changing consumer preferences, and increasing formalisation of retail.

Analysts note that expectations of improved revenue growth and operational efficiency are key factors driving the rally. The company has shown resilience in maintaining sales momentum despite rising competition in the organised retail segment. Its focus on cost control, efficient supply chain management, and value pricing continues to support margins, even in a challenging

LIC Shares Slip as 'Death Cross' Appears on Technical Charts



Mumbai, Jan 7:

Shares of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) have shown renewed weakness on technical charts as the stock formed a 'Death Cross' pattern, a trend signal often interpreted as bearish by traders and analysts. This development comes after a period of subdued performance in LIC's share price, which has been under pressure amid broader market selling and ongoing discussions around a possible government stake sale.

A 'Death Cross' occurs when a stock's short-term moving average, typically the 50-day moving average, crosses below its long-term 200-day moving average. This suggests that recent price momentum is weakening relative to longer-term trends and is considered a warning sign for further downside risk in the near term.

In LIC's case, the 50-day average has moved below the 200-day average, signaling that the stock's short-term trend has turned negative after several months of struggle. Previously, a 'Golden Cross'—where the 50-day average crossed above the 200-day average—was seen around mid-2025, indicating a period when momentum had turned positive. The recent shift back to a Death Cross represents a reversal of that earlier strength.

Market participants note that LIC has been trading below both key moving averages for several weeks, reinforcing the technical bearishness. The stock's downward bias has persisted for the sec-

ond consecutive month, reflecting a lack of directional strength. In addition to moving average patterns, the stock has also been below key trend indicators used by traders to gauge near-term direction.

The appearance of a Death Cross often leads technical traders to expect continued selling pressure or at least a period of consolidation at lower levels. This pattern suggests that any rallies could face resistance, and downside risk may remain until more positive momentum returns or fundamental catalysts emerge.

On the weekly timeframe, LIC's price action has been more mixed, with the stock consolidating around longer-term averages. This suggests that while short-term technical signals are negative, the broader medium-term trend may still offer support around more extended moving average levels.

Investors and market watchers are also factoring in broader concerns, including the impact of government plans to offload a portion of its holdings. Reports of a proposed stake sale of around 6.5 per cent have added to selling pressure, as uncertainty around timing and pricing influences sentiment.

Overall, the formation of the Death Cross is seen as a bearish technical development, reinforcing caution among traders. Investors are likely to watch closely for price reactions around key support levels and any changes in momentum that could signal a reversal of the current trend.

Snow Brings Schiphol to a Standstill, Viral Videos Show Staff Making Snowman



Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, one of Europe's busiest aviation hubs, has been thrown into major disruption after heavy snowfall and extreme winter weather forced the cancellation of hundreds of flights. As operations slowed to a crawl, videos of airport ground staff building a "snowman" near a parked aircraft and engaging in a playful snowball fight went viral on social media, offering a light-hearted moment amid widespread travel chaos.

The severe weather has caused significant operational challenges since January 2, with more than 2,700 flights cancelled so far, affecting over 350,000 passengers travelling to and from Amsterdam. According to flight tracking platform Flightradar24, as many as 675 flights were cancelled on January 7 alone—nearly 59 per cent of all scheduled arrivals and departures for the day. The update, shared at 1:31 pm, warned that additional cancellations were possible as conditions continued to deteriorate.

Schiphol Airport confirmed that only limited air traffic would be possible on January 7. "As a

precaution, more than 600 flights are cancelled. More cancellations are expected," an airport spokesperson said, as quoted by aviation news outlet AeroTime. Authorities have advised passengers to closely monitor their flight status and prepare for delays or cancellations.

The viral videos, shared on X (formerly Twitter), show ground staff attempting to make the most of the situation. In one clip, a staff member is seen constructing a snowman on a snow-covered grassy area beside an aircraft, while another video captures employees engaging in a snowball fight on the airport grounds. While the exact dates of the videos are unclear, they reflect the unusual scenes unfolding as snow blanketed the airport.

The winter storm has placed immense strain on runway operations and aircraft de-icing procedures. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Schiphol's largest carrier, has been particularly affected, canceling hundreds of flights due to a shortage of de-icing fluid. The airline said its Germany-based supplier was unable to guarantee timely replen-

ishment after supplying 85,000 litres of fluid. Other major airlines, including British Airways and easyJet, have also faced delays and cancellations. On Tuesday evening, KLM warned of continued snowfall combined with strong southerly to southeasterly winds. "KLM has therefore had to cancel 600 flights for Wednesday," the airline said in a statement, adding that early decisions were taken to provide passengers with clarity and avoid last-minute disruptions.

KLM also noted that staff across departments, including office employees and flight crew, were working extra hours to assist stranded passengers. Beyond air travel, the disruption extended to rail services, with train connections between Schiphol Airport and Amsterdam Central Station also being suspended.

Airport authorities continue efforts to clear runways and restore normal operations, though travellers have been urged to plan ahead as freezing temperatures and snow are expected to persist across parts of Europe.

Working Nights on Rapido: Bengaluru Rider Reveals 4-Day Earnings Details



A Bengaluru resident's firsthand account of working as a part-time bike driver for ride-hailing platform Rapido has gone viral on social media, offering a rare and transparent look into the earnings potential of gig-based delivery and mobility jobs. Shared through a Reddit post titled "Rode as a Rapido Captain in Bangalore for 4 days (part-time, mostly night rides)", the breakdown has sparked widespread discussion among users considering short-term or emergency income options.

The individual explained that they worked purely part-time over four days, primarily taking rides after 10 pm when incentives tend to be higher. "I worked as a Rapido bike captain in Bangalore for four days, purely part-time. Thought I'd share a transparent earnings breakdown for anyone curious," the user wrote.

Using a Hero Super Splendor motorcycle with an average mileage of 45 km per litre, the rider covered roughly 200 kilometres during the four-day period. In total, they spent around 17 hours on the road, mostly during late-night hours. According to the post, the most profitable shift was on the second day, when the rider earned 750 in

about five hours.

The detailed cost and earnings summary shared in the post is as follows:

- Total earnings: * ₹2,220
- Petrol expenses: * Approximately ₹400
- Net earnings: * Around ₹1,820
- Total working time: * About 17 hours

While the user did not describe the income as exceptional, they suggested that Rapido could be a viable option for people seeking quick cash, especially if they already own a bike and are comfortable working night shifts. The post noted that late-night riding often comes with better incentives, making it more lucrative than daytime hours.

As the post gained traction, several social media users shared their own experiences and insights into how flexible gig work can supplement income when approached strategically.

commenter said their roommate works a regular office job from 2 pm to 10 pm and then rides for Rapido overnight, often earning close to ₹1,000 per night. Another user from Mumbai mentioned considering Rapido as a side gig limited to Saturdays.

Some users also highlighted Rapido's business model. One comment pointed out that Rapido does not operate on a per-ride commission system but instead charges riders a fixed daily fee, allowing captains to keep the full fare from passengers. Others shared examples of drivers maximizing income by working across multiple platforms, such as combining Rapido rides with Porter deliveries during the same shift.

Overall, the viral post has provided valuable insight into how flexible gig work can supplement income when approached strategically.

Gujarat's Skies Set to Dazzle as International Kite Festival Returns in January 2026

Gujarat is once again preparing to paint its skies with colour as it gears up to host the Vibrant International Kite Festival (IKF) 2026, one of India's most celebrated cultural events. Held every January, the festival is deeply rooted in the traditional celebration of Uttarayan, when kite flying becomes a cherished ritual across the state. In 2026, the festival will be organised from January 10 to January 14, aligning with Makar Sankranti, which marks the transition of the sun into Capricorn and signifies the end of winter and the beginning of the harvest season.

Organised by the Gujarat Tourism Department, the International Kite Festival attracts kite flyers, artists, and tourists from across the globe. The primary venue for the grand celebrations is the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, which transforms into a vibrant hub of activity during the festival. Alongside Ahmedabad, several other cities and heritage locations across Gujarat will also host kite-flying events, including Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara, Dwaraka, Dholavira, Vadnagar, Shrivardhan, Palitana, and Hanol.

The festival is re-



nowned for its impressive international participation. Kite enthusiasts from countries such as Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and Indonesia bring giant, innovative, and artistically designed kites that fill the sky with breathtaking visuals. At the same time, traditional Indian kite makers showcase colourful patangs and tukals, celebrating Gujarat's rich

kite-flying heritage. Beyond kite flying, the International Kite Festival offers a rich cultural experience. Visitors can enjoy folk music and dance performances, explore handicraft exhibitions, and savour authentic Gujarati cuisine at local food stalls, featuring favourites like undhiyu, laddoos, and other festive delicacies. Special workshops on kite-making and kite-flying techniques are organised, particularly for

children and tourists, making the festival both entertaining and educational.

International Kite Festival 2026: Schedule and Dates

- January 10: Rajkot, Surat, and Dholavira
- January 11: Shrivardhan, Statue of Unity (Ekatanagar), and Vadnagar
- January 12-14: Ahmedabad (main celebrations at Sabarmati Riverfront)
- January 13: Vadodara

• January 14: Hanol and Palitana, along with ongoing events in Ahmedabad

Entry and Timings

Entry to the festival venues, including the Sabarmati Riverfront, is free for all visitors. Events generally take place from 10 am to 5 pm, with cultural performances and festivities continuing into the evening, making IKF 2026 a truly unforgettable experience.

US Man Misses \$1.87 Billion Powerball Jackpot by Just One Number



A man in the US state of Virginia narrowly missed out on one of the biggest lottery prizes in history after falling short by just a single number in the Powerball draw.

Jeffrey Dimond, a resident of Spotsylvania County, came agonisingly close to winning the massive Rs 16,809 crore (\$1.87 billion) Powerball jackpot during the Christmas Eve drawing, which had been billed as the second-largest lottery prize ever.

Dimond purchased his Powerball ticket using the Easy Pick option, allowing the system to randomly generate numbers.

He bought the ticket at a Wawa convenience store located at 9235 Court House Road in Spotsylvania.

The winning numbers for the draw were 4, 25, 31, 52 and 59, with the Powerball number being 19.

While lottery officials

did not disclose exactly which number Dimond missed, he successfully matched four of the five

had opted for the Power Play feature when purchasing his ticket, paying an additional dollar. This option doubled his winnings, significantly boosting his payout.

Interestingly, Dimond and his wife were initially unaware of their good fortune. The couple only realised they had won a substantial amount after scanning

their tickets and receiving a notification indicating a major prize.

The Virginia Lottery later confirmed the details of the win in an official statement released on Tuesday, January 6. Despite missing out on a jackpot that could have changed their lives forever, the couple remains content with their winnings. They have al-

ready decided to use the prize money for practical home improvements, including installing a new roof and building a new deck. Powerball is known for its extremely long odds, which stand at 1 in 292.2 million for winning the jackpot. These steep odds are designed to allow prizes to grow larger as jackpots roll over when no player matches all the numbers. In contrast, the overall odds of winning any Powerball prize are much better, at 1 in 25.

Powerball drawings take place three times a week—on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at 10:59 pm. Tickets cost \$2 and are available across 45 US states, as well as Washington, DC, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Lottery officials often highlight that while the jackpot odds are daunting, the game offers numerous smaller prizes that many players win regularly.

₹118 for 100 Feet? Uber Booking Mistake Goes Viral on Social Media



A social media post describing an unusually short Uber ride has gone viral, triggering renewed discussion about how ride-hailing platforms calculate fares and apply minimum charges. The incident was shared by X user The Kaipullai, who recounted an awkward but humorous booking mistake after exiting a metro station.

According to the post,

the user booked an Uber intending to travel home but accidentally selected the same metro station as the destination. The error only became apparent after he had already entered the cab. The total distance involved was barely around 100 feet. The driver quickly pointed out the mistake and, rather than completing the comically short trip, chose to cancel the ride, sparing the passenger an uncomfortable experience.

However, what truly

across social media platforms and drawing a flood of reactions. Some users responded with humour, turning the incident into a meme-worthy moment. One commenter joked that the situation resembled a classic comedy scene, referencing actor Vadivelu and comparing it to a fictional scenario where a passenger is taken in a circle only to be dropped off at the same spot, but still charged for the ride.

Others were more critical, questioning the driver's role in the situation.

The episode has reignited curiosity around how ride-hailing apps determine pricing, particularly in cases involving negligible travel distances. Uber has previously stated that its fares are algorithm-driven, factoring in distance, travel time, demand, and base operational costs. Even extremely short trips can generate a fare if the ride is technically valid within the system.

The episode has reignited curiosity around how ride-hailing apps determine pricing, particularly in cases involving negligible travel distances. Uber has previously stated that its fares are algorithm-driven, factoring in distance, travel time, demand, and base operational costs. Even extremely short trips can generate a fare if the ride is technically valid within the system.

POINT has reached out to Uber for comment on the viral post, but the company has not issued an official response so far.

India U19 Complete Dominant 3-0 Series Sweep Against South Africa U19

India Under-19 capped off a commanding tour of South Africa with a resounding 233-run victory in the third Youth One-Day International, completing a clean 3-0 series sweep at Willowmoore Park, Benoni. The visitors delivered a ruthless all-round performance, underlined by explosive batting at the top and clinical bowling, to stamp their authority on the series.

Batting first, India U19 produced a stunning display of power and composure to post a massive 393 for 7 in their 50 overs. Leading from the front was captain Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who continued his sensational form with a blistering 127 off just 74 balls. The left-hander attacked from the outset, striking the ball cleanly to all parts of the ground and keeping the South African bowlers under constant pressure.

Suryavanshi found ideal support in opener Aaron George, who played a contrasting yet equally effective knock of 118. The duo stitched together a monumental 227-run opening partnership, setting the tone for India's innings and effectively taking the match away from the hosts. Their stand combined aggres-



sion with smart shot selection, punishing loose deliveries and rotating strike efficiently during the middle overs.

Despite some late breakthroughs by South Africa, India's strong foundation ensured the scoring rate never dipped. Contributions from the middle order helped India finish with one of their highest totals in youth ODI cricket, leaving the

hosts with an almost impossible chase.

South Africa U19 struggled from the start in reply, losing early wickets against India's disciplined pace and spin attack. The bowlers maintained tight lines and lengths, extracting movement and bounce to keep the batters in check. Regular wickets prevented any meaningful partnerships from developing, and the hosts were eventually bowled out for 160.

The margin of victory reflected India's dominance throughout the match and the series. Suryavanshi's outstanding performances across all three games earned him both Player of the Match and Player of the Series honours, highlighting his growing reputation as one of the most exciting prospects in Indian cricket.

The emphatic series win showcased India U19's depth, balance, and maturity, with strong performances in both batting and bowling departments. As the team looks ahead to future international youth tournaments, this clean sweep in South Africa will serve as a major confidence booster and a clear statement of intent.

Anand Makes Triumphant Return at Tata Steel Chess India 2026

The 2026 Tata Steel Chess India Rapid & Blitz tournament in Kolkata has kicked off with excitement and anticipation, featuring a stellar lineup of grandmasters, including the return of Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand after a six-year competitive hiatus. The event, held at the Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium, hosts both Open and Women's Rapid and Blitz competitions, making it one of the first major chess events of the year.

Anand's comeback has been the highlight of the tournament. The five-time world champion, who has largely focused on coaching and commentary in recent years, chose this event to return to competitive chess. His participation has thrilled fans and added invaluable experience to a field filled with top international talent. On the first day, Anand impressed by winning key games and finishing as a joint leader, demonstrating that his tactical sharpness and



strategic understanding remain world-class.

Another Indian star to watch is R Praggnanandhaa, who continues to impress with his consistent performances. After a strong previous season, he enters the tournament with a measured approach, treating each game as preparation for upcoming major events. Praggnanandhaa's ag-

gressive style and deep opening knowledge make him a formidable opponent in both rapid and blitz formats.

American grandmaster Hans Niemann adds further intrigue to the competition. Known for his dynamic and sometimes unpredictable style, Niemann arrives determined to make a mark in the rapid and blitz games. His

strong recent form ensures he will be a tough competitor for the top spots. On day one, Niemann matched Anand's performance, remaining unbeaten and sharing the lead, highlighting the competitive intensity at the top.

The tournament also features India's rising talents, including Arjun Erigaisi, Vinit Gujrathi, and

Nihal Sarin, who are competing with energy and creativity. Their participation ensures a strong Indian presence in the Open section and adds to the excitement for local chess enthusiasts.

The Women's Rapid and Blitz section is equally competitive, featuring top international masters and national champions. The high standard of play and fast-paced format promise thrilling matches across all sections of the tournament.

As the rapid portion concludes and the blitz rounds begin, the Tata Steel Chess India 2026 tournament is shaping up to be a spectacular start to the chess calendar. With veterans like Anand competing alongside rising stars such as Praggnanandhaa and dynamic challengers like Niemann, the event promises intense battles, high-quality games, and a showcase of both experience and youthful talent. Fans can look forward to several days of enthralling chess action in Kolkata.

Mustafizur Rahman Controversy Sparks Political Storm Ahead of IPL 2026

The cricket world has been rocked by an unexpected political controversy involving Bangladesh fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman and the Indian Premier League's Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) ahead of the 2026 season. What began as a routine signing at the IPL auction quickly escalated into a diplomatic flashpoint, highlighting how sport and geopolitics can collide in unpredictable ways.

Mustafizur, one of Bangladesh's most celebrated pacers, was a surprise buy at the IPL 2026 mini auction, securing a lucrative contract with KKR worth several crore rupees. The left-arm seamer, known for his deceptive slower deliveries and cutters, was expected to bring valuable experience and skill to the franchise's pace attack. However, his inclusion drew immediate controversy due to rising political tensions between India and Bangladesh.

Within days of the signing, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)



intervened and directed KKR to release Mustafizur from their squad. The decision was framed as a response to escalating bilateral sensitivities and concerns within India linked to recent unrest and strained relations. Despite strong initial enthusiasm for his IPL debut, the pacer's journey in the tournament was abruptly halted, leaving fans and cricket officials stunned.

The backlash from Bangladesh was swift and strong. The country's

cricket board and government officials expressed deep disappointment and termed the decision unfair, arguing that Mustafizur had done nothing to warrant exclusion and should not have become entangled in politics. In protest, the authorities in Dhaka ordered a suspension of IPL broadcasts within the country, effectively blocking fans from watching the highly popular league.

Political figures and

commentators in both countries weighed in on the issue, with some urging that cricket should remain separate from political disputes. Critics argued that the controversy could set a dangerous precedent where geopolitical tensions directly impact players' careers and franchise competitions.

Former players and analysts also highlighted the potential damage to the longstanding cricketing ties between India and Bangladesh, which have historically seen players

David Gower Lauds Jacob Bethell After Magnificent Century in Sydney Ashes Test



Jacob Bethell announced his arrival on the biggest stage with a magnificent maiden Test century during the fifth and final Ashes Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground, earning glowing praise from former England captain David Gower. The young left-hander produced a performance of rare composure and class, offering England a much-needed highlight in a challenging Ashes campaign.

England were under immense pressure after Australia piled up a huge first-innings total, leaving the visitors fighting to stay competitive in the match. Early wickets in England's second innings only added to the tension, but Bethell responded with maturity well beyond his years. Walking in at a critical juncture, the 22-year-old settled quickly and began the task of rebuilding with patience and assurance.

Bethell's innings was a blend of sound technique and controlled aggression. He absorbed pressure from Australia's relentless bowling attack, defended solidly when required, and punished loose deliveries with authority. As the innings progressed, his confidence grew, and he began to dictate terms, finding gaps with precision and timing his strokes beautifully.

Reaching his maiden Test hundred was a landmark moment in Bethell's young career. The century was greeted with applause from all corners of the ground and marked a significant personal achievement,

especially coming against Australia in an Ashes Test at Sydney. He remained unbeaten deep into the final day's play, anchoring the innings and helping England secure a valuable lead.

Former England great David Gower was quick to acknowledge the brilliance of the knock. In a short but powerful reaction, Gower described Bethell's effort as "brilliant," expressing delight at seeing such composure and quality from a new face in England's batting line-up. The praise carried extra weight, coming from one of England's most elegant batsmen of the past.

Bethell's innings stood out not just for the runs scored, but for the context in which they came. England had struggled for consistency throughout the series, particularly in their batting, and his performance offered a glimpse of hope for the future. It was a reminder that even in difficult tours, new talent can emerge and make a lasting impression.

While the Ashes series outcome may not swing England's way, Bethell's century in Sydney could prove to be a defining moment for his career. With technique, temperament, and confidence on display, he has given selectors and supporters plenty to be optimistic about. Backed by praise from legends like Gower, Jacob Bethell's Sydney hundred may well be remembered as the beginning of a promising Test journey.

PV Sindhu Opens 2026 Season with Gritty Win at Malaysia Open



Indian badminton star PV Sindhu made a confident start to her 2026 season with a hard-fought victory in the opening round of the Malaysia Open in Kuala Lumpur. Returning to competitive action after an injury-affected period, the former world champion showed resilience and composure to defeat Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei in straight games, signaling a positive beginning to the new season.

Sindhu began the match cautiously, taking time to settle into rhythm against an opponent who looked sharp early on. The opening exchanges were closely contested, with Sung attempting to control rallies and test Sindhu's movement. As the first game progressed, however, Sindhu began to find her range. Using her trademark powerful smashes and precise placement, she steadily pulled away to take the opening game 21-14, asserting control at crucial moments.

The second game proved far more challenging. Sung raised her intensity, forcing Sindhu into longer rallies and pushing her deep into the court. At one stage, Sindhu trailed and appeared under pressure as her opponent sensed an opportunity to level the match. Drawing on her vast experience, Sindhu responded with calm shot selection and improved defensive work, gradually closing the gap.

The closing stages of the second game turned into a tense battle of

nerves. With both players trading points, Sindhu held her composure under pressure, producing key winners when it mattered most. She clinched the game 22-20, sealing the match and confirming her place in the next round after a demanding contest.

This victory holds special significance for Sindhu, as it marked her first competitive match of the season following time away from the court due to injury. While there were moments of rust, her ability to fight through a tough second game underlined her mental strength and competitive instinct. The match also offered encouraging signs in terms of her attacking play and court coverage as she builds momentum.

With the win, Sindhu moves into the pre-quarters, where she is set to face a higher-ranked opponent in what promises to be a stern test of her readiness. Progressing in a Super 1000 tournament at the very start of the season provides valuable confidence and ranking points.

For Indian badminton fans, Sindhu's opening-round performance offers optimism. Her ability to dig deep, adapt to match situations, and close out tight games remains one of her greatest strengths. As the Malaysia Open progresses, all eyes will be on Sindhu to see how far she can go in what could be a crucial season for the experienced shuttler.

'Tarasuki Ram' Lyrical from Draupathi 2 Blends Celebration, Faith, and Power



The newly released lyrical song "Tarasuki Ram" from the upcoming historical drama Draupathi 2 offers a striking example of how music can function as narrative rather than mere spectacle.

The song seamlessly transitions into its second stanza, "Jai Rama Rama Rama Hare Ram," set against the backdrop of prâna pratisthâ celebrations. This segment features Richard Rishi's character carrying the idol of Lord Rama alongside members of his clan. While the celebratory mood continues, the emotional register shifts toward faith, unity, and shared conviction. Here, celebration becomes an act of consecration and collective belief, rooted in devotion rather than display.

Composed as a song of contrasts, Tarasuki Ram is structured around two distinct stanzas, each representing a different emotional and ideological space. The opening section, "Tarasuki," depicts the sultana clan immersed in grand celebration. Marked by pulsating rhythms, expansive choreography, and visually dominant staging, this portion presents celebration as an assertion of authority and power. The energy is outward-facing

and collective, driven by scale, momentum, and a sense of dominance that reflects political strength rather than spiritual depth.

Produced by Sola Shakkavarthi under Netaji Productions, in association with G. M Film Corporation, Draupathi 2 expands into a broader historical canvas set in the 14th century. The film draws inspiration from the reign of Hoysala emperor Veera Vallalar III and the legacy of the Kadavarayas of Sendhamangalam, exploring themes of imperial conflict, resistance, and cultural upheaval.

Directed by Mohan G., the film stars Richard Rishi and Rakshana Induchoodan as Draupathi Devi, with a strong ensemble cast including Natti Natraj, Y. G. Mahendran, Nadodigal Barani, Vel Ramamoorthy, and others. With music by Ghibran Vaibodha and cinematography by Philip R. Sundar, Draupathi 2 continues to build momentum as a historical drama where music serves as an extension of its ideological and emotional storytelling.

"Sahakutumbaanam Brings Fresh Layers to Family Entertainment" – Hero Dheekshith Shetty



Sahakutumbaanam, the latest family entertainer produced under the HNG Cinemas LLP banner, is steadily winning hearts at the box office following its New Year release. Written and directed by Uday Sharma and produced by Mahadev Goud and Nagarjuna, the film features Ram Kiran and Megha Akash in the lead roles. Since its release, the film has been receiving a positive response from audiences, particularly family viewers who are appreciating its emotional core and relatable storytelling.

One of the key strengths of Sahakutumbaanam lies in its impressive ensemble cast. The film brings together seasoned performers such as Nata Kireeti Rajendra Prasad, Comedy Brahma Brahmanandam, Subhalekha Sudhakar, Satya, Rajashree

Nair, Racha Ravi, Giridhar, Tagubothu Ramesh, and Bhadram, among others. Their presence adds depth and credibility to the narrative, making the family dynamics more engaging and authentic on screen.

Renowned music director Mani Sharma has composed the soundtrack, which has been well received for its melody and emotional resonance. Madhu Dasari's cinematography enhances the visual appeal of the film, while Shashank Mali's editing ensures a smooth and engaging narrative flow.

With its blend of emotion, humor, music, and strong performances, Sahakutumbaanam is emerging as a wholesome entertainer. Its refreshing narrative approach and family-centric theme continue to strike a chord with audiences in theatres, positioning the film as a notable New Year release in the entertainment space.

After watching the film, hero Dheekshith Shetty shared his appreciation for the team and the concept of Sahaku-

tumbaanam. Praising the film, he said it offers a refreshing take within the family entertainer genre by adding new layers to a familiar format. He particularly lauded the well-written characters and highlighted Ram Kiran's confident performance, noting that he never appears like a newcomer. Dheekshith also appreciated the appealing songs, Ram Kiran's energetic dance performances, and the strong production values.

With its blend of emotion, humor, music, and strong performances, Sahakutumbaanam is emerging as a wholesome entertainer. Its refreshing narrative approach and family-centric theme continue to strike a chord with audiences in theatres, positioning the film as a notable New Year release in the entertainment space.

After watching the film, hero Dheekshith Shetty shared his appreciation for the team and the concept of Sahaku-

Samantha's 'Maa Inti Bangaram' Teaser Trailer to Release on January 9

Star actress Samantha is all set to return to the big screen with her latest film Maa Inti Bangaram, in which she plays the central role. The makers of the film have officially announced that the teaser trailer will be released on January 9 at 10 AM, raising excitement among fans and film enthusiasts. According to the production team, the teaser promises to deliver a powerful and intense cinematic experience, offering a glimpse into a gripping story driven by strong emotions and high-impact drama.

Maa Inti Bangaram marks another collaboration between Samantha and director Nandini Reddy, who earlier delivered the super hit Oh Baby. While that film was known for its light-hearted humor and emotional warmth, the makers clarify that this new project explores a com-

pletely different emotional space. This time, the duo is venturing into a bold and gripping family action drama, blending intense storytelling with strong character arcs.

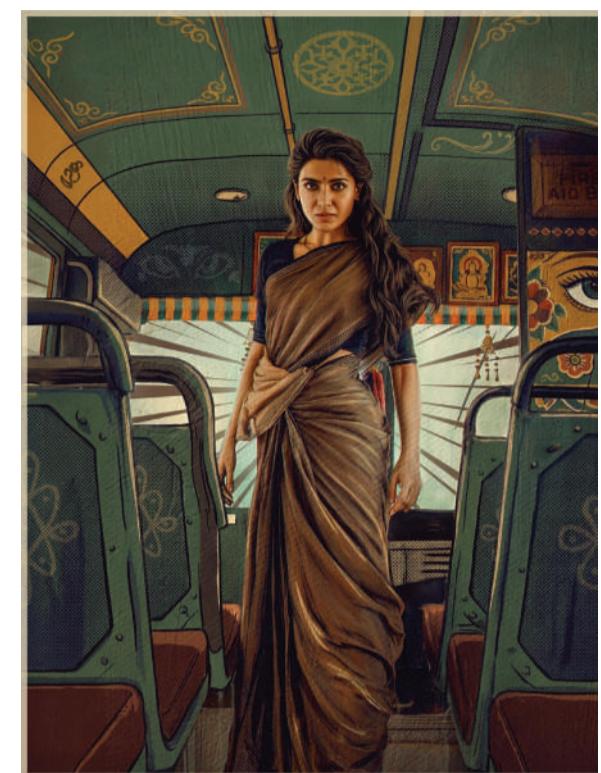
The successful combination of Samantha and Nandini Reddy has already set high expectations, and the film is being positioned as a significant step forward in Samantha's career.

In addition to playing the lead role, Samantha is also co-producing the film under the Tralala Moving Pictures banner, along with Raj Nidimoru and Himanshu Duvvuru. This dual role highlights her growing influence behind the scenes and her commitment to backing content-driven cinema. The first-look poster released earlier created a strong buzz on social media, with Samantha's fierce and commanding appearance receiving widespread appreciation.

The poster hinted at a character marked by intensity, resilience, and raw power, suggesting a performance that could take her to a new level altogether.

The film boasts a strong supporting cast, with Diganth and Gulshan Devaiah playing key roles. Senior actress Gautami and Manjusha also appear in important characters, adding further depth to the narrative. The technical team is equally impressive, with Om Prakash handling cinematography and acclaimed composer Santosh Narayanan providing the music. The story, screenplay, and dialogues are penned by Vasanth Maringanti and Raj Nidimoru, while renowned writer Sita R. Menon serves as the creative supervisor.

With the teaser trailer set to drop on January 9,



anticipation continues to build around Maa Inti Bangaram, as audiences eagerly await a powerful preview of Samantha's intense new avatar.

Nata Kireeti Rajendra Prasad Unveils Title and First Look Poster of Trendy Comedy Panchali Pancha Bhartruka



Veteran actor Nata Kireeti Rajendra Prasad officially unveiled the title and first look poster of the upcoming trendy comedy entertainer Panchali Pancha Bhartruka, creating strong buzz among moviegoers and industry circles. The film is being jointly produced by Royal Throne Productions and Om Sai Ram Arts and promises to offer a fresh, youthful take on comedy with the intriguing tagline, "Less Logic, More Magic."

The launch event was held today in a cheerful atmosphere, with renowned music director RP Patnaik gracing the occasion. The unveiling marked an important milestone for the film, which is being directed by Ganga Saptashikha and positioned as a fun-filled entertainer with contemporary sensibilities.

Panchali Pancha Bhartruka features Venkat Duggireddy, Raj Pavan, Gemini Suresh, and popular rap singer Roll Rida in the lead roles. Adding strength to the cast, Nata Kireeti Rajendra Prasad will be seen in an important supporting role, along with Prudhvi Raj and Srikanth Iyengar. The film is produced by Venkat Duggireddy (USA), with Srikanth Settivari and Sainadh Manyam serving as co-producers.

The film's music is composed by Mahesh Narayana and Bishek, with editing by Johnny Basha and cinematography by KV Prasad. The story is penned by Bobby KSR, while the screenplay is written by Raj Pavan. With a quirky title, youthful cast, and a promise of pure entertainment, Panchali Pancha Bhartruka is gearing up for a grand theatrical release soon and is expected to strike a chord with audiences looking for light-hearted comedy.

naik shared his excitement about the unique title, stating that while the term Panchali Pancha Bhartruka is familiar, no one had dared to use it as a film title before. He felt the title itself reflects the fun nature of the film and extended his best wishes to the entire team, especially Gemini Suresh and Roll Rida.

Speaking at the event, Rajendra Prasad expressed his confidence in the project and praised the young team behind it.

He described the film as a youthful entertainer with a fresh storyline by a new director. Without revealing details about his role, he said audiences should experience his character on the big screen. He also noted that it had been a long time since he acted in such a strong comedy film and urged audiences to encourage new talent.

Music director RP Pat-

'Assalu Cinema' Song Released from Action King Arjun's Pan-India Film Seetha Payanam

Sri Ram Films International has unveiled the energetic song "Assalu Cinema" from the much-anticipated pan-India film Seetha Payanam, directed by the multi-talented Action King Arjun. The film has already generated strong buzz due to its scale, star-studded cast, and Arjun's all-round involvement as writer, producer, and director.

"Assalu Cinema" stands out as a lively and visually appealing number, composed by Melody King Anup Rubens. The song features catchy, vibrant music that instantly connects with audiences, while the lyrics penned by renowned lyricist Chandrabose add a stylish and playful flavor. Lending her soulful and melodious voice to the track is Shreya Ghoshal, whose vocals elevate the song and give it a strong emotional and musical appeal. The song prominently showcases Aishwarya Arjun, whose glamour, expressive performance, and confident screen presence add charm and energy to the visuals.

The technical crew behind the film is equally notable. G. Balamurugan handles cinematography, ensuring rich visuals, while Dr. Sai Madhav Burra pens impactful dialogues. Editing is managed by Ayoob Khan, and the film's art direction is led by Mohan B. Carey, Shiva Kamesh D., and CH Krishna. Action sequences are choreographed by Kickas Khalee, promising gripping stunt choreography. UL. Murthy serves as co-director, with Sai Satish as PRO and Star Circle oversee-



ing digital marketing. With the release of "Assalu Cinema," excitement around Seetha Payanam has intensified. The song offers a vibrant glimpse into the film's tone and style, setting the stage for what promises to be a major pan-India release this Valentine's Day.