



TRUE POINT

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People's Governance Gives Telangana a New Direction in Just Two Years: Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy

TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud Calls for Intensified State-wide Movement Against G-RAM-JI

Hyderabad Police Crack Down on Chinese Manja Ahead of Sankranti, Seize ₹1.24 Crore Worth of Contraband

Telangana Government Charts Modern Silo-Based Storage Plan to Protect Crops and Food Security

TPN Bureau | Hyd-
January 08

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday delivered a hard-hitting address at Gandhi Bhavan, accusing the BJP-led Central Government of conspiring against the poor, the Constitution, and democratic rights under the guise of policy reforms.

Speaking to party leaders and cadres, the Chief Minister asserted that the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has empowered nearly 80 per cent of the country's population in a nation of 140 crore people and warned against any attempt to weaken or dismantle it.

Revanth Reddy alleged that the Modi government, emboldened by its strength in Parliament, is harassing the poor and marginalized. He said Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar eradicated bonded labour, secured inde-

pendence, and ensured voting rights for citizens, but today those very rights are under threat. He recalled that during the last general elections, the BJP sought 400 seats with the alleged intention of amending the Constitution, a move that was thwarted due to nationwide awareness led by Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge.

The Chief Minister claimed that the Congress prevented a conspiracy to hand over the country to corporate giants like Adani and Ambani. He also criticised the Centre's voter verification drive under the name "SUR," alleging it was a deliberate attempt to remove the voting rights of the poor and minorities. "If the poor lose their vote, they will also lose access to ration cards, Aadhaar-linked benefits, and welfare schemes," he warned, adding that there was a deep-rooted conspiracy behind the voter purge exercise. Highlighting the importance of MGNREGS, Revanth Reddy said the scheme

enhanced the self-respect of the poor and that the Telugu states played a crucial role in its launch and implementation. He alleged that recent changes to the scheme were aimed at supplying cheap labour to corporates, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of colluding with big companies. Drawing parallels with the now-repealed farm laws, he credited Rahul Gandhi's struggle for forcing the Prime Minister to apologise to farmers and withdraw the "black laws." The Chief Minister questioned the Centre's narrative of "Vikas Bharat," asking where such development was visible when schemes like MGNREGS were being weakened. He asserted that the fight would continue until the employment guarantee scheme was fully restored and vowed to make Modi apologise to the nation on this issue. He noted that the Telangana Assembly had already passed a unanimous resolution opposing changes to MGNREGS. From January

20 to 30, village-level meetings will be held across the state to pass resolutions against the new law. MLAs will take responsibility at the constituency level, ministers at the parliamentary constituency level, and mandal-level in-charges will be appointed, with the Chief Minister himself taking charge of one mandal. Large public meetings are planned across nine districts from February 3 to 9, with an invitation to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi for the Mulugu meeting. Revanth Reddy also directed MPs to protest on the first day of the Parliament budget session.

Citing Congress victories in 66 per cent of Sarpanch seats, he called for a clean sweep in upcoming municipal elections. Acknowledging party workers' efforts, he pledged to campaign door-to-door for their success and concluded by asserting that Telangana would stand firmly behind Rahul Gandhi's prime ministerial aspirations.

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar Alleges KCR Betrayed Telangana on Krishna Water Shares

TPN Bureau | January 08:

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs and senior BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Thursday launched a sharp attack on former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) and state political parties over the Krishna river water dispute, alleging repeated betrayals of Telangana's interests. Speaking at a press conference in Karimnagar, the Union minister accused both the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the Congress of manipulating river water is-

sues to cover up their governance failures.

Bandi Sanjay claimed that Telangana is entitled to 571 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of water from the Krishna river based on legal entitlements, but argued that KCR had agreed to only 299 TMC during crucial negotiations. He insisted that KCR owes an explanation to the people of Telangana for this decision, which he described as a betrayal of the state's rightful share of water resources.

The Union minister also alleged that despite the state's pressing need for water, the previous BRS government did not



fully utilise its allocated share during its tenure. He criticised both the BRS and Congress for bringing up river water issues only as a political dramatization rather than genuinely addressing farmers' and communities' concerns. Bandi Sanjay argued that such debates divert public attention from other governance failures and stalled development

projects. Referring to historical grievances, he said that even when Andhra Pradesh diverted about 4 TMC of water through the Pothireddypadu project, the BRS-led government in Telangana did not take adequate action to safeguard the state's interests. The minister also insinuated alleged corruption and inflated cost estimates in projects such as the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, accusing the previous regime of misusing resources.

Bandi Sanjay further criticised the Congress government for failing to utilise Telangana's water

allocation effectively when it held power, asserting that both national parties have misled the public on river water rights. He reiterated that the BJP has historically championed Telangana's interests in water disputes and would continue to support efforts to secure rightful shares for the state.

The minister's comments have added fuel to the ongoing political debate over water sharing in the region, reflecting deep-seated tensions between state and national leaders on the management and distribution of inter-state river waters.

Bhatti Vikramarka Slams BJP, Demands Repeal of New Employment Law

TPN Bureau | January 08:

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Wednesday delivered a detailed address at the PCC extended-level meeting, raising strong objections to the Central Government's new employment law and asserting that the BJP poses a greater threat to the nation than historical imperialist forces. He urged Congress party leaders and cadres to mobilise a massive statewide agitation demanding the repeal of the law, emphasising that senior State Government leaders would actively participate in all

protest programmes.

Highlighting the significance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Vikramarka warned that the BJP is conspiring to dismantle a people-centric programme inspired by Gandhiji's vision, which has provided employment security to millions across the country. He recalled that India witnessed numerous struggles and agitations under Gandhi's leadership during the freedom movement, yet the British never raised a baton against him. "Within six months of Independence, Gandhi was assassinated in broad

daylight by individuals driven by RSS ideology. This proves that the RSS-driven BJP is more dangerous than British imperialism," he said.

Vikramarka urged party leaders to explain to Telangana's people the BJP government's agenda of dismantling MGNREGS. He noted that Telangana is the first and only state to unanimously pass a resolution in the Legislative Assembly opposing the new employment law and forwarding it to the Centre. He outlined Congress's transformative legacy through landmark legislations including land reforms, bank nationalisation, and forcing seasonal mi-

gration to urban areas. Contractors are now allowed to handle work, weakening workers' rights. Additionally, the new funding norms—60% from the Centre and 40% from States—enable the BJP to stall funds in States that fail to provide their share, effectively sabotaging the scheme.

He also highlighted fiscal discrimination, noting that northern states receive higher returns on taxes compared to southern states like Telangana. He warned that the BJP is systematically repealing Congress-era laws, potentially undermining the nation's Independence.



Himachal Pradesh Education Minister Visits Telangana Secretariat: Reviews Reforms and Integrated Residential Schools

A delegation led by Himachal Pradesh Education Minister Rohit Kumar met Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at the Secretariat on Thursday to discuss educational reforms in the state. The meeting was attended by Education Commissioner Yogita Rana, School Education Director Naveen Nicholas, CM Special Secretary Ajit Reddy, and senior officials from the Himachal Pradesh government.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister briefed the delegation on key initiatives aimed at transforming Telangana's education system, including the establishment of Young India Integrated Residential Schools. He explained that these residential schools are being constructed on a sprawling 25-acre campus to serve SC, ST, BC, and minority students, with a mini-university concept backed by an investment of 200 crore.

CM Reddy also shared plans to introduce a Telangana Education Policy, inspired by the National Education Policy, for which a dedicated committee has already been appointed. He highlighted efforts to strengthen government schools by implementing pre-pri-

mary education, particularly to provide foundational learning in rural areas. Measures are being planned to ensure transport facilities for young children in villages to access these pre-primary classes. The Chief Minister also updated the delegation on Telangana's efforts to transform ITIs into ATCs (Advanced Training Centers), with at least one center being established in each constituency to provide skill-based education and improve employability.

The visit highlighted knowledge-sharing and collaboration between the two states, with Telangana presenting itself as a model for education reforms and innovative skill development initiatives. The Himachal Pradesh delegation appreciated the state's focus on inclusive education, infrastructure development, and strategic planning to enhance educational outcomes for marginalized and rural students. This meeting reinforces Telangana's commitment to transforming its education sector and providing quality, inclusive, and accessible education for all students across the state.



Former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao Invited to Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jathara by State Women Ministers



TPN Bureau | Jan 08

In a gesture underscoring the cultural and traditional significance of Telangana's heritage, State Women Ministers, led by Minister Smt. Seetakka, personally handed over an invitation to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) to attend the upcoming Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jathara, recognized as the world's largest tribal festival. The festival draws large numbers of devotees from Telangana and neighboring states and serves as a unifying cultural event for tribal and non-tribal communities alike.

The ministers pre-sented KCR and his wife Shobha with ceremonial sarees and traditional gifts as a token of respect, reflecting the festival's traditional customs. Minister Seetakka expressed her delight at personally handing over the gifts and clarified that the visit was purely ceremonial and not political in nature. "This festival

celebrates our cultural heritage. As daughters of the soil, we have come directly to extend the invitation to him," she said. She elaborated that the Jathara is a centuries-old festival dedicated to the goddesses Sammakka and Saralamma, revered as mothers who fulfill devotees' wishes across regional and cultural boundaries.

The festival draws large numbers of devotees from Telangana and neighboring states and serves as a unifying cultural event for tribal and non-tribal communities alike. The ministers confirmed that KCR had graciously accepted the invitation and assured his participation in the grand Medaram Jathara. Alongside the ministers, Mulugu District Congress Committee President Paidakula Ashok and Siddipet DCC President Akanksha Reddy also joined the meeting to ensure the invitation was personally conveyed. The group handed over prasadam as part of the ceremonial proceedings, further emphasizing the respect and cultural importance attached to the event.

During the visit, KCR and his wife received the ministers warmly, greeting them with traditional hospitality, including

People's Governance Gives Telangana a New Direction in Just Two Years: Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy

Hyderabad, January 8 (TPN Bureau):

Telangana has witnessed a clear and positive transformation within just two years of the Congress government coming to power under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, State Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said on Thursday. He stated that as the government steps into its third year, it is moving forward with a balanced approach that gives equal priority to development and welfare, firmly placing people at the centre of governance.

The Minister was speaking after unveiling a souvenir titled "Rising

Revanth Reddy – A Decade of Progress in Two Years", brought out by the SPEAK organisation. The publication was released at his residence in the presence of government advisor P. Sudarshan Reddy. Addressing the gathering, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said the Congress government has remained committed to safeguarding public trust while putting Telangana on a fast track of growth and inclusive development.

He emphasised that the people's government is determined to accelerate development further and expand the reach of welfare schemes in the coming years. "Every de-



cision of this government is centred around the welfare of the people. Governance is not about slogans, but about measurable outcomes that touch everyday lives," he said.

The Minister remarked that Telangana had suffered due to a decade of neglect, corruption, and arrogant administration in the past. The Congress government, he said, took upon

itself the responsibility of correcting the course and restoring transparent, accountable, and people-friendly governance. "We are translating people's aspirations into policy and delivering re-

sults on the ground, not just making promises," he added. Highlighting achievements over the last two years, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said decisive steps have been taken to ensure justice and support for farmers, the poor, women, youth, Dalits, tribals, and minorities. Welfare schemes, he said, were implemented in a way that ensured benefits actually reached eligible beneficiaries instead of remaining confined to official records. Speaking specifically about the Revenue Department, the Minister said major reforms were introduced to bring transparency in land administration. Measures such as resolving long-pending land disputes, protecting government lands, and expediting land surveys through modern technology have provided direct relief to citizens. These

initiatives, he said, have reduced uncertainty and strengthened public confidence in the system.

The Minister reiterated that the government would continue to pursue people-centric governance with renewed energy in the coming years. He asserted that the progress achieved in just two years reflects the administration's clear vision and commitment to long-term development. The event was attended by Women's Commission Chairperson Nereela Sharada, SPEAK honorary advisor Anne Satyanarayana, organisation president Vidyasagar, and other prominent participants.

BRSV Alleges 100-Crore Scam in KGBV Tenders, Demands CBI or Judicial Probe



Hyderabad, January 8: Bharat Rashtra Samithi Vidyarthi Vibhag (BRSV) State Vice President Tungabalu on Wednesday alleged a

massive 100-crore scam in the tendering process of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayam (KGBVs) in Telangana and demanded an immediate Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or court-monitored judicial inquiry into the issue.

Addressing the media, Tungabalu accused the Congress government of indulging in rampant corruption ever since it came to power in the state. He claimed that preliminary information indicates serious irregularities worth nearly 100 crore in KGBV-related tenders. He alleged that the government has turned institutions meant for the education and welfare of poor, Dalit, tribal, and backward class girls into hubs of corruption.

The BRSV leader said tenders were allegedly

awarded without transparency, in violation of established norms, and were allegedly cornered by contractors close to the ruling party. He charged that the Congress government had compromised the future, safety, and education of thousands of underprivileged girls for political and financial gains.

Tungabalu further alleged that substandard materials and services were being supplied in KGBVs, including poor-quality food, hostel facilities, and essential amenities. He warned that such negligence was adversely affecting the health and education of students. "This is not just financial corruption; it is a crime against young girls whose lives and futures are being put at risk," he said.

Demanding accounta-

bility, he called for an immediate CBI inquiry or a judicial probe under the supervision of the High Court to investigate the alleged 100-crore scam. He urged strict action against all those involved, including the Chief Minister, ministers, senior officials, and contractors, if found guilty.

The BRSV leader warned that if the government fails to order an impartial probe and bring the truth before the public, the organisation would launch statewide protests. He said demonstrations, dharnas, and road blockades would be organised in front of KGBVs across Telangana. Tungabalu asserted that BRSV would continue to question and oppose any government that exploits girls' education for corruption.

Telangana Agriculture Minister Tummala Orders Strict Action Against Unauthorized HT Cotton Seeds



Hyderabad, January 8 (TPN Bureau):

Telangana Agriculture Minister Tummala Narendra directed officials on Thursday to take strict measures to prevent the entry and sale of unauthorized HT (Herbicide Tolerant) cotton seeds in the state. Reviewing the situation with agriculture department officials and directors at the Secretariat, the minister emphasised that farmers must be protected from banned or uncertified seeds, which pose environmental and economic risks.

Minister Tummala noted that HT/BG-III cotton seeds were developed by Monsanto in the United States but failed in field trials, leading the Central Government to deny approval for their commercial use. Despite this, some unscrupulous agents have been illegally supplying these seeds to farmers in Telangana, including counterfeited seeds smuggled from Maharashtra and Gujarat.

To curb the illegal trade, the minister instructed officials to establish task force teams in border districts starting this month. These teams are tasked with monitoring seed movement, preventing unauthorized seed sales, and overseeing co-marketing activities in line with state regulations.

Minister Tummala also stressed the importance of awareness campaigns, urging farmers not to purchase HT seeds, which

Hyderabad Becomes Hub for AI Innovation: IT & Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu



Hyderabad, 08-01-2026 (TPN Bureau):

for AI innovation and investment," he noted.

Hyderabad is rapidly establishing itself as a leading city for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India, IT & Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu said on Thursday. The Minister was speaking at the inauguration of the expanded Aiden AI Engineering Centre at Hitech City, highlighting the city's growing prominence in AI and technology.

Minister Sridhar Babu emphasized that the government's proactive efforts over the last two years have created a robust ecosystem that is attracting globally renowned companies to Telangana. "The supportive infrastructure and policies have positioned Hyderabad as a preferred destination

backing needed to thrive. "Our aim is to make Hyderabad a national and international hub for AI research, development, and implementation," he said.

Officials from Aiden AI, including CEO Kiran Ventrapragada, COO Srinivasa Kamidi, and

Kavita Murali Krishna, attended the event. The Minister highlighted that the synergy between the government and private sector companies is key to Hyderabad's rapid emergence as a leading AI destination. This initiative is ex-

pected to boost employment, drive innovation, and strengthen Telangana's position on the global technology map, making Hyderabad a pivotal centre for artificial intelligence research and industry growth.

Former Minister Harish Rao Flags Delay in Telemetry Installation for Krishna Water Monitoring



Hyderabad, 08-01-2026 (TPN Bureau):

Former Minister Harish Rao has raised serious concerns over the negligence of both Central and Telangana governments in implementing telemetry systems to monitor Krishna river water usage. Highlighting procedural delays and mismanagement of allocated funds, he criticized the authorities for failing to safeguard Telangana's water rights. According to Rao, a total of 4.18 crore had been allocated for the installation of telemetry devic-

es by the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), but the funds have reportedly been diverted without proper utilization. He alleged that the Telangana government's inaction is indirectly aiding the illegal exploitation of Krishna waters by Andhra Pradesh. He noted that in June 2016, the KRMB had approved the installation of telemetry systems in 18 locations during the first phase, with 9 additional locations planned in the second phase. However, nearly a decade later, the

second phase remains incomplete, highlighting gross administrative delays. Rao questioned why the AP government was not pressured to act and why KRMB remained silent despite its responsibility to protect Telangana's interests. "Despite repeated claims of telemetry installation, the Centre has done nothing in two years. The state's inaction mirrors the Polavaram and Nallamala Sagar negligence. It is shocking that both Telangana and Central governments, along with

The former minister emphasized that telemetry systems are crucial for tracking water consumption, ensuring transparency, and preventing misuse of Krishna river resources, and called for urgent, coordinated action by all concerned authorities. This statement comes amid growing tensions between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh over water sharing, with Rao stressing that timely telemetry installation is vital to protect Telangana's rightful share.

TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud Calls for Intensified Statewide Movement Against G-RAM-JI

Hyderabad, January 8 (TPN Bureau):

The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) extended-level meeting commenced at Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday under the leadership of TPCC President and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud. Addressing the gathering, Mahesh Kumar Goud called for an intensified statewide agitation against the proposed G-RAM-JI Act, in accordance with the directions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC). In his address, the TPCC chief announced that protests against the G-RAM-JI Act would be taken to the grassroots level across Telangana. He instructed party cadres to organise Gram Sabhas in every village between January 20 and 30, after the Sankranti



festival. These village meetings, he said, must focus on educating people about the adverse impact of the G-RAM-JI Act and mobilising public opinion against it.

Mahesh Kumar Goud strongly emphasised the importance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), describing it as one of the most progressive welfare legislations in the country. To counter what he termed as misinformation, he directed the party to distribute 5,000 pamphlets in each Assembly constituency explaining the significance and benefits of the employment guarantee scheme. He stressed that every pamphlet should reach every village and every habitation without fail. Highlighting the global

Revanth Reddy Accused of University Land Grab by BRS MLC Dr. Dasoju Sravan

Hyderabad, 08-01-2026 (TPN Bureau):

BRS MLC Dr. Dasoju Sravan on Thursday strongly criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his government, alleging that they are attempting to sell university lands for personal and political gain. Speaking at a press conference at Telangana Bhavan, Dr. Sravan described the move as unethical, anti-people, and a direct assault on the education sector. Dr. Sravan claimed that Revanth Reddy is personally involved in schemes to acquire vast tracts of land under the guise of development. He highlighted the government's attempt to take over 50 acres belonging to Maulana Azad National Urdu University, calling it shameful and unacceptable. Reports of notices issued on lands be-



longing to other prestigious institutions, including the Indian School of Business (ISB), led him to assert that the government is behaving like a real estate mafia. The MLC further stated that the Chief Minister does not need to sell university lands to sustain or glorify his position, and if he is incapable of governing without doing so, he should step down immediately. Dr. Sravan questioned whether such critical decisions

had even been discussed in the Cabinet or if the CM is acting arbitrarily, likening him to a gardener who sells land at will. He described the move as playing with Goddess Saraswathi and warned that the people of Telangana would not forgive such actions.

Criticizing the Congress government for remaining silent on issues affecting the Urdu language and Urdu students, Dr. Sravan called on the Muslim commu-

nity and the people of Telangana to stand united against this injustice. He emphasized that the notice issued to the Urdu University must be immediately withdrawn, and that the Chief Minister and his ministers should cease all real estate dealings. He also urged the government to protect the lands of educational institutions, recalling how the BRS had supported students during the Kanche-Gachibowli land issue.

State's Road Safety and EV Initiatives at National Transport Development Council Meeting

New Delhi, 08-01-2026 (TPN Bureau):

The 43rd meeting of the National Transport Development Council, chaired by Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari at Bharat Mandap, New Delhi, saw participation from transport ministers of all states and union territories. Representing Telangana were Transport Minister Ponnambalam Prabhakar, Special Chief Secretary Vikas Raj, Transport Commissioner Ilamberti, and senior officials from the state transport department.

During the session, Minister Prabhakar emphasized the need to establish a Driving Training and Research



Institute (IDTR) in Telangana to enhance road safety and develop skilled drivers. He highlighted the state government's ongoing initiatives to promote electric vehicles (EVs) within the Outer Ring Road (ORR) area of Hyderabad, including the gradual transition of RTC buses to fully electric operations, followed by taxis, auto-rickshaws, and other commercial vehicles. Since the introduction of the state EV policy in November 2024, the number of electric vehicles in Telangana has surged from 4,376 in 2020 to over 2.5 lakh in 2025. The state aims to achieve 100% EV adoption within the ORR and 25% out-

side it.

Minister Prabhakar also outlined the state's vehicle scrapping and green tax policies, stricter automated fitness testing at 37 new sta-

tions, and integration of AI, sensors, and advanced cameras to modernize driving license issuance and vehicle registration processes. Public transport safety

will be enhanced with tracking devices for buses and taxis, linked to an integrated command control center.

Additional initiatives include the establishment of road safety awareness programs in schools and colleges, development of world-class transport academies, improvement of truck terminal parking yards around Hyderabad, and modernization of RTO offices akin to passport service centers. These measures are part of Vision 2047, aimed at training 5 lakh heavy vehicle drivers with advanced skills and ensuring Telangana sets global benchmarks in road safety and transport management.

Hyderabad, 08-01-2026 (TPN Bureau): Telangana Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies, Captain N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, has strongly criticized the reforms introduced by the Central Government in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), describing them as a death blow to rural employment. Addressing a PCC executive meeting at Gandhi Bhavan on Thursday, the minister said the

Congress government had historically designed the scheme to empower rural laborers, instilling confidence among the poor, and enhancing their social dignity.

He accused the BJP

of deliberately weakening the program, despite it being a flagship initiative of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, with the intent of undermining its effectiveness in rural India. "The Central Government has diluted key provisions such as the 100-day guaranteed employment and wage safeguards for job card holders. Administrative powers of Gram Panchayats have been curtailed, directly striking at the scheme's core objectives," he said.

The minister further criticized the reduction of Central funding by 40%, shifting the financial burden onto state governments, thereby impacting the livelihood of rural workers.

He urged the Congress machinery nationwide to mobilize and protest against these reforms, calling for coordinated action to restore the integrity of the scheme.

Uttam Kumar Reddy also emphasized that all 12,000 Gram Panchayats in Telangana should pass resolutions opposing the reforms, consolidate them, and submit a formal demand for the full restoration of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA to the President of India. He called for long-term agitation to safeguard the fundamental principles of the program and ensure continued employment rights for rural laborers.

Government Schools to Get Centralized Kitchens for Quality Breakfast and Lunch

Hyderabad | 08 January 2026 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) has directed a detailed review of the infrastructure required to provide nutritious breakfast and lunch to students in government schools across Telangana. The meeting focused on strengthening the mid-day meal program and ensuring that students receive high-quality, hygienically pre-



pared meals. During the review, the Chief Minister emphasized the need to establish centralized kitchens in every two assembly constituencies. These kitchens would ensure standardized preparation of meals, maintaining quality and hygiene for school children. He also suggested exploring the use of solar kitchens, which would not only provide energy-efficient solutions but also promote

sustainability in the education sector.

KCR instructed officials to take immediate steps to implement these measures and ensure that students in government schools have access to fresh and nutri-

tious meals. The initiative aims to enhance student health, support learning outcomes, and reduce malnutrition in rural and urban schools alike.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the construction progress of Young India Integrated Residential Schools, which are being developed to provide high-quality education and residential facilities to children from various

backgrounds. He urged officials to expedite the ongoing construction works and ensure timely completion of these schools, so that more students can benefit from modern educational infrastructure.

In line with these directives, KCR instructed officials to prioritize budget allocations for both centralized kitchens and the residential schools. He emphasized that adequate funding

and efficient execution are essential to the success of these programs, which aim to provide holistic support for students' nutrition and education. The Chief Minister's guidance reflects the government's commitment to improving student welfare and enhancing the overall quality of government schooling in Telangana. By implementing centralized kitchens, incorporating renewable en-

ergy solutions, and accelerating residential school projects, the administration aims to create an ecosystem where students' academic, nutritional, and developmental needs are fully met. Officials were asked to submit regular progress reports and ensure close monitoring of the execution of these initiatives. The CM reiterated that children's health and education are top priorities and

Hyderabad Police: Newly Appointed DCPs Assume Charge

Hyderabad | 08 January 2026 | TPN Bureau

Several newly appointed Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) assumed charge on Thursday across different zones of the reorganized Hyderabad Police Commissionerate. Following the formal assumption of responsibilities, the officers met the City Police Commissioner, VC Sajjanar, IPS, and presented him with bouquets as a gesture of respect.

The newly appointed DCPs and their respective zones are:

- Charminar Zone: Shri Kare Kiran Prabhakar, IPS
- Rajendranagar Zone: Shri S. Srinivas, IPS
- Golconda Zone: Shri G. Chandramohan
- Jubilee Hills Zone: Shri A. Ramana Reddy
- Shamshabad Zone: Shri B. Rajesh

City Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar warmly welcomed the officers and emphasized the importance of maintaining law and order while delivering effi-



cient and citizen-friendly policing. He directed the DCPs to work diligently to ensure the safety and security of the city and to strengthen public trust through effective service.

The Commissioner highlighted that proactive policing, community engagement, and coordination across zones are key to safeguarding Hyderabad's peace and enhancing the efficiency of the police force. He encouraged the officers to uphold integrity, discipline, and professionalism in all aspects of their duties.

The assumption of charge by these officers marks an important step in reinforcing the operational structure of the Hyderabad Police Commissionerate. By taking responsibility for their respective zones, the DCPs will play a pivotal role in managing law enforcement, responding to emergencies, and implementing initiatives to improve public safety.

Commissioner Sajjanar also underscored the

need for officers to remain vigilant against crime, ensure quick response to public grievances, and adopt modern policing techniques to address challenges in urban law enforcement.

The ceremony concluded with a formal briefing by the Commissioner on current policing priorities, administrative expectations, and strategic objectives for each zone. The DCPs committed to executing their responsibilities with dedication, ensuring both operational effectiveness and public satisfaction in their jurisdictions.



Drugs Must Be Avoided... Choose a Golden Future



Qutbullapur, Hyderabad | 08 January 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a significant anti-drug operation, the Qutbullapur police apprehended two individuals involved in the illegal purchase and sale of the prohibited substance MDMA, sending a strong message about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of making responsible choices for a better future. The arrests were made under the jurisdiction of Bachupally Police Station, following a coordinated operation by local law enforcement and the Special Operations Team (SOT) of the Bala

narag Zone SOT CI Shivakumar, Satish Kumar, Bachupally CI, and other police personnel from the Bala

nagar Zone SOT and Bachupally Police Station. The police reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to conducting regular anti-drug drives and creating awareness programs aimed at educating communities about the risks associated with drug abuse.

This operation reflects the proactive stance of Hyderabad police in addressing the challenges posed by narcotics, ensuring community safety, and encouraging young citizens to choose a healthy, drug-free life. The authorities reiterated that the Government has imposed a complete ban on Chinese Manja due to the serious risks it poses to humans, birds, and the environment. The Commissioner warned of zero tolerance, stating

a case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, and investigations are ongoing to dismantle the drug supply chain.

ACP Ravikiran Reddy highlighted that the operation was successfully conducted in collaboration with Bala

nagar SOT, Bachupally Police, and other units, showcasing the commitment of the Telangana police to combating drug-related offenses and protecting the youth from falling into the traps of substance abuse.

The ACP urged citizens, especially the younger generation, to reject drugs and focus on education, skill development, and constructive activities that lead to a "golden future." He emphasized that drugs not only destroy lives but also affect families and communities, and called upon the public to report suspicious activities immediately to the police.



Hyderabad Police Crack Down on Chinese Manja Ahead of Sankranti, Seize 1.24 Crore Worth of Contraband

Hyderabad, January 8 (TPN Bureau):

Ahead of the Sankranti festival, the Hyderabad City Police have intensified their crackdown on the banned Chinese Manja (synthetic/nylon kite strings) to prevent illegal sale, storage, and transportation across the city. The enforcement drive has resulted in significant seizures and multiple arrests.

Addressing the media, Hyderabad Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar, IPS, emphasized that while Sankranti is a festival of joy and kite-flying, celebrations must not endanger lives. He reiterated that the Government has imposed a complete ban on Chinese Manja due to the serious risks it poses to humans, birds, and the environment. The Commissioner warned of

that anyone found selling, storing, or transporting Chinese Manja will face immediate legal action.

He further highlighted that some traders have shifted to online platforms to evade enforcement. "We have established round-the-clock surveillance on e-commerce platforms and social media. Strict legal action will be taken against anyone involved in online sale or purchase of Chinese Manja," the Commissioner added.

Parents were cautioned about the metallic coating on Chinese Manja, which can cause severe injuries and even electric shocks, particularly to children. Citizens were urged to use only traditional cotton kite strings and report violations via dial 100 or WhatsApp at 94906 16555.

As part of the ongoing

drive, the Hyderabad Police have registered 103 cases and arrested 143 individuals. A total of 6,226 bobbins of banned Chinese Manja, valued at 1,24,52,000, have been seized. The South West Zone reported the highest number of violations with 34 cases, 46 arrests, and 3,265 bobbins seized (65,30,000). The South Zone followed with 27 cases, 35 arrests, and 1,861 bobbins seized (37,22,000). The East Zone recorded 18 cases and 29 arrests with seizures worth 6,02,000. Other zones reported fewer cases, with the Central, North, and West Zones accounting for six, five, and four cases respectively. The Commissioner's Task Force played a pivotal role, handling 67 cases, 87 arrests, and seizing banned manja worth 68,78,000. The event was

attended by Addl. CP (Crimes & SIT) M. Srinivasulu, IPS; DCPs Khare Kiran Prabhakar, IPS; G. Chandra Mohan, IPS; Gaikwad Vaibhav Ragunath, IPS; Addl. DCP (Task Force) Ande Srinivas Rao, and other officials. The Commissioner congratulated the officers and staff, presenting cash awards in recognition of their efforts to enforce the ban effectively.

DGP Presents 1.31 Crore Insurance Cheque to Family of Constable Who Died in Road Accident



Hyderabad | 08 January 2026 | TPN Bureau

Director General of Police, Shri B. Shivadar Reddy on Thursday personally handed over an insurance cheque of 1.31 crore to the family of a constable who lost his life in a road accident last year. The cheque, provided through Bank of Baroda, was presented at the DGP's office as part of the government's support for the bereaved family.

The deceased, Constable Boy Pandu, had been serving at Amberpet CPL. He and his wife tragically died in a road accident on March 25, 2025. As the constable held a Bank of Baroda account, the insurance amount became due to his family. The DGP personally delivered the cheque to ensure timely assistance to the family, providing them financial relief during a difficult time.

The handover ceremony was attended by senior officials of Bank of

Baroda, including DGM K. Muralikrishna and Advisor, Retired Brigadier S.K. Prasad. The presence of bank officials underscored the collaborative effort between the police department and financial institutions to support families of personnel who sacrifice their lives in service.

Shri B. Shivadar Reddy expressed his condolences to the family and emphasized the department's commitment to the welfare of

measures by the police department to safeguard the welfare of its employees and their dependents, reinforcing a culture of care and responsibility within the force. Bank representatives assured continued support and smooth processing of all claims related to police personnel, ensuring that families facing tragic circumstances are not left in distress. The family expressed gratitude for the timely delivery of the insurance amount and the attention given by the DGP and bank officials. The initiative is seen as a model of cooperation between government departments and financial institutions to provide immediate relief in cases of untimely death of serving personnel. This move reiterates the government's commitment to the safety and welfare of its workforce and demonstrates how administrative coordination can translate into meaningful support for families in times of need.

13 kg of Dry Ganja Seized in Nizamabad; Five Arrested Under NDPS Act



Nizamabad, January 8 (TPN Bureau):

In a major crackdown on narcotics trafficking, the Prohibition and Excise Department, Nizamabad, seized 13 kilograms of dry ganja and arrested five persons on Thursday while intercepting its transportation by bus from Madhya Pradesh to Telangana.

According to District Prohibition and Excise Officer K. Malla Reddy, the operation was carried out based on reliable information regarding the movement of dry ganja from Madhya Pradesh to Nizamabad.

Further onward to Nizamabad. Acting swiftly on the intelligence, a special route watch was conducted under his direct supervision by the Station House Officer (SHO) and staff of the Prohibition and Excise Department, Nizamabad.

The checking was carried out at Reliance Mart on the Kanteswar Bypass Road within Nizamabad town. During the operation, officials intercepted the suspects and detected a case under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The seizures made during the operation include 13 kilograms of dry ganja and five mobile phones believed to have been used for coordinating the illegal transportation and distribution of the contraband. The arrested accused have been identified as Pooja Pawar, wife of Devrao, a resident of Devika Thanda, Rolmamada, Neradigonda in Adilabad district; Durpada Bai Jadhav, wife of Ramesh, a resident of Kupti village in Adilabad district; Kishan Motiram Dhale, son of Motiram Dhale, a resident of Bellon Dhanora, Kinwat in Nanded district of Maharashtra; Indrajith Tagore, son of Govind Singh Tagore, a resident of Paroti Post, Umarghad Taluka, Yavatmal district of Maharashtra; and Manja Venkat Ram, son of Davlathu, a resident of Nowsiram Thanda, Chedamal in Kamareddy district. After completion of the necessary legal formalities, the accused along with the seized contraband were produced before the Honourable Judicial First Class Magistrate

(JFCM) Court, Nizamabad, and were remanded to judicial custody. Officials stated that the case is currently under investigation to trace the larger network involved in the procurement and distribution of ganja across inter-state routes. Further arrests are likely as the probe progresses. District officials reiterated that strict surveillance and enforcement measures will continue to curb the trafficking of narcotic substances and warned that those involved in drug-related offences will face stringent legal action.

BJP Holds Extensive Meeting in Warangal, Outlines Strategy for Upcoming Municipal Elections

Warangal, 08-01-2026 (TPN Bureau):

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) conducted a large-scale meeting of its party workers in Warangal district, focusing on strategies and campaign activities to ensure the success of its candidates in the upcoming municipal elections.

During the meeting, party leaders emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among members to strengthen the party's presence at the grassroots level. Attendees were urged to work in close collaboration to ensure the election of councillors committed to public service, thereby increasing BJP's popularity and support among the local

populace.

Party officials also outlined detailed action plans for outreach, voter engagement, and awareness campaigns, aiming to consolidate support across wards. Leaders highlighted that disciplined teamwork, active participation, and consistent engagement with citizens are essential for translating public goodwill into electoral victories.

The program saw participation from several senior BJP leaders and office-bearers, including district presidents Ravi Kumar, Pradeep Rao, Sridhar Reddy, as well as state general secretaries Dr. Gautam Rao and Veerender Goud. Veteran leaders Rajeshwar Rao and Aruri Ramesh were also present.

sent, providing guidance and strategic inputs to party workers.

The gathering underlined the party's commitment to strengthening local governance and ensuring the election of councillors dedicated to the welfare of citizens. Party leaders encouraged members to maintain consistent engagement with residents and to convey the BJP's vision for development and public service effectively.

The meeting concluded with a call for unity and coordinated action among party workers, stressing that disciplined preparation and sustained public outreach would be key to achieving success in the upcoming municipal elections.



Telangana Government Charts Modern Silo-Based Storage Plan to Protect Crops and Food Security

Hyderabad, 08-01-2026, TPN Bureau

Telangana's Minister for Water Resources and Civil Supplies, Captain N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, has outlined a comprehensive roadmap to safeguard harvested crops using modern technology, while simultaneously strengthening food security. Speaking at a review meeting held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat with officials from the Food Corporation of India and the State Civil Supplies Department, the Minister emphasized that the initiative aims to assure farmers and prevent post-harvest losses.

Highlighting Telangana's position as a leading grain-producing state in India, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government is planning to implement a scientific silo-based system to store paddy, maize, soybean, and other crops. The integrated silos, equipped with automa-



ed cleaners and dryers, would allow grains to be stored for up to two years without human intervention, preserving quality and minimizing spoilage.

The Minister pointed out that the current practice of sending purchased grains directly to rice mills leads to delays in milling and damages the grain due to the ab-

sence of proper storage facilities. By using modern silo systems, moisture can be removed efficiently, ensuring long-term preservation of grains and allowing farmers to fetch higher market prices for older stocks.

Uttam Kumar Reddy also highlighted the revolutionary impact of Telangana's Congress-

around 5,000 crore incurred during milling and central procurement processes, while also generating additional revenue of approximately 1,000 crore for the state government. The Minister stressed that the adoption of these modern storage methods will safeguard farmer incomes, enhance crop security, and strengthen overall food management in Telangana.

Officials at the meeting reviewed the technical details of the silo storage systems, emphasizing the need for integrated dryers, automated cleaning, and scientific grain preservation methods to maximize efficiency and protect the state's agricultural output. The government plans to implement the project in a phased manner, ensuring that harvested crops are preserved effectively and farmers gain long-term benefits.

Minister Vakiti Srihari Urges Road Safety Awareness at National Road Safety Month Celebrations in Narayanapet



Narayanapet, January 8 (TPN Bureau):

Telangana's Minister for Sports, Animal Husbandry, and Youth Services, Vakiti Srihari, participated in the National Road Safety Month celebrations held at Narayanapet district headquarters. The month-long campaign, which began on January 1, involves students taking road safety pledges and spreading awareness on safe driving practices.

Addressing the students, Minister Srihari emphasized the importance of following traffic rules to prevent accidents. "In our country, an accident occurs every second. Observing safety regulations can save many lives," he said.

He urged parents to remind children to drive safely and young people to remember their family's concerns while on the road.

Sharing his personal experience, the minister recounted how he lost the opportunity to play cricket at the national level due to an accident.

uals' children, including those of Kota Srinivas Rao, Babu Mohan, and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who tragically died in road accidents, underlining the real-life consequences of unsafe driving. The program saw active participation from students, school officials, and local authorities, reinforcing the message that road safety is a shared responsibility. The initiative aims to create a culture of caution and awareness among young riders, encouraging them to make responsible choices and reduce traffic-related fatalities across the district. Minister Srihari concluded by urging everyone to pledge safety, respect traffic rules, and set an example for others, making Telangana's roads safer for all.



Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy Reacts to Jagan's Comments on Rayalaseema Lift

Bhuvanagiri, 08-01-2026, TPN Bureau

Bhuvanagiri MP Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy has reacted strongly to recent remarks made by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy regarding the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project. Chamal Reddy criticized the attempts of the BRS leadership to politicize the issue, alleging that it aims to favor AP interests and provoke Telangana sentiments ahead of key political developments. He said that the BRS was trying to corner Telangana leaders, including BJP's Revanth Reddy, over the Krishna river water allocations in Palamuru, Rangareddy, and Banakacherla.

"The comments by Jagan have revealed the truth about KCR's misappropriation during the combined state days when he diverted Krishna river waters illegally," Chamal Reddy asserted.

He recalled that during his tenure as Chief Minister, KCR had attempted to divert Krishna waters unlawfully. Jagan himself admitted that he had spoken to KCR about the illegal transfer of water to AP. "I successfully ensured that more TMCs of water were transferred to AP during my tenure, whereas the current regime under Chandrababu Naidu has failed,"



Jagan reportedly said, according to Chamal Reddy.

Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy highlighted that Jagan clarified that even Revanth Reddy had pointed out discrepancies, which made Chandrababu Naidu step back on water allocations. He accused the KCR-Jagan alliance of exploiting Telangana's river resources for political gain. "With KCR's blessing, Jagan admitted to deceiving Telangana farmers by diverting Krishna river waters to Andhra Pradesh," Chamal Reddy concluded.

He added that the current political narrative by BRS and its leaders has attempted to portray Revanth Reddy as opposing AP's interests, whereas the facts show that the Telangana water share was mismanaged by previous governments under the combined state leadership. Chamal Reddy stressed that Revanth Reddy has been working to safeguard Telangana's water allocations, and the attempts to politicize this issue are misleading. Recalling the Assembly proceedings, he pointed out that Revanth Reddy had spoken about protecting Telangana's rightful water shares, and Jagan's statements reinforce that the KCR-led government had allowed illegal transfers in the past. Chamal Reddy concluded that the BRS should stop using water resources as a political tool and acknowledge the contributions of Telangana leaders in defending the state's interests. This reaction underscores the ongoing tension between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh over water sharing and highlights the political maneuvering surrounding the Krishna river allocations, with Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy calling for transparency and accountability in safeguarding Telangana's water resources.

Zohran Mamdani and the Perils of Performative Politics

As New York City's newly elected mayor, Zohran Mamdani inherits the daunting task of governing one of the world's most complex urban centers. With a population exceeding eight million, the city faces urgent challenges—soaring housing costs, strained public transportation, public safety concerns, and decaying infrastructure. Yet, instead of focusing squarely on these immediate responsibilities, Mamdani has drawn attention for an unusual and controversial fixation: Indian domestic politics, particularly the case of jailed activist Umar Khalid.

This preoccupation is striking not merely because it concerns a foreign country, but because it involves an ongoing judicial process entirely outside Mamdani's jurisdiction. Khalid is accused by Indian authorities of playing a central role in the 2020 Delhi riots, which left 53 people dead and hundreds injured. That an American municipal leader would repeatedly insert himself into such a matter—while grappling with the everyday governance of New York—raises serious questions about misplaced priorities and ideological grandstanding.

Mamdani's association with Khalid did not begin with his mayoral victory. As a junior member of the New York State Assembly, he publicly aligned himself with Khalid during protests against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States in June 2023. At one such event, Mamdani read from Khalid's prison diary, portraying him as a persecuted scholar and student activist rather than acknowledging the grave charges he faces. This framing omitted the extensive case assembled by Indian investigators, including witness testimony, call records, and allegations of coordinated incitement through groups such as the Jamia Coordination Committee.

His advocacy escalated further after assuming office. In December 2025, Mamdani reportedly



sent a handwritten letter to Khalid, delivered through the activist's parents. The note—later shared online by Khalid's partner—expressed emotional solidarity and admiration, stating, "I think of your words on bitterness often... We are all thinking of you."

In India, the gesture triggered sharp reactions, particularly from leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party, who accused Mamdani of interfering in India's judicial process.

The controversy is sharpened by legal developments in India. In January 2026, the Supreme Court denied Khalid bail, citing "prima facie" evidence of his involvement in planning and mobilizing violence during the riots. The court's findings emphasized the seriousness of the charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. By continuing to champion Khalid without addressing these judicial conclusions, Mamdani appears to disregard the

victims of the violence and reduce a complex tragedy to a simplistic narrative of oppression that fits his ideological lens.

This selective treatment of facts is not an isolated instance. Mamdani's public record includes several statements that critics argue stretch or distort reality. During his political campaign, he claimed that Muslims were effectively "eradicated" from Gujarat following the 2002 riots, suggesting their presence had nearly vanished.

Census data directly contradicts this assertion: Muslims constituted nearly 10 percent of Gujarat's population in 2011—over six million people—and the number has grown since. The claim was dismissed by figures across the political spectrum in India, including Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who described it as a "blatant lie."

More recently, Mamdani claimed in January

2026 that he had been "briefed" on U.S. military strikes in Venezuela, condemning them as acts of imperial aggression. The assertion bordered on the absurd. As mayor of New York City, Mamdani does not receive national security briefings, nor does his office hold any authority over foreign policy.

His remit includes sanitation schedules, zoning laws, and public transit—not geopolitics. The dissonance between Mamdani's global rhetoric and his local responsibilities has not gone unnoticed. Social media users were quick to mock the contrast, with one X user noting that his primary job is ensuring the city's 10,000 daily tons of garbage are collected on time—not weighing in on international conflicts.

The criticism underscores a broader concern: a mayor seemingly more invested in symbolic activism than the unglamorous, essential work of municipal

governance. Mamdani's background further complicates his messaging. Born to acclaimed filmmaker Mira Nair and prominent academic Mahmood Mamdani, he grew up in elite intellectual and cultural circles.

He has openly acknowledged benefiting from nepotism early in his career, including landing a role in Disney's Queen of Katwe. During an October 2025 debate, former Governor Andrew Cuomo accused him of having "never had a job" outside politics, a remark intended to highlight what critics see as Mamdani's limited exposure to everyday economic realities.

Despite this privileged upbringing, Mamdani frequently condemns capitalism and "rugged individualism," advocating collectivist ideals while enjoying the advantages of inherited status. Political strategist Hank Sheinkopf summarized the contra-

dition bluntly, saying Mamdani grew up with "three silver spoons in his mouth." To critics, his lectures on equality ring hollow when delivered from a position of profound advantage.

By contrast, Mamdani's detractors often embody the self-made trajectories he disparages. Former Mayor Eric Adams rose from poverty in Brooklyn, overcame dyslexia, and built a career in law enforcement before entering politics. Adams has labeled Mamdani a "snake oil salesman" willing to say anything for power. Rapper and entrepreneur 50 Cent criticized Mamdani's proposed tax hikes on high earners, warning they would drive investment out of the city. Elon Musk went further, calling him a "charismatic swindler" whose policies threaten to lower living standards.

Mamdani's rhetoric has also unsettled New York's diverse communities. His defense of the

caption "globalise the intifada," which he framed as a call for Palestinian rights, sparked outrage among Jewish groups. The phrase is historically associated with violent uprisings that killed over 1,000 Israelis in the early 2000s. More than 850 rabbis condemned Mamdani's stance in a joint letter, arguing that it normalized language that incites violence and endangers Jewish New Yorkers.

His policy appointments have compounded these concerns. Mamdani named Cea Weaver, an outspoken communist, as the city's tenant czar. Weaver has described private property—particularly homeownership—as a "weapon of white supremacy" and argued for its seizure for collective use. Eric Adams responded sharply, pointing out that homeownership has historically enabled immigrants and minorities to build stability and generational

wealth. Census data backs this up: by 2024, Black homeownership stood at 45.9 percent and Hispanic homeownership at 51.4 percent, both rising steadily.

Critics warn that such ideological positions risk deepening racial tensions, discouraging investment, and worsening New York's housing crisis by undermining market incentives. They argue that dismantling property rights would erode, rather than expand, economic opportunity.

Mamdani's worldview also reveals a flawed reading of history. In his victory speech, he quoted Jawaharlal Nehru's famous "Tryst with Destiny" address, celebrating India's post-independence idealism. What he omitted was the economic legacy of Nehru's License Raj—a rigid system of state controls that shackled India's economy for decades, limiting growth to roughly 3.5 to 4 percent annually and fostering widespread corruption. Only the liberalization reforms of 1991 dismantled this apparatus, unlocking sustained growth and entrepreneurship.

By romanticizing a model that stifled innovation and rewarded rent-seeking, Mamdani appears disconnected from both economic evidence and America's own foundational values of free enterprise and individual opportunity—the very forces that enabled immigrants, including his own parents, to prosper in the United States.

Ultimately, Mamdani's mayoralty begins under a cloud of distraction and contradiction. His fixation on foreign ideological battles, selective use of facts, and embrace of radical economic ideas suggest a leader more committed to performance than pragmatism. New York City does not need symbolic crusades; it needs effective governance. If Mamdani continues to prioritize spectacle over substance, the city's residents—not distant causes—may bear the cost.

Can India's Quick-Commerce Industry Survive the Cost of Speed?

India's fast-growing quick-commerce industry is facing its first serious reckoning. On New Year's Eve, more than 200,000 delivery riders across the country participated in a flash strike, refusing to transport food, groceries, and other essentials. While the immediate disruption appeared limited, the protest has exposed a deeper fault line in a sector built on speed, surplus labor, and fragile economics.

At the heart of the strike were familiar demands: better pay, safer working conditions, and basic dignity for gig workers. These issues, at least in theory, can be addressed by the platforms that rely on delivery labor. But the union leading the protest went further, calling for an end to the industry's defining promise—10-minute deliveries. That demand strikes at the core of the quick-commerce model and raises uncomfortable questions about whether India's obsession with instant gratification is sustainable at all.

Like many consumer habits, the desire for ultra-fast deliveries took root during the pandemic. Lockdowns normalized the idea that groceries and essentials could arrive at one's doorstep within min-

utes. In the United States and Europe, however, the model struggled once normal life resumed. Startups such as Fridge No More, Buyk, Jokr, and Getir either shut down or scaled back dramatically, unable to balance speed with profitability.

India, by contrast, doubled down. Instead of slowing delivery times, platforms made them shorter. Instead of limiting product categories, they expanded them—adding everything from pillows to prescription drugs. Companies such as Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, and Zepeto poured capital into "dark stores," warehouse-like facilities strategically located in dense neighborhoods to shave minutes off delivery times.

The result has been explosive growth. Even traditional retailers and global e-commerce giants that initially hesitated—Reliance Retail under Mukesh Ambani, Amazon, and Walmart-owned Flipkart—are now investing aggressively. According to real-estate consultancy Savills Plc, the number of dark stores in India could triple by 2030, growing from roughly 2,500 today to around 7,500, as 10-minute deliveries spread beyond major metros into smaller

cities.

Yet the New Year's Eve strike has forced a public reckoning over the hidden costs of this speed. Delivery platforms insist they do not impose time pressure on riders. But workers argue that reality tells a different story. Late deliveries often result in poor customer ratings, reprimands from supervisors, or financial penalties.

In practice, riders feel compelled to take risks on India's already dangerous roads—narrow, congested, poorly maintained, and infamous for traffic fatalities occurring roughly every three minutes nationwide.

In cities like New Delhi, the hazards go beyond traffic. Riders spend long hours exposed to some of the world's worst air pollution, compounding health risks that rarely feature in company earnings calls or marketing campaigns.

Even before the strike, investors had begun to worry about rising scrutiny of gig-economy labor practices. India's new labor codes include provisions for social security benefits for gig workers, raising fears of higher costs. Since mid-October, shares of Swiggy Ltd. and Eternal Ltd.—the parent company of Zomato and Blinkit—have fallen by

roughly 20%, even as the broader Nifty 50 index remained largely stable.

The strike has only complicated matters further. If regulators push consumers to be more patient, or force companies to provide stronger worker protections, the economics of quick commerce could unravel before the sector ever becomes profitable.

Industry leaders are keenly aware of this risk. In a series of posts on X, Eternal CEO Deepinder Goyal dismissed the strike as the work of a "small number of miscreants" who were obstructing non-striking riders.

He emphasized that order volumes reached a record 7.5 million on December 31, suggesting the protest had little operational impact. At the same time, Goyal sought to address growing public concern. He argued that 10-minute deliveries do not encourage reckless driving, noting that Blinkit riders travel an average distance of just 2 kilometers at an average speed of 16 kilometers per hour. He highlighted company-funded insurance coverage and claimed that the average worker earns about 102 rupees per hour while logged into the app.

On paper, the math looks reasonable. A rider working 10 hours a day for 26

days a month could earn roughly 21,000 rupees, before fuel and vehicle maintenance.

"Now tell me, is this unfair?" Goyal asked, describing delivery work as unskilled, largely part-time, and accessible to anyone.

But the company's own data reveals the weakness in this argument. Very few workers actually log in enough hours to earn that hypothetical monthly income. Over a year, the average Zomato delivery partner worked just 38 days, at roughly seven hours per day. Only 2.3% worked more than 250 days annually.

If gig work truly offered a reliable pathway out of urban poverty, critics argue, far more people would attempt to maximize their earnings. Instead, churn remains extremely high, with millions of workers cycling in and out of platforms each year.

One explanation lies in India's vast surplus labor pool. With so many people seeking income, platforms rarely face a shortage of riders, even if individual workers are dissatisfied with pay or risk levels. When one group quits, another replaces it. From the consumer's perspective, the system works seamlessly—orders are picked up and delivered on time.

To supporters of India's e-commerce boom, this is simply capitalism at work.

Even if today's riders do not become middle-class, their children might. Interfering with platforms now, they argue, would only spread poverty more evenly rather than creating opportunity.

If critics contend this narrative glosses over a crucial distinction. The consumer-facing side of quick commerce is undeniably capitalist, driven by competition, innovation, and scale. The delivery side, however, resembles something closer to pre-capitalist labor arrangements. Riders supply their own vehicles, pay for fuel, absorb maintenance costs, and have no assurance of

continuity. Unlike even feudal sharecroppers, they lack permanence; a platform can suspend a worker's account without explanation, instantly cutting off income.

This fragility becomes even more concerning when viewed in a global context. By 2030, India's gig economy is expected to employ 23.5 million people—three times today's figure. China already offers a glimpse of what such scale can look like. Despite faster historical job creation, competition among delivery workers there is brutal. In cities like Beijing, missing a bathroom break can jeopardize a courier's chance of hitting a \$1,000 monthly income target.

In both countries, the conclusion is the same: left entirely to market forces, abundance for consumers often translates into precarity for workers. The only entity capable of rebalancing the equation is the state.

Without thoughtful regulation—covering social security, safety standards, and reasonable expectations of speed—the promise of instant delivery risks becoming a system where convenience is purchased at the cost of dignity. If governments fail to intervene, the road to ever-faster service may ultimately lead not to prosperity, but to a modern form of serfdom hidden behind the glow of smartphone screens.



West Bengal CM Intervenes at IPAC Raid, Sparks Political Clash

Kolkata – West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee became the centre of a dramatic confrontation during a raid by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at the residence and offices of Pratik Jain, chief of election consultancy IPAC. The ED has alleged that Banerjee, along with state police personnel, forcibly removed laptops, phones, and documents from the premises, obstructing an ongoing investigation into a coal smuggling and money laundering syndicate.

The matter has now reached the High Court, with the ED claiming that Banerjee, despite holding the office of Chief Minister, is "defending those involved in coal smuggling and money laundering" and obstructing justice. The court is expected to hear the case tomorrow.

The ED's Allegations

According to the Enforcement Directorate, the searches were carried out at 10 locations—six in West Bengal and four in Delhi—in connection with a coal smuggling syndicate allegedly led by Anup Majee. The group is accused of illegally excavating coal from Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) leasehold areas in West Bengal and selling it to factories in districts including Bankura, Bardhaman, and Purulia. Investigators say a portion of this coal was supplied to the Shakambhari Group of companies.

The ED's probe has also uncovered a hawala network allegedly used to layer and transfer the proceeds of the illegal operations. Officials claim that one hawala operator facilitated transactions involving tens of crores of rupees to Indian Pac Consulting Private Limited (I-PAC), linking the consultancy firm to the money trail.

In a statement, the ED said the searches at Jain's residence and offices were part of its anti-money laundering operations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The agency insisted



the actions were evidence-based, not politically motivated, and stressed that no party offices were targeted.

Mamata Banerjee's Version

Banerjee, speaking to reporters outside Jain's residence, claimed the raid was politically engineered by the BJP ahead of West Bengal's assembly elections. She accused the ED of taking "party data, laptops, iPhones, tax papers, bank account details, and election strategy," calling it an "insult to the IT sector."

The Chief Minister said she went to Jain's residence after discovering the raid and seeing that he had not answered her calls. "We are gentle, we are sober, but if you give me pain, I won't stay quiet. IPAC is authorised by us and they are our team. If we build the data now, the election will be over," she said.

Banerjee also accused the BJP of undermining democracy, questioning whether it would be acceptable if opposition offices were raided in a similar manner. "In the name of SIR, 1.5 crore voters have

been deleted. If you have the courage, fight with us electorally Amit Shah ji," she added.

Political Reactions

The raid has sparked a fierce political backlash. The BJP condemned Banerjee's actions, with Swapan Dasgupta posting on X, formerly Twitter, that the Chief Minister is "wilfully putting herself above the Constitution & Rule of Law" by removing allegedly incriminating documents.

The Opposition was quick to hit back. Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi called the ED raid "yet another chapter in the BJP's playbook of coercion," accusing the agency of weaponizing state institutions against political rivals. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav added, "The BJP is losing badly in Bengal. First proof!"

The Coal Smuggling Case

The ED has stated that its investigation into the coal smuggling syndicate revealed a complex network involving illegal excavation, sales to industrial buyers, and financial transactions routed through hawala

operators. The agency is pursuing the trail under anti-money laundering laws to recover proceeds of crime and hold the perpetrators accountable.

The involvement of IPAC, according to the ED, is tied to alleged financial transactions connected to the syndicate, raising questions about the consultancy's role in the flow of funds.

Looking Ahead

With assembly elections in West Bengal due early this year, the controversy over the ED raid, Banerjee's intervention, and the alleged coal smuggling network is expected to dominate political discourse. The High Court hearing scheduled for tomorrow will likely determine whether the Chief Minister's actions constitute obstruction of justice or whether her claims of political targeting hold merit.

As the battle unfolds, the incident highlights the intersection of law enforcement, electoral politics, and governance in one of India's most politically vibrant states.

Justice Varma Challenges Parliamentary Inquiry; SC Reserves Judgment

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its judgment on a plea filed by Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma, who is challenging the constitutionality of the parliamentary panel probing corruption charges against him. The case has attracted significant attention, given its implications for judicial accountability and the impeachment process of high-ranking judges in India.

A bench comprising Justices Dipankar Datta and S.C. Sharma heard arguments from senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Siddharth Luthra, representing Justice Varma, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for both houses of Parliament. After extensive deliberations, the court chose to reserve its verdict, leaving the matter pending for a formal judgment.

Arguments by Justice Varma's Counsel

Rohatgi and Luthra argued that the procedure followed in constituting the parliamentary inquiry committee was irregular and contrary to the Judges (Inquiry) Act of 1968. They contended that only the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha have the authority to admit a motion for the removal of a judge from office. They challenged the constitution of the inquiry committee itself, asserting that the process adopted bypassed statutory provisions and violated Varma's constitutional rights.

Parliamentary Panel's Defense

Representing both houses, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta defended the formation of the parliamentary panel. Mehta argued that once a motion is admitted in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the inquiry committee is to be constituted jointly by the Speaker and the Chairman, as



envisioned under parliamentary practice. He emphasized that the action was procedural and constitutionally valid, noting that the committee's role is to examine allegations of misconduct in accordance with the law.

During the hearing, the Supreme Court also observed that there is no legal bar under the Judges Inquiry Act preventing the Lok Sabha Speaker from setting up an inquiry committee to probe corruption charges against Justice Varma, even after a similar motion had been rejected in the Rajya Sabha.

Background of the Case

Justice Varma, who was serving at the Allahabad High Court, was earlier repatriated from the Delhi High Court after authorities found burnt wads of currency notes at his official residence in New Delhi on March 14. The discovery triggered a series of inquiries into his conduct.

On December 16, the Supreme Court had agreed to hear Varma's plea challenging the parliamentary inquiry and issued notices to the Lok Sabha Speaker and the secretaries-general of both Houses of

Parliament.

Prior to the parliamentary action, then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna had initiated an in-house inquiry into the allegations. A three-member committee was constituted, comprising Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice G.S. Sandhawalia, and Karnataka High Court Justice Anu Sivaraman. This committee submitted its report on May 4, concluding that Justice Varma was guilty of misconduct.

After Varma declined to resign despite the findings, the CJI forwarded the committee's report and the judge's response to the President and the Prime Minister, setting in motion the impeachment proceedings.

Parliamentary Proceedings

Following the in-house inquiry, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla admitted a multi-party motion for Varma's removal on August 12. Subsequently, a three-member parliamentary inquiry committee was formed, comprising Supreme Court judge Justice Aravind Kumar, Madras High Court

Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, and senior advocate B.V. Acharya.

Justice Varma has sought to quash the Speaker's action, the admission of the motion, and all consequential notices issued by the inquiry committee. His plea contends that the entire process is unconstitutional and violates the provisions of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, which governs the removal of high court and Supreme Court judges.

Implications

The Supreme Court's verdict will have significant implications for judicial accountability in India, particularly concerning the balance of powers between Parliament and the judiciary in impeachment proceedings. Legal experts note that the case could set a precedent for how parliamentary inquiry committees are constituted in future cases against sitting judges.

With the verdict reserved, all eyes are now on the apex court to determine the legality of the parliamentary probe, the limits of judicial review in impeachment-related matters, and the proper interpretation of the Judges (Inquiry) Act.

Bengaluru Ranked India's Most Women-Friendly City for 2025



Bengaluru has been ranked the best city for women in India for 2025, according to a comprehensive index released by Chennai-based workplace inclusion firm Avtar. The study evaluated 125 cities across the country on how effectively they support women through a combination of social infrastructure and industrial inclusion initiatives.

The Silicon Valley of India claimed the top spot with a City Inclusion Score (CIS) of 53.29, followed by Chennai (49.86) and Pune (46.27). Hyderabad (46.04) and Mumbai (44.49) completed the top five, highlighting the ongoing prominence of southern and western metros in fostering women-friendly urban ecosystems.

The index is based on two main pillars. The Social Inclusion Score (SIS) measures factors such as safety, health, education, mobility, and overall liveability. The Industrial Inclusion Score (IIS) assesses formal job opportunities, corporate diversity and inclusion practices, skill development programs, and women's workforce participation. Cities that score highly on both pillars are considered the most conducive for women's long-term career growth and overall well-being.

While Chennai topped the social inclusion category, thanks to robust safety frameworks, access to quality education and healthcare, and strong public services, Bengaluru led in industrial inclusion. The city's mature corporate ecosystem, extensive formal employment opportunities, and widespread adoption of diversity and inclusion policies gave it a decisive edge over other metros.

Pune and Hyderabad demonstrated relatively balanced performances across social and industrial metrics, suggesting stronger potential for sustained female workforce participation.

In contrast, central and eastern Indian cities lagged behind on industrial

inclusion, highlighting limited formal employment avenues for women despite some improvements in social infrastructure.

Regionally, South India recorded the highest averages across both indices, followed closely by Western India. Cities that combine strong social infrastructure with inclusive corporate practices are identified as the most resilient environments for women's careers.

The study's findings underscore the importance of a dual approach: building safe, supportive urban spaces while simultaneously creating formal employment opportunities and promoting inclusive corporate cultures. Such a framework ensures sustainable conditions for women to thrive professionally and socially.

The top 10 women-friendly cities in India for 2025 are: Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Gurugram, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, and Coimbatore.

Vijay's Jana Nayagan Faces Sudden Delay



Thalapathy Vijay's much-anticipated film Jana Nayagan was postponed just two days before its scheduled release after the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) failed to issue the censor certificate in time. Despite the absence of certification, advance bookings had already opened in select Indian theatres as well as across international markets.

The sudden postponement has reportedly resulted in losses of nearly ₹50 crore for the makers and distributors.

Following the announcement, theatre owners have begun cancelling shows and processing refunds. However, the larger concern now revolves around the long-term box office impact of this last-minute delay on one of the biggest Tamil releases of the year.

Strong pre-sales momentum

Anticipation for Jana Nayagan reached fever pitch after Vijay announced that the film would be his final acting project before entering full-time politics. As the release date approached, ticket demand surged dramatically. In Chennai, black-market ticket prices reportedly soared to as high as ₹5,000 per ticket.

According to trade tracking website Sacnilk, the film collected approximately

₹10.68 crore in domestic pre-sales, including blocked seats. Industry insiders believe that the actual opening-day potential could have been even higher due to the inflated prices in the unofficial ticket market.

Internationally, Jana Nayagan emerged as the top-performing Sankranti/Pongal release in advance bookings, outperforming other major releases scheduled for the same period, including Prabhas' The Raja Saab.

Overseas pre-sales reportedly touched nearly ₹32 crore for the opening day alone, with exceptional traction in markets such as North America, the UK, and Malaysia.

Box office uncertainty after postponement

The abrupt postponement is expected to significantly affect the film's box office prospects, particularly overseas. Trade experts suggest that international exhibitors may now be hesitant to allocate the same number of screens once the film eventually releases, especially with multiple festival releases competing for space.

UK-based distributor Ahimsa Entertainment revealed the scale of the disruption in a public statement. The company had planned releases across more than 260 theatres in the UK, with thousands of

shows and a record number of early-morning premiere screenings. Pre-sales had crossed 65,000 tickets and were trending at levels comparable to Vijay's blockbuster Leo. The distributor noted that the film was on the verge of setting new benchmarks before the postponement.

Industry analysts warn that the delay has forced a major reshuffling of screens in both domestic and overseas markets and could impact the credibility of Tamil releases internationally.

Shows cancelled, refunds underway

Following the CBFC delay, the Jana Nayagan team approached the Madras High Court seeking an expedited clearance. While the court has reserved its order, theatres have already cancelled scheduled shows and initiated refunds. Several cinemas have reassigned screens to The Raja Saab, which is slated for release on January 9.

Theatres across the globe have confirmed that refunds are being processed and will reflect in customers' accounts in the coming days. As fans await clarity on the film's new release date, questions remain over whether Jana Nayagan will be able to reclaim its original scale of release, particularly in overseas markets.

Hasina Rejects Claims of Indian Involvement in Bangladeshi Student's Death



Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has addressed allegations linking her Awami League party to the assassination of student leader Sharif Osman Hadi last month. In an exclusive interview with NDTV, Hasina called Hadi's killing a tragic outcome of lawlessness and electoral violence under the interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus.

"The killing of Sharif Osman Hadi was a tragic and reprehensible act that was the direct consequence of the lawlessness and electoral violence that have consumed Bangladesh under the interim government," Hasina said. She added that, instead of preventing further violence, the tragedy had been exploited by extremist groups as a "political tool" to advance radical ideologies, inflame tensions, attack democratic institutions, and distract from the interim government's failures in maintaining law and order.

Hasina strongly rejected claims of Indian involvement in the killing, calling such assertions "deliberate and entirely baseless." She said these allegations were propagated by "fundamentalist forces" seeking to recast the Yunus government's shortcomings as foreign conspiracies. "Attempts to link this case to India are deliberate and entirely baseless. They are driven by fundamentalist forces that thrive on hostility toward Bangladesh's closest ally and seek to recast internal governance failures as foreign conspiracies," she stated.

The former premier warned that

Dhaka's "manufactured narrative" connecting Hadi's death to India risked radicalizing public discourse and undermining decades of trust between the two nations. "These views are not representative of the people of Bangladesh and are actively harmful to our country's interests. India is our closest ally, and our two countries have worked together over many decades to build trusted trade and diplomatic relations and ensure the stability of our region," she added.

Sharif Osman Hadi, a prominent student leader during Bangladesh's 2024 protests, was shot in the head by masked gunmen in Dhaka on December 12, 2025. He died six days later at a hospital in Singapore. Hadi had risen to prominence during student-led movements that contributed to the end of Hasina's rule.

Following his death, violent mobs in Dhaka attacked media offices, including Prothom Alo and Daily Star, and targeted cultural organizations like Chhayanat and Udichi Shilpi Goshthi. A Hindu factory worker was also lynched in central Mymensingh. Despite the widespread unrest, Hasina criticized the Yunus administration for failing to take decisive security measures or hold perpetrators accountable.

She concluded that the interim government's handling of both domestic security and foreign policy was "short-sighted and highly dangerous," emphasizing that Hadi's killing should not be used to distort Bangladesh's relations with India.

US May Tax Countries Buying Russian Energy by 500%



WASHINGTON — U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly given his support to a bipartisan Russia Sanctions Bill that could penalize countries, including India, China, and Brazil, for purchasing Russian oil, according to Republican Senator Lindsey Graham. The legislation, co-authored by Graham and Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal, aims to weaken Moscow economically as the Trump administration continues to pursue a negotiated settlement to the war in Ukraine.

The bill would grant the President authority to impose tariffs and secondary sanctions of up to 500 percent on nations that knowingly buy Russian oil, gas, uranium, or other strategic exports. The measure is intended to deprive Russian President Vladimir Putin of funding for his military operations in Ukraine.

Graham, a prominent defense hawk, said he met with Trump at the White House on Wednesday, where the President extended his support for the legislation, which has been under development for several months. A White House official also confirmed the endorsement to the Associated Press.

"This will be well-timed, as Ukraine is making concessions for peace and Putin is all talk, continuing to kill the innocent," Graham said in a statement.

Legislative Timeline

A Senate vote on the bill could occur as early as next week, although the schedule remains uncertain. The

Senate is expected to take up a scaled-back government funding package that the House is currently considering. A Senate recess for Martin Luther King Jr. Day follows shortly afterward.

The legislation has garnered dozens of co-sponsors in the Senate. A companion bill in the House has been drafted by Republican Representative Brian Fitzpatrick. The White House has indicated that some revisions may be necessary to provide flexibility for the President in applying the sanctions, though details of any adjustments remain unclear.

Strategic Context

The sanctions package comes as the Trump administration works to finalize a peace deal to end the nearly four-year-long conflict in Ukraine. Special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, are leading the negotiations.

If enacted, the bill could have wide-reaching implications for international trade, potentially affecting major Russian trading partners. The legislation reflects growing bipartisan consensus in Congress that economic pressure is a crucial tool to weaken Moscow and support Ukraine in its ongoing struggle against Russian aggression.

The Trump-backed bill represents a significant escalation in U.S. efforts to curb Russia's revenue streams while signaling strong support for Ukraine, even as the administration explores diplomatic solutions to the conflict.

Legislative Timeline

A Senate vote on the bill could occur as early as next week, although the schedule remains uncertain. The

Notorious CIA Double Agent Aldrich Ames Dead at 84



Aldrich Ames, one of the most damaging spies in American history, has died in federal prison at the age of 84. A former senior CIA officer, Ames betrayed the United States for nearly a decade by selling its deepest intelligence secrets to the Soviet Union and, later, to Russia.

For years, Ames lived a life that far exceeded his government salary. He maintained Swiss bank accounts, drove a Jaguar, and ran up tens of thousands of dollars in credit-card debt—all while working in the CIA's counterintelligence division. That double life came crashing down in February 1994, when he was arrested outside his home in Arlington, Virginia, and quickly confessed.

On April 28, 1994, standing before a U.S. court, Ames admitted that he had handed Moscow "virtually all" of the Soviet agents known to him, along with a "huge quantity" of classified material. When asked why he committed

espionage, he cited money problems, calling his motivations "the basest" and driven by "immediate and continuing" financial pressures. Over nine years, he received more than \$2.5 million for his betrayal.

A Troubling Career Path

Born in 1941, Aldrich Ames joined the CIA in 1962 and spent more than three decades with the agency, much of it in counterintelligence—the very unit responsible for identifying and neutralizing foreign spies. Despite chronic alcoholism, poor job performance, and serious lapses in judgment, Ames steadily rose through the ranks.

His career included alarming incidents that, in hindsight, should have raised red flags. On one occasion, he left a briefcase filled with classified documents on a subway. Nevertheless, he was eventually appointed head of the CIA's Soviet counterintelligence branch, a position that granted him near-unrestricted access to the

agency's most sensitive information.

Selling Secrets to the Enemy

By 1985, Ames was drowning in financial trouble. A costly divorce from his first wife and growing expenses associated with his second wife, Rosario, pushed him toward espionage. In April of that year, he walked into the Soviet Embassy in Washington and offered the names of CIA agents operating inside the USSR.

From that moment, the damage was catastrophic. Ames routinely delivered plastic-wrapped classified documents to his KGB handlers, revealing surveillance techniques, intelligence operations, and the identities of American assets. Entire CIA networks inside the Soviet Union were systematically dismantled.

Human Cost of the Betrayal

The consequences were brutal. Numerous agents were arrested, tortured, and executed. Among the most prominent was General Dmitri Polyakov, a senior Soviet military officer who had secretly worked for the CIA for decades.

British intelligence narrowly avoided similar losses. Oleg Gordievsky, a KGB colonel secretly spying for MI6, later recalled realizing that Ames had likely passed along information that could have exposed him. "Everything, all the new answers of my information, he must have passed to the KGB," Gordievsky said.

The Long Hunt for a Mole

For years, Ames evaded suspicion while flaunting his wealth. On a modest CIA salary of about \$60,000, he purchased a \$540,000 home, luxury vehicles, and paid for expensive medical procedures for his wife. Meanwhile, U.S. intelligence operations in the Soviet Union were mysteriously collapsing.

By the early 1990s, the

CIA and FBI recognized that a mole was operating at the highest levels. A joint counterintelligence task force was formed, and evidence slowly began pointing to Ames. On February 21, 1994, he and Rosario were arrested.

Fallout and Legacy

Ames pleaded guilty to espionage and tax evasion in exchange for avoiding the death penalty. He was sentenced to life in prison without parole, while Rosario served five years. The scandal rocked the CIA, prompting the resignation of then-director James Woolsey and a sweeping internal overhaul under his successor, John Deutch. The case also strained already fragile U.S.-Russia relations in the post-Cold War era.

Aldrich Ames's legacy remains a stark reminder of how greed, negligence, and institutional failure can combine to produce one of the most devastating intelligence breaches in American history.

ICE Officer Kills Woman in Minneapolis, Sparks Mass Protests



MINNEAPOLIS — A U.S. immigration enforcement officer shot and killed a woman on the streets of Minneapolis Wednesday, triggering mass protests and sharp criticism from local leaders who rejected federal claims that she posed a domestic terrorism threat.

The victim, identified by local media as 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good, was reportedly shot at point-blank range after federal agents surrounded her vehicle. Authorities said she had blocked their path, prompting the officer to open fire. Video footage captured the moment a masked Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent fired three shots into Good's Honda SUV, which then careened out of control and collided with stationary vehicles. Onlookers could be heard shouting at federal officers as the scene unfolded. Good's bloodied body was later seen slumped inside the crashed vehicle.

The Trump administration quickly described Good's actions as an attempted attack on ICE agents. "She then proceeded to weaponize her vehicle," said Department of Homeland Security (DHS) chief Kristi Noem, calling the incident "domestic terrorism." DHS added that Good had been impeding ICE's work throughout the day.

However, Minneapolis

Mayor Jacob Frey sharply rejected the federal account, calling the claims "bullshit" and demanding that ICE leave the city. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz echoed concerns over the federal response, labeling it "propaganda" and promising a thorough and expeditious state investigation.

Protests and Public Response

The shooting prompted thousands of protesters to take to the streets of Minneapolis, braving freezing temperatures and holding signs reading "ICE out of MPLS." The demonstrations came amid ongoing local opposition to federal immigration enforcement, which has intensified under the Trump

administration.

Witnesses described a chaotic and grisly scene. Brandon Hewitt, who captured video of the aftermath, said he heard three gunshots and saw Good's body being loaded into an ambulance. Another witness told FOX9 that the surviving passenger exited the vehicle covered in blood, and a man claiming to be a doctor was initially denied access to assist Good.

Good's mother, Donna Ganger, told the Minnesota Star Tribune that her daughter was "probably terrified" and had no involvement in any violent activity.

Federal Enforcement Context

ICE has been at the fore-

front of President Trump's immigration crackdown, which aims to detain and deport millions of undocumented migrants. DHS launched an aggressive recruitment campaign last summer to add 10,000 new ICE agents to the existing 6,000-member force, sparking concerns over training and oversight.

According to Noem, federal officers in Minneapolis numbered up to 2,000 as part of immigration enforcement sweeps. The shooting comes amid broader tensions between federal authorities and citizens opposing aggressive deportation policies. Earlier incidents include the September killing of an undocumented immigrant in Chicago by an ICE officer after the man allegedly tried to resist detention by driving into the officer.

ICE has defended its officers, stating that the violence against agents is a direct consequence of "constant attacks and demonization." Noem also noted that the officer involved in Wednesday's shooting had previously been rammed and dragged during a June confrontation with an anti-ICE protester.

Aftermath and Investigation

The ICE officer who fired the shots was treated at a local hospital and released. Local and federal authorities are reviewing the incident, while Minneapolis and Minnesota officials vow to ensure accountability. The case has intensified scrutiny over ICE operations and raised questions about the balance between public safety, federal authority, and citizens' rights in cities resisting aggressive immigration enforcement.

The Minneapolis community remains deeply divided, with residents and activists condemning what they view as excessive use of force, while federal officials maintain that officers acted in self-defense. The investigation is ongoing, and protests continue as tensions over immigration policy in the city show no signs of easing.

Banks' Treasury Income Expected to Remain Flat in Q3 Amid Yield Hardening, RBI Support

Banks' treasury income is expected to remain largely steady in the third quarter of the current financial year, as modest hardening in government bond yields offsets gains from the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Open Market Operation (OMO) purchases, according to treasury heads at leading banks.

Benchmark government bond yields rose by 10-12 basis points during the quarter, pressuring banks' treasury book valuations, particularly in the available-for-sale (AFS) segment. This increase in yields led to mark-to-market stress, limiting the potential for valuation-led gains.

However, RBI's OMO purchase programme, which injected around Rs 1.5 lakh crore of durable liquidity into the banking system, helped cap losses and offered selective trading opportunities. Public sector banks, typically active participants in OMOs, were able to partly offset the impact of yield hardening by selling securities to the central bank. The RBI conducted three major OMO purchases in December 2025, amounting to Rs 50,000 crore each on December 14, 18, and 29.

"Bond yields moved within a narrow range during the quarter, so losses were limited, but there weren't major opportunities to book large profits," said Balasubramanian R, Head of Treasury at Dhanlaxmi Bank. "Compared to Q2, there is no



significant downside, but only marginal trading gains are expected."

Some banks also booked gains by shifting securities from their held-to-maturity (HTM) portfolios into OMOs, partially mitigating valuation pressures in the AFS book. Additionally, coupon inflows from Government of India (GoI) and state development loan (SDL) securities provided further support to treasury income. "Interest income is expected to rise, as many coupon payments from GoI and SDL securities were scheduled during this quarter," Balasubramanian

added.

Despite these supports, treasury performance is likely to vary across banks. Lenders with larger AFS holdings may face valuation challenges, while those with more flexible portfolios could benefit from OMO-related gains.

"The AFS book will certainly face challenges in terms of realizable value. Some of this will be offset by banks that participated in OMOs and realised HTM gains, but overall, industry-level results won't be very strong," said Alok Singh, Group Head - Treasury at CSB Bank.

V. Ramachandra Reddy, DGM and Head of Treasury at Karur Vysya Bank, echoed this view, noting that RBI's liquidity infusion helped mitigate the negative impact of rising yields. "Active participation in OMOs, especially by PSU banks, is likely to support trading gains and improve treasury income despite yield hardening," he said, adding that liquidity comfort and strategic positioning in investment books should aid profitability.

A report by Systematix Institutional Equities indicated that other income growth for banks would vary significantly: Axis Bank is expected to see a 12.6% year-on-year rise, Bank of India 21%, Bank of Maharashtra 8.7%, and HDFC Bank 7.4%. Conversely, IndusInd Bank's other income is projected to decline 28.6%, while Bank of Baroda may see a 1.1% drop.

The report also noted that, for Bank of India, sequential fee income is expected to align with advances growth, but treasury income could be lower due to hardening of average yields, reflecting the mixed outlook across the sector.

Overall, the combination of modest yield pressures and RBI liquidity support suggests that banks' treasury income in Q3 will remain largely flat, with gains and losses balancing out across different segments and lenders.

Nifty Slides Below 26,000 as Bears Dominate; Sensex Drops 780 Points Amid Global and Tariff Concerns

Indian equity markets continued their losing streak for the fourth consecutive session on January 8, with the Nifty slipping close to the 25,850 level amid broad-based selling, persistent foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows, rising geopolitical tensions, and concerns over potential US tariffs.

Tracking weak global cues, domestic markets opened on a subdued note, with the Nifty hovering around 26,100. Sustained profit booking throughout the session dragged the index to an intraday low of 25,858.45. At close, the Sensex fell 780.18 points, or 0.92 percent, to 84,180.96, while the Nifty dropped 263.90 points, or 1.01 percent, to 25,876.85. Broader indices underperformed, with the BSE Midcap and Smallcap indices each losing around 2 percent.

Sectoral trends were broadly negative, with metals, oil & gas, power, PSU banks, and capital goods shedding 2-3 percent. Top Nifty losers included Hindalco Industries, ONGC, Jio Financial, Wipro, and Tech Mahindra, while gainers were limited to ICICI Bank, Eterna, SBI Life Insurance, and Bharat Electronics.

Export-oriented stocks faced heavy pressure amid concerns over potential 500 percent US



tariff sanctions, with Gokaldas Exports, K.P.R. Mill, Pearl Global Industries, Apex Frozen Foods, and Avanti Feeds falling 4-9 percent. Hindustan Zinc declined 6 percent after silver prices dropped below Rs 2.5 lakh/kg. Meesho fell 4 percent following the GM-Business resignation, and Angel One dropped 2 percent as the board prepared to consider a stock

split. Over 180 stocks, including Jyothy Labs, Sapphire Foods, IRCTC, Jubilant Foodworks, Colgate Palmolive, Page Industries, Vedant Fashions, United Breweries, and Whirlpool, hit 52-week lows, while more than 100 stocks, including India Cements, AIA Engineering, Eicher Motors, Axis Bank, Bajaj Auto, Polycab, MCX India, and NMDC,

touched 52-week highs.

Technically, the Nifty has broken below its rising trendline and the psychological 26,000 mark, closing below its 50-day exponential moving average (50-EMA) for the first time in three months, signaling a bearish shift. A rising India VIX also points to heightened volatility and panic among investors. Analysts suggest that selling pressure may continue unless the Nifty regains the 26,000-26,100 resistance zone. Key support levels are seen at 25,700 and 25,550, while the immediate resistance remains near 26,000-26,100, coinciding with the 20-EMA.

The bearish sentiment has negated last week's bullish Symmetrical Triangle breakout, with prices slipping below last week's low. The breakdown from the trendline connecting higher bottoms of November and December, along with the close below the 50-DEMA, further reinforces the negative momentum.

Volatility is expected to remain elevated in the near term, particularly amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and concerns over fresh tariffs. Traders are advised to exercise caution and avoid aggressive positions until global and domestic market cues stabilize.

Sebi Overhauls Stockbroker Rules to Simplify Compliance and Boost Ease of Doing Business

In a major overhaul, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has revamped its more than three-decade-old stockbroker regulations, replacing the Sebi (Stock Brokers) Regulations, 1992 with the updated Sebi (Stock Brokers) Regulations, 2026. The move is aimed at simplifying compliance, promoting ease of doing business, and aligning stockbrokers' activities with other financial regulators.

The new regulations streamline the legal framework, remove outdated provisions, and introduce clearer definitions. One significant change allows stockbrokers to conduct activities under the regulatory framework of other financial sector regulators or specified authorities, with such activities falling under the purview of the respective regulator.

Sebi has restructured the regulations into eleven chapters covering all major aspects of stockbroker operations, from underwriting and professional conduct to proprietary trading. Redundant schedules have been removed, while essential content has been integrated into the main chapters to improve read-



ability and understanding.

Several key definitions have been updated for clarity. "Proprietary trading" now explicitly refers to trading by a stockbroker in its own account across any segment of a recognized stock exchange, while a "proprietary trading member" is defined as a stockbroker whose trades are solely proprietary in nature.

The overhaul also introduces measures to enhance compliance efficiency. Stockbrokers can now maintain books of ac-

counts electronically, and joint inspections by Sebi, stock exchanges, clearing corporations, or depositories are permitted. Brokers are required to inform exchanges about the location of their records, ensuring transparency and ease of monitoring.

The new regulations remove outdated provisions, such as those related to physical delivery of shares, the Forward Market Commission, and sub-brokers, reflecting the modernized structure of securities markets.

Sebi's board had approved the regulatory overhaul in December 2025, highlighting that the simplification reduces complexity for market participants. The new draft reduces the length of the regulations from 59 pages to 29, while cutting the word count from 18,846 to 9,073 words, making the framework more accessible and easier to interpret.

With these changes, Sebi aims to make regulatory compliance simpler, reduce redundancy, and ensure that stockbrokers operate under a clear and cohesive framework while continuing to uphold investor protection and market integrity.

Gabion Technologies India, a manufacturer of gabions, rockfall protection nettings, and geosynthetic materials, is witnessing overwhelming demand for its Initial Public Offering (IPO), which closes today, January 8, 2026. The company's maiden public share sale, valued at ₹29.16 crore, has already been oversubscribed by over 300 times, reflecting strong investor interest.

According to BSE data as of 11:02 AM on January 8, the IPO had been subscribed 303.05 times overall. Non-institutional investors (NIIs) and retail investors are driving the surge, with both categories oversubscribing their respective portions by more than 400 times. NIIs have recorded the highest demand, oversubscribing their reserved portion by 412.86 times, while retail investors followed closely at 406.35 times. Qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) showed relatively lower interest but still oversubscribed their allocation by 9.99 times.

The positive sentiment is also visible in the grey market, where unlisted shares of Gabion Technologies are reportedly trading at a premium. Market sources indicate a grey market premium (GMP) of ₹30 per share, or roughly 37% above the upper end of the IPO price band of ₹81 per share.

IPO Structure and Pricing
Gabion Technologies' IPO is a fully fresh issue of 3.6 million equity shares, with no offer-for-sale component. The price band is set between ₹76 and ₹81

US Sanctions Bill Sparks Sell-Off in India's Export-Oriented Textile and Shrimp Stocks



Shares of India's export-driven textile and shrimp companies fell sharply on January 8, following news that US President Donald Trump had approved a bipartisan sanctions bill proposing up to 500 percent tariffs on countries continuing to purchase Russian oil, including India. The development sparked fresh volatility in stocks heavily reliant on US revenue.

Gokaldas Exports saw its shares plummet nearly 13 percent to trade at ₹596.65, before recovering partially to close around 8 percent lower. The company derives more than 60 percent of its revenue from the United States, making it particularly sensitive to trade-related policy shifts. K.P.R. Mill shares fell over 4 percent, Pearl Global Industries dropped close to 8 percent, while Apex Frozen Foods and Avanti Feeds declined 8 percent and 9 percent respectively. Analysts attributed the decline to fears that higher tariffs could disrupt exports and squeeze margins for companies dependent on the US market.

The sanctions bill, titled the Sanctioning of Russia Act 2025, is designed to penalise countries seen as "fueling Putin's war machine" by continuing to purchase discounted Russian oil. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a key proponent of the legislation, said the bill would provide President Trump "tremendous leverage" over countries like India, China, and Brazil to discourage their purchase of Russian oil, which Washington argues is financing Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Under the proposed legislation, the US president could impose tariffs up to 500 percent on goods and services imported from countries continuing to do business with Russia. The bill would also allow the US to sanction individuals and entities involved in such trade. A bipartisan vote in Congress could

Gabion Technologies IPO Oversubscribed Over 300 Times, Set to List on BSE SME Next Week



per share, with a lot size of 1,600 shares. Investors can apply for a minimum of 3,200 shares (two lots) and in multiples of 1,600 shares thereafter. At the top end of the price band, a minimum two-lot retail investment would require ₹2,59,200.

With the subscription window closing today, the basis of allotment is expected to be finalised by Friday, January 9. Successful investors are likely to see their shares credited to their demat accounts by Monday, January 12, 2026, ahead of the company's listing on the BSE SME platform on Tuesday, January 13, 2026.

Use of IPO Proceeds
According to the company's Red Herring Prospectus (RHP), Gabion Technologies intends to utilize the net proceeds of the IPO as follows: ₹22.11 crore for working capital requirements, ₹1.05 crore for purchase of plant and machinery, with the remaining funds allocated to general corporate purposes.

Management and Advisors
KFIN Technologies is acting as the registrar for the offering, while GYR Capital Advisors serves as the sole book-running lead manager for the IPO.

With robust subscription numbers, a significant grey market premium, and strong retail and NII participation, Gabion Technologies' IPO has emerged as one of the most successful public offerings on the BSE SME platform this year, signaling strong investor confidence in the company's growth prospects.

Foreigner Confronts Littering in Meghalaya's Cleanest Village, Video Goes Viral



A viral video circulating on social media has reignited a nationwide conversation on civic responsibility and public cleanliness in India. The clip, widely shared on Instagram, shows a foreign tourist confronting a man for littering in Mawlynnong, a scenic village in Meghalaya that is often celebrated as one of the cleanest villages in Asia.

In the video, the foreigner records a car occupant who allegedly threw plastic waste along the roadside. Calm but firm, the tourist points out the act and notes that the vehicle's registration number is clearly visible. "So this gentleman's just thrown plastic here. And then we also have the registered car number here. I think it is not fine," he says in the clip, expressing concern over the careless disposal of waste in a region known for its pristine environment.

The situation escalates briefly when the man being filmed objects to the

recording and claims that permission is required to film him. The foreigner refuses to stop, explaining that he has been living in Meghalaya and feels a strong responsibility to protect its natural beauty. He emphasizes that maintaining cleanliness is a shared duty, regardless of where one comes from.

During the confrontation, another man—believed to be a local resident—steps in and urges the car's occupants to pick up the plastic bottles they had thrown and dispose of them properly in a nearby dustbin. The intervention appears to defuse the situation, with the waste eventually being collected.

Thanking the local man for his support, the foreigner later says in the video, "Mawlynnong is the cleanest village in Asia. Let's keep it like that," underscoring the importance of preserving the village's reputation and environment.

The video quickly went viral, amassing over 1.1

Gurgaon Techie Claims He Was Fired for Not Replying During Holiday Break



A Gurgaon-based software developer has sparked a heated online debate after claiming he was laid off for failing to respond to his manager's messages during the Christmas and New Year holiday period. The incident, shared in a detailed Reddit post, has reignited discussions around work-life balance, managerial accountability, and the so-called "right to disconnect" in India's tech industry.

According to the post, the 29-year-old developer was travelling in a remote, high-altitude region during the official holiday break, where mobile network connectivity was unavailable for several days. He claimed that despite it being a company holiday, his manager attempted to contact him and later assumed he had deliberately switched off his phone to avoid communication. This assumption, the developer alleged, ultimately led to his termination.

The techie said the decision came without any prior warning, performance review, or placement on a performance improvement plan (PIP). He further stated that his job performance had never been questioned before the incident and that no formal discussion took place before he was let go. In his post, he attributed the termination to what he described as his manager's "fragile ego," claiming the lack of response was taken as a personal affront rather than a logistical issue.

"I wasn't even given a warning or a PIP," he wrote. "The only thing that hurt them was that I didn't reply during the Christmas and New Year holidays. I was out of the city, and for a few days there was no signal due to high altitude. They thought I intentionally switched off my phone. Basically, it's their ego that landed me in this situation."

The developer also expressed concern about his financial stability, noting that he had no backup source of income. He said he feared the company might delay or withhold his official employment documents, which could further complicate his job search. Since the incident, he has updated his profiles on LinkedIn

and Naukri and has begun applying for roles aggressively, though he admitted the current job market feels unforgiving.

"The market is brutal," he wrote, adding that increasing competition and rising expectations—especially with the growth of AI-related skills—have made interviews more demanding.

The post quickly gained traction on Reddit and other social media platforms, drawing widespread sympathy. Many users offered emotional support, career advice, and even referrals. Others shared similar experiences, criticizing toxic workplace cultures and the unchecked power some managers wield.

Several commenters described the episode as a harsh reminder of the lack of boundaries in many corporate environments, while others argued that the developer may have already been on the company's "hit list." Overall, the case has sparked renewed calls for clearer holiday policies, healthier work cultures, and stronger employee protections in India's tech sector.

Ex-ISRO Engineer Explains Why He Left Space Science for a Simpler Life

A chance conversation at a restaurant has gone viral on social media after a content creator revealed that the restaurant manager he was chatting with was once an ISRO scientist. The video, shared on Instagram by a user named Sando, captures an unexpected and thoughtful exchange that has since sparked discussions about career choices, mental health, and redefining success.

In the clip, the restaurant manager casually shares details about his former life as a scientist-engineer at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), where he worked for an impressive 16 years. The video's caption sums up the moment perfectly: "A random restaurant conversation that turned into a chat with an ISRO scientist."

During the conversation, the former scientist explains the intense pressure that came with working on satellite assembly. He describes the extraordinary precision required in his job, noting that the margin for error was almost nonexistent. "Satellite assembly has very high pressure. The tolerance is 0.001," he explains. According to him, even assembling a single



component involved managing multiple parts, each measured down to microscopic accuracy.

To put the stress into perspective, he compares the precision of his work to the thickness of a strand of human hair. "One strand of hair is about 4 microns. We had to work with a tolerance of one micron," he says. He adds that even a single hair falling into the assembly could compromise the entire system, highlighting the immense responsibility engineers shoulder in

space missions.

After years in such a demanding environment, the scientist decided to step away from ISRO in search of a quieter, more peaceful life.

He chose to work as a restaurant manager, a decision he says brought him much-needed mental calm. "There is no pressure here. I feel relaxed," he shares, expressing contentment with his current role.

He also mentions that he once had an opportunity to work in the United States, but a clerical error in his documents prevented the move. Despite that setback, he appears at peace with where life has led him.

The video struck a chord with viewers, quickly gaining over 1,07,000 likes and thousands of comments. Many users praised his honesty and perspective. Some reflected on how high-stress scientific careers can take a toll, while others admired his courage to walk away from a prestigious role for mental well-being.

One commenter noted that such decisions are not always about money, but about stress and quality of life. Another highlighted the deeper life perspective someone gains after solving complex scientific problems. Many saw the story as a powerful reminder that changing careers—even from highly respected positions—is valid if it brings peace and fulfillment.

The viral moment has resonated widely, offering a refreshing reminder that success is personal and mental peace can be just as important as professional prestige.

T-shirts."

Others imagined humorous alternate outcomes. "Imagine your parents waking up to see a delivery guy entering the house," one user wrote, accompanied by laughing emojis. Some users also shared similar experiences, including one who recalled ordering Blinkit just to get a delivery agent to knock repeatedly and wake up her husband when he wasn't responding to calls.

Beyond the humour, many commenters highlighted the delivery agent's professionalism and willingness to help. "He stayed calm, followed instructions, and saved the day—definitely deserves a big tip," one user remarked.

The viral moment serves as a light-hearted reminder of human resourcefulness and the often-unseen dedication of delivery workers who, at times, end up doing much more than just delivering groceries.

Blinkit Delivery Agent Helps Pune Friends Re-Enter Home at 3 AM



their home.

Once the order was accepted, the friends contacted the Blinkit delivery agent and carefully explained their situation.

Over the phone, they calmly guided him on how to reach their apartment, locate the spare key, and unlock the main door—without making noise or disturbing their sleeping parents. The agent listened attentively, fol-

lowed instructions step by step, and successfully helped them get back inside.

The incident was later shared on Instagram by Pune resident Mihir Ghosh, who posted a video capturing the unusual rescue. The post quickly gained traction, drawing thousands of views and comments. Even Blinkit joined the conversation, replying in the comments section with a hu-

morous note that read, "This can only happen in Pune."

Social media users were quick to react, praising both the ingenuity of the friends and the delivery agent's composure. Many joked about Blinkit becoming an emergency service, with one user commenting, "Blinkit is the new 911." Another wrote, "Some superheroes don't wear capes... they wear Blinkit

Vietnamese Waiter's Love for 'Balika Vadhu' Wins Hearts Online



many by skipping Bollywood stars altogether and instead focusing on the television serial. He praised Balika Vadhu for its meaningful storyline, explaining that the slow-paced narrative and emotional depth set it apart from fast-action films. According to him, the show's long-running format allowed viewers to form a strong emotional connection with the characters.

Win also fondly remembered the actors' expressive performances, describing their exaggerated emotions as both entertaining and memorable. At one point in the video, he even imitates an over-the-top facial expression from the show, drawing smiles and laughter from those around him.

"I'm a big fan, also with my family," he says in the video. "That's the

post, she wrote, "Girl, you are popular in Vietnam. Also, he was the sweetest man to discuss his love for this show."

The video soon reached Avika Gor, who was visibly touched by the unexpected admiration from across the globe. Responding in the comments, the actor said the moment had "made her day," expressing gratitude for the love her work continues to receive internationally.

Social media users were quick to react, calling the exchange wholesome and heartwarming. Many shared similar experiences, noting the widespread popularity of Indian daily soaps in countries such as Vietnam, Bulgaria, Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Eastern Europe. The viral clip has once again underlined how Indian television storytelling continues to transcend borders, languages, and cultures.

India U-19 Crush South Africa to Sweep Series as Suryavanshi, George Hit Centuries

Vaibhav Suryavanshi continued his sensational form with a stunning century, and Aaron George also scored a commanding hundred as India U-19 crushed South Africa by 233 runs in the third youth ODI, completing a 3-0 series sweep on Wednesday at Willowmoore Park.

Sent in to bat, India's captain Suryavanshi, who had previously smashed a 24-ball 68 in the second game, was unstoppable. The 14-year-old from Bihar unleashed a flurry of shots, hitting 10 sixes and nine boundaries in a fluent 74-ball innings, finishing on 127. Opening partner Aaron George complemented him perfectly, scoring 118 off 106 balls. Together, they put on a mammoth 227-run opening partnership, laying the foundation for India's imposing total.

India posted a formidable 393 for 7, a score South Africa struggled to chase. Ntando Soni (3/61) and Jason Rowles (2/59) were the only bowlers to make notable breakthroughs for the hosts.

South Africa's response began disastrously. Kishan Singh struck early, reducing the visitors to 15 for 3 within the first four overs by dismissing Jorich Van Schalkwyk, Adnaan Lagadien, and Le-



thabo Phahlamohlaka. Singh, continuing his strong form from the previous match where he had taken four wickets, once again emerged as India's standout bowler.

The South African middle order offered fleeting resistance. Daniel Bosman (40) and Rowles (19) added some runs, but wickets fell at regular intervals, and the side

slumped to 99 for 6 by the 23rd over. Paul James (41) and Corne Botha (36 not out) managed to delay the inevitable, but India's dominance was unshakable.

Suryavanshi's performance further cemented his status as a rising star in youth cricket. The young sensation has now scored three centuries and four fifties in 18

Youth ODI matches, amassing 973 runs at an impressive average of 54.05 and strike rate of 164.08. His aggressive yet controlled batting has made him a key figure in India U-19's lineup.

Earlier in the series, India had won the first match by 25 runs under the DLS method and claimed the second game by eight wickets. With the

clean sweep, India's U-19 team has displayed consistent dominance both with the bat and ball, signaling strong prospects for future youth tournaments.

Suryavanshi and George's explosive batting, coupled with Singh's incisive bowling, were decisive in India's comprehensive series victory over South Africa.

Tilak Varma Ruled Out of T20I Series Against New Zealand Due to Abdomen Injury



India's middle-order star Tilak Varma will miss the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand after suffering an abdomen injury, raising concerns ahead of the T20 World Cup beginning next month. The series kicks off on January 21 in Nagpur, and while India may name a replacement, senior batter and India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill is unlikely to be considered.

Tilak, who was in Rajkot representing Mumbai in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, experienced severe abdominal pain on Wednesday morning. He was immediately taken to a local hospital, where scans were conducted and the results sent to the Centre of Excellence (COE) in Bengaluru. According to sources within the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), doctors have advised surgery, which is expected to require three to four weeks of recovery. This makes his participa-

tion in the entire T20I series doubtful and casts uncertainty over his availability for India's opening T20 World Cup match against the USA on February 7.

The selection committee and team management are unlikely to consider Shubman Gill as a replacement, as it would be awkward to have India's

senior white-ball captain warming the bench or acting as a temporary substitute. Assam's Riyan Parag, if fully recovered from a shoulder injury, could be a more probable candidate to fill the gap.

In positive news, India's ODI vice-captain Shreyas Iyer has been declared match-fit by the COE Bengaluru medical team.

available for his first ODI since the SCG clash against Australia in August. Yashasvi Jaiswal, his Mumbai teammate, will skip the final league match to join the national team in Vadodara.

Hardik Pandya, meanwhile, will play Baroda's last Vijay Hazare Trophy game against Chandigarh on Thursday. Despite his strong 133-run performance against Vidarbha, he was rested from the New Zealand series to manage workload ahead of the World Cup. The COE has also restricted him from bowling more than 10 overs in a match to preserve his fitness.

Tilak Varma's injury is a significant setback for India, particularly as the team looks to finalize its squad and momentum ahead of the T20 World Cup. With replacements likely to be young talents like Riyan Parag, India will have to adapt quickly to fill the void in the middle order.

Jhulan Goswami Hails Harmanpreet Kaur's Legacy, Predicts 4-5 More Years of Indian Cricket Brilliance



Mumbai: India's cricketing stalwart Harmanpreet Kaur has set an "untouchable" benchmark in captaincy, says former India pacer and Mumbai Indians (MI) mentor Jhulan Goswami. At 36, Harmanpreet has already led India to its first Women's ODI World Cup title and Mumbai Indians to multiple Women's Premier League (WPL) trophies, and Jhulan believes she still has another four to five years of high-level cricket ahead.

"What she has done for Indian cricket, for Mumbai Indians, and franchise cricket is phenomenal," Jhulan told PTI on Wednesday. "Being the first World Cup-winning captain, along with two WPL titles, makes her record very difficult for anyone to touch in the near future. Her legacy will be immense, and I believe she still has 4-5 years to go to the sport."

Jhulan also recalled the emotional celebration of India's World Cup victory,

where former players like Mithali Raj, Anjum Chopra, and Reema Malik were acknowledged on the field. "It was pure emotion. Harmanpreet, Smriti Mandhana, and the team made it happen spontaneously. Indian cricket has rarely seen such a gesture," she said.

Looking ahead to the fourth edition of the WPL, Harmanpreet will captain

MI once again. The franchise will see a coaching change, with Australia's Lisa Keightley replacing England's Charlotte Edwards. Jhulan expressed confidence in the new coach, saying, "Lisa brings the philosophy of fearless cricket that Charlotte started. She will ensure the team continues to play with that mindset."

The team's ability to re-

Jhulan also backed MI spinner Saika Ishaque, who took 15 wickets during MI's maiden WPL title win in 2023 but faced challenges afterward. "Her first season was outstanding. The following year, she struggled with fitness and opposition teams planned better against her. These are natural ups and downs," she explained.

On the broader WPL competition, Jhulan noted the growing strength of Indian domestic players. "In the first season, domestic players were not fully prepared for the intensity, glamour, and crowd pressure. But they've improved rapidly and now challenge even the most experienced internationals," she said.

With a mix of experienced leaders like Harmanpreet and rising domestic talent, Jhulan believes Indian women's cricket is poised for sustained success both in the WPL and on the international stage.

Australia Tops WTC Table After Clinching 4-1 Ashes Series Win Against England



Australia solidified their lead atop the World Test Championship (WTC) points table following a five-wicket victory over England in the fifth Ashes Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Thursday. The Steve Smith-led side secured a commanding 4-1 series win, maintaining their dominance in the WTC with a points percentage (PCT) of 87.50.

England, by contrast, slipped to seventh place after their sixth loss in 10 matches, posting a PCT of 31.66. India remained sixth with a PCT of 48.15, keeping them within striking distance of the top four. New Zealand occupy second place with a PCT of 77.78, followed by South Africa (75.00) and Sri Lanka (66.67). Pakistan sit fifth at 50.00 PCT, although they have played just two matches in this WTC cycle so far.

The fifth Test proved memorable for several reasons. After bowling England out for 342 early on the final day, Australia set a modest target of 160 to win. The hosts got off to a brisk start with Travis Head and Jake Weatherald putting together a 62-run opening partnership, laying the foundation for the chase.

WPL 2026 Begins with Glamorous Opening Ceremony as Mumbai Indians Face RCB in Season Opener



The fourth season of the Women's Premier League (WPL) is set to begin in grand fashion, combining top-tier cricket with Bollywood glamour at a dazzling opening ceremony. As defending champions Mumbai Indians gear up to take on Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the tournament opener, excitement is building not just for the cricketing action but also for the spectacular curtain-raiser planned by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

The WPL 2026 opening ceremony will take place on Friday, January 9, at the iconic DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. The opening match between Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru is scheduled to start at 7:30 PM IST, while the cultural festivities are expected to begin around 6:30 PM IST, giving fans an hour of entertainment before the first ball is bowled.

Viewers can watch the ceremony and the match live on the Star Sports Network, with live streaming available on the JioCinema app and website.

Adding glamour to the evening, the BCCI has confirmed a star-studded lineup for the opening ceremony. Popular rapper and music icon Yo Yo Honey Singh will headline the musical performances, promis-

ing an energetic start to the tournament. Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez will also take centre stage, with her performance expected to celebrate the confidence, strength, and courage of women in sports. Further elevating the glamour quotient, Miss Universe 2021 Harnaaz Sandhu is also scheduled to appear, making the ceremony a blend of sport, music, and style.

The WPL has quickly established itself as one of the most exciting women's T20 leagues in the world, and the 2026 edition aims to build on that momentum. The tournament will be played across two venues — Navi Mumbai and Vadodara — with a total of 22 matches featuring five teams. The league stage will be followed by the playoffs, with the grand finale scheduled for February 5 in Vadodara.

This season is expected to be especially competitive, with leadership changes adding intrigue. Jemimah Rodrigues will captain Delhi Capitals, while Meg Lanning takes charge of UP Warriorz, alongside several international and domestic stars eager to make their mark. With rising fan interest, elite talent, and a glamorous opening night, WPL 2026 promises to be a landmark season for women's cricket in India.

Raja Saab Pre-Release Event Sets the Stage for a Grand Sankranti Spectacle



The pre-release press meet of Rebel Star Prabhas' prestigious upcoming film Raja Saab was held in a grand manner in Hyderabad, setting the stage for one of the most awaited Sankranti releases of the year. Directed by Maruthi and produced by TG Vishwa Prasad and Krithi Prasad under the People Media Factory banner, Raja Saab is positioned as a large-scale horror fantasy-comedy with lavish production values and pan-India appeal.

Speaking at the event, producer TG Vishwa Prasad expressed strong confidence in the film's box-office prospects, stating that the makers are expecting Raja Saab to collect over 100 crore globally on its opening day. He revealed that the project, which began nearly three years ago, evolved from a simple horror-comedy into a massive horror-fantasy spectacle with huge sets

and high-end technical execution. According to him, the final 40 minutes of the film will deliver a "global movie impact," with additional fantasy elements added especially for the festive season.

Director Maruthi described Raja Saab as a film close to his heart, noting that the massive palace set almost became a second home for the team during the long shoot. He promised that audiences would see Prabhas in the kind of role they have been eagerly waiting for, blending charm, emotion, humor, and larger-than-life fantasy. "Viewers will walk into theatres with excitement and walk out with double the happiness," he said, adding that the film has the feel of a Disney-style fantasy entertainer.

Actresses Nidhhi Agerwal and Riddhi Kumar shared warm memories from the shoot, calling the set a joyful and fami-

ly-like space. Nidhhi described Raja Saab as a special film in her career, while Riddhi said audiences would feel transported into a fantasy world filled with romance, action, and horror elements.

Music director Thaman S, who received loud cheers at the event, termed Raja Saab a "pan-world film" rather than just pan-India. He credited Maruthi's vision and strong content for inspiring an intense background score and highlighted the growing popularity of songs like "Nache Nache."

With Prabhas leading a stellar cast that includes Malavika Mohanan, Nidhhi Agerwal, Riddhi Kumar, Sanjay Dutt, and Boman Irani, Raja Saab is gearing up for a worldwide theatrical release on January 9, promising a festive entertainer packed with spectacle, emotion, and fantasy.

'Pandaga Ki Alludu Vastunnadu': Anaganaga Oka Raju Theatrical Trailer Promises a Grand Sankranthi Treat



The theatrical trailer of Anaganaga Oka Raju is out now, and it has instantly struck a festive chord with audiences. Opening on a majestic and powerful note, the trailer features the commanding voice of King Akkineni Nagarjuna, whose narration adds gravitas and sets the perfect tone for what promises to be a wholesome, celebratory entertainer. His voiceover elevates the trailer, lending it an epic, fairy-tale-like quality that draws viewers straight into the world of the film.

At the heart of the trailer is star performer Naveen Polishetty, who once again proves why he is one of the most loved entertainers of the current generation. His impeccable comic timing, effortless humor, and boundless energy dominate every frame he appears in. Each punchline lands with precision, offering a clear indication that the trailer is only a small glimpse of the full-fledged entertainment the film has in

store. Naveen's screen presence assures audiences of laughter-filled moments that will resonate across age groups. Meenakshi Chaudhary makes a strong impression with her innocence and natural charm. The fun built around her character is neatly executed, and her chemistry with Naveen Polishetty stands out as one of the highlights of the trailer. The love track is woven seamlessly into the narrative, complementing the family emotions and situational comedy.

Produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, with Srikanth Studios presenting the film, Anaganaga Oka Raju carries the catchy and celebratory tagline, "Pandaga Ki Alludu Vastunnadu." The film is all set to arrive as a perfect Sankranti family entertainer, inviting audiences to celebrate together when it releases worldwide in theatres on January 14, 2026.

Yash Treats Fans on His Birthday with Power-Packed Toxic Teaser

Kannada superstar Yash gave his fans a massive birthday treat with the release of the much-awaited teaser of his upcoming film Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups. Marking his return to the big screen after a long gap, the teaser has instantly set social media abuzz, showcasing the star in a strikingly intense and stylish new avatar.

The teaser opens on a dark and atmospheric note, set in a graveyard-like backdrop that immediately establishes the film's gritty tone.

Yash makes a commanding entry as Raya, a ruthless and stylish gangster, sporting long hair, a rugged beard, and an intimidating screen presence. His powerful body language, sharp styling, and the punch dialogue "Daddy is home" have already become a talking point among fans, underlining the mass appeal of the actor

continues to command. Packed with slick visuals and high-octane moments, the teaser hints at a raw and violent world driven by power, chaos, and ambition. The background score adds to the intensity, amplifying the sense of danger and dominance surrounding Yash's character. Every frame reflects scale and ambition, suggesting that Toxic is being mounted as a world-class action drama with uncompromising production values.

Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Geetu Mohandas, Toxic promises to present Yash in a completely new light, far removed from his earlier roles. The director's distinct storytelling style, combined with Yash's mass appeal, has raised expectations for a film that blends artistic depth with commercial spectacle. The teaser offers only a glimpse, but



it is enough to establish the film's dark, edgy universe.

The film also boasts an impressive ensemble cast, featuring leading actresses such as Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, and Rukmini Vasanth, adding further star power and

intrigue to the project. Their roles, though not revealed in the teaser, are expected to play a crucial part in the narrative. Produced on a grand scale, Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups is gearing up for a worldwide theatrical release on March 19, 2026, in multiple languages. With this stylish and intense teaser, Yash has not only celebrated his birthday in style but has also firmly reignited fan excitement, setting the stage for what could be one of the biggest cinematic events of the year.

Prime Video Announces Telugu Original Crime Thriller Cheekatilo, Starring Sobhita Dhulipala, to Premiere on January 23



Prime Video has officially announced January 23 as the worldwide premiere date of its latest Telugu Original movie Cheekatilo, an edge-of-the-seat crime suspense drama led by Sobhita Dhulipala. Set against the gritty and bustling backdrop of Hyderabad, the film promises a gripping narrative that delves deep into the city's darkest secrets while exploring themes of truth, resilience, and moral courage.

A Prime Original movie, Cheekatilo is directed by Sharan Kopishetty and produced by veteran producer D. Suresh Babu under the banner of Suresh Productions Pvt. Ltd. The screenplay has been jointly written by Chandra Pemmaraju and Sharan Kopishetty. The film stars Sobhita Dhulipala and Viswadev Rachakonda in lead roles, with Chaitanya Visalakshmi, Esha Chawla, Jhansi, Aamani, and Vadlamani Srinivas playing pivotal supporting

characters. The story follows Sandhya, a true crime podcaster portrayed by Sobhita Dhulipala, whose pursuit of justice takes a dark and dangerous turn after the mysterious death of her intern. As Sandhya investigates further, she uncovers a chilling chain of brutal crimes that expose the underbelly of the city. Blending modern storytelling tools like podcasts with a culturally rooted narrative, Cheekatilo presents a contemporary take on the crime suspense genre.

Speaking about the project, Nikhil Madhok, Director and Head of Originals at Prime Video India, said that the platform remains committed to expanding its South Originals slate with bold and emotionally engaging stories. He noted that while thrillers are a familiar genre, Cheekatilo stands out for its emotional depth and cultural authenticity. Madhok added that the film's themes of resilience and sisterhood are universal, making it relatable to audiences beyond the Telugu-speaking regions and across global markets.

Producer D. Suresh Babu described Cheekatilo as a layered and emotionally charged suspense drama. He emphasized that the film highlights the courage required to confront darkness and speak the truth, a message he believes is especially relevant today. Calling the collaboration with Prime Video a meaningful milestone, he expressed confidence that the haunting narrative and strong performances would leave a lasting impact on viewers.

Cheekatilo will premiere exclusively on Prime Video on January 23 across India and more than 240 countries and territories worldwide, with subtitles available in Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, and Kannada, making it accessible to a wide and diverse audience.

Constable Kanakam 2 Review: A Gripping Sequel That Deepens the Mystery

Constable Kanakam 2 marks a solid and engaging return to the rural crime drama space, building effectively on the foundation laid by its first season. Set once again in a seemingly quiet village, the second season dives deeper into unresolved mysteries, raising the stakes with darker themes, sharper twists, and stronger emotional undercurrents.

The story picks up from where the first season ended, revolving around the disappearance of Chandrika and the growing suspicion surrounding a series of missing girls. Constable Kanakam, played convincingly by Varsha Bolllamma, finds herself navigating a maze of half-truths, buried secrets, and unsettling revelations.

The narrative unfolds steadily, using flashbacks and new character entries to add layers to the investigation and keep the audience guessing. One of the strengths of Constable Kanakam 2 is its storytelling approach. The makers balance crime investigation with family emotions, ensuring the series does not become overly grim. The suspense is main-



ained through well-placed twists, and the screenplay avoids unnecessary distractions, staying focused on the central mystery. Unlike many sequels that feel stretched, this season offers a sense of closure while still leaving room for future developments. Varsha Bolllamma once again proves to be the backbone of the series. Her portrayal of Kanakam feels natural and grounded, capturing both the vulnerability and determination of a constable caught between duty and emotion. The supporting cast delivers reliable performances, adding authenticity to the village setting and the unfolding drama.

Technically, the series maintains a consistent tone. The rural backdrop plays a crucial role in enhancing the suspense, with effective cinematography capturing the eerie calm of village life. The background score subtly heightens tension without overpowering the scenes, complementing the narrative rather than distracting from it.

The final episodes introduce an unexpected twist that adds impact to the conclusion, making

the viewing experience satisfying. While the pace slows slightly in a few stretches, the overall engagement remains intact due to the strong core mystery. **Verdict:** Constable Kanakam 2 is a worthy sequel that successfully expands its story universe with engaging twists, emotional depth, and solid

performances. It is a recommended watch for audiences who enjoy rural crime thrillers with a strong investigative and emotional focus.