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Chandrababu Naidu Slams YSRCP Over Crime Politics



Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN
Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday strongly criticized the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), alleging that the party's political culture has become synonymous with crime and disorder rather than democratic governance. Speaking to party workers and the media, Naidu claimed that the YSRCP has fostered lawlessness, undermining public confidence in the state's political process.

He stated that under the YSRCP's rule, politics has often been reduced to criminality,

with incidents of violence, disruption, and disregard for public institutions becoming commonplace. Naidu contrasted this with his government's emphasis on rule-based governance and maintaining law and order, highlighting a stark difference between the approaches of the two parties.

The Chief Minister further alleged that YSRCP leaders have been unable to handle the restoration of law and order, which has led to frustration and repeated attempts to challenge his administration through rhetoric and political maneuvers. He described this behavior as a reflection of desperation rather than constructive opposition and insisted that

public service and empowerment are the true markers of his government's political ethos.

Naidu reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining peace and security across Andhra Pradesh, emphasizing that the law is supreme and that any attempts to disturb public order or threaten citizen safety will be dealt with strictly. He reiterated that his administration prioritizes the safety and welfare of the people above political rivalry. His remarks come amid heightened political tensions in the state, as the ruling coalition and YSRCP frequently accuse each other of misusing institutions and engaging in aggressive tactics for electoral advantage. Naidu's comments underscore the widening divide between the two parties and position his government as a force for stability and integrity, in contrast to what he described as the "criminalized culture" of the opposition.

The Chief Minister concluded by stating that Andhra Pradesh's development and the protection of democratic values remain central to his government's agenda, and that law and order will continue to be a priority in the state's political and administrative framework.

This statement by Naidu clearly signals a firm stance against political violence and a continued focus on governance, public safety, and accountability in the state.

Ambati Rambabu Completes Medical Tests, To Be Produced in Court Soon

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau
Senior YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader and former minister Ambati Rambabu completed his medical examinations at Guntur Government General Hospital on Sunday evening and is expected to be produced before the local court shortly, following his arrest over remarks made against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Rambabu was taken into custody late Saturday night by police from the Nallapadu Police Station after allegations that he had made derogatory comments about the Chief Minister during a political exchange. Law enforcement officials transferred him to the hospital on Sunday

for routine medical tests as part of standard procedure before his court appearance.

The incident that led to Rambabu's arrest unfolded in Guntur district, where a dispute erupted over a local issue involving a banner set up by ruling party activists. Rambabu reportedly objected to the display and was accused by political opponents of making offensive and provocative statements about the Chief Minister, prompting a formal complaint and subsequent police action.

Following his detention, tensions ran high in the area, with reports of protests and political mobilization by both supporters and critics. The police maintained a strong security presence around the hospital and the police station to prevent any escalation of unrest and to ensure that public order was maintained.

Political sources say that Rambabu's medical examination was completed without any major health issues being reported, and authorities are now preparing to escort him to the magistrate's court for the next step in legal proceedings. Production before the court is expected later on Sunday once all formalities are finished.

Meanwhile, reactions from different political quarters have varied sharply. Supporters of Rambabu and leaders from his party have condemned the arrest as politically motivated, asserting that the actions taken by police reflect broader tensions and a charged political atmosphere in the state. They

argue that criminal proceedings should not be used as a tool against political opponents, especially in matters involving speech and expression.

On the other hand, opposition voices have defended the police action, saying that complaints lodged against Rambabu over his remarks warranted legal action and that the law must take its course without yielding to political pressure.

As the situation develops, attention is now focused on Rambabu's impending court appearance, which could further influence political discourse in Andhra Pradesh, especially in the lead up to upcoming elections and ongoing debates over political conduct and law enforcement.

Union Budget 2026–27 Focuses on Growth, Inclusive Development

New Delhi, February 1, 2026 |
TPN Bureau

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2026–27 in

Parliament on Sunday, outlining a roadmap aimed at boosting economic growth, infrastructure, employment, and fiscal stability. The total expenditure for the year has been projected at 53.5 lakh crore, with capital expenditure increased to 12.2 lakh crore to support large-scale infrastructure projects across the country. Sitharaman emphasized three key pillars: sustainable economic growth, inclusive development, and job creation. The budget retains fiscal discipline with a targeted fiscal deficit of 4.3 percent of GDP, while prioritizing public investment-led growth to enhance long-term competitiveness and resilience.

Infrastructure development received a major focus, with plans for seven new high-speed rail corridors connecting major cities, development of 20 new na-



TDP Protest Turns Violent at Former Minister Jogi Ramesh's Residence in Ibrahimpatnam

Amaravati, February 1, 2026

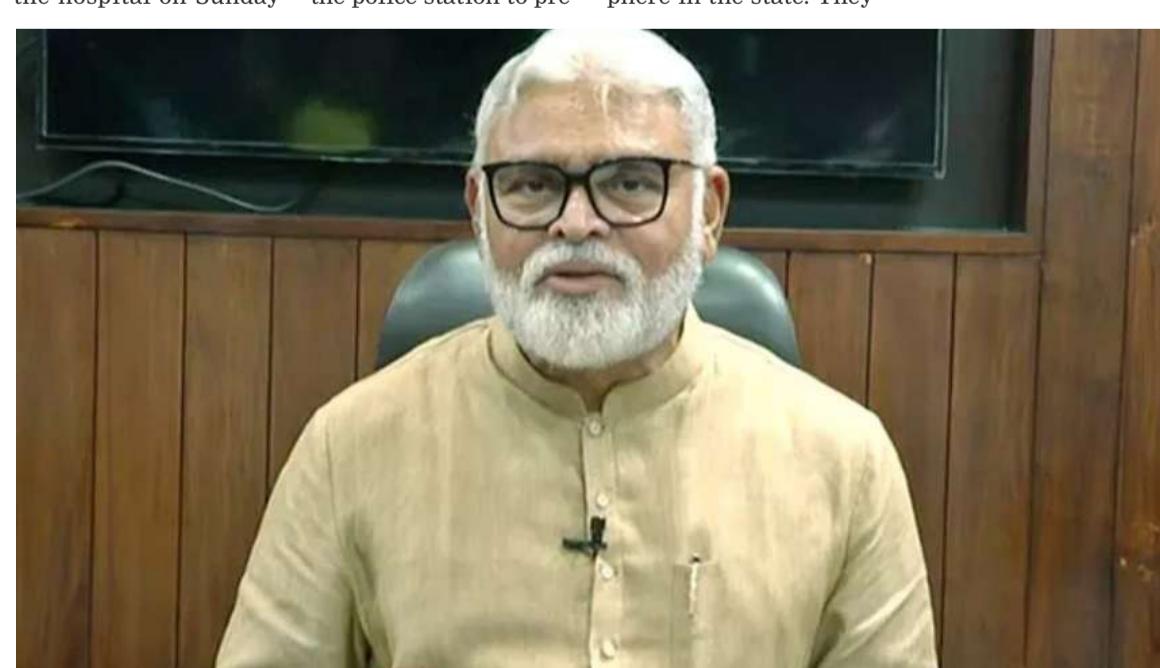
neighborhoods.

The incident highlights the growing tension between political parties in Andhra Pradesh, where verbal disagreements are increasingly spilling into public confrontations. Analysts say such events threaten the safety of political leaders and citizens alike and contribute to a climate of intimidation and unrest.

Following the attack, Jogi Ramesh appealed for calm, urging all parties to exercise restraint and avoid violence. While defending his right to express political views, he emphasized that democratic discourse should not be a reason for attacks on

private property or personal safety. He called on political factions to engage through dialogue rather than street confrontations.

The Ibrahimpatnam incident adds to a string of recent confrontations between political factions, reflecting the highly charged atmosphere in Andhra Pradesh ahead of upcoming electoral and policy debates. Observers note that maintaining law and order and fostering civil political engagement are critical to preventing further escalation and ensuring public confidence in the state's governance.



national waterways, and dedicated freight corridors to improve logistics and reduce transportation costs. These initiatives aim to strengthen connectivity and promote regional development.

Support for critical sectors was also highlighted, including additional allocations for MSMEs, agriculture, and the biopharma industry to drive rural income and create employment opportunities. The budget introduced tax reforms and adjustments, including changes to securities transaction tax (STT) and tax collection at source (TCS), aimed at benefiting specific segments of the economy.

Innovation and advanced manufacturing were prioritized, with plans to expand semiconductor production and reinforce chemical parks to reduce import dependence and strengthen domestic value chains. These steps are intended to position India as a competitive hub for technology and manufacturing while creating employment for skilled youth.

While industry groups welcomed the budget as balanced and forward-looking, some opposition parties and analysts criticized it for insufficient clarity on allocations for key programs and specific growth-boosting measures.

Concerns were also raised by several states, including Telangana, which argued that state-specific needs and projects were not adequately represented in the allocations. State leaders have indicated they will seek further discussions with the Union Government to address these gaps. The Finance Minister's proposals are now set to be debated extensively in Parliament.

Observers expect discussions to focus on both the opportunities presented by the infrastructure and investment initiatives, as well as the challenges of implementation, fiscal management, and equitable development across regions. The budget aims to balance growth with inclusivity while providing the framework for India's economic trajectory for the year ahead.

Nara Lokesh Hails Union Budget as Growth Booster for State

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Minister for Information Technology and Electronics Nara Lokesh on Sunday welcomed the Union Budget 2026 27, describing it as a balanced and forward-looking financial plan that offers significant opportunities for the state's development. Lokesh said the budget aligns with India's broader growth trajectory and long term aspirations, and it positions Andhra Pradesh to benefit from key national initiatives.

Speaking to reporters and addressing supporters, Lokesh expressed gratitude to the central leadership, praising the budget for its comprehensive approach toward economic expansion, infrastructure enhancement and industrial growth. He said the provisions outlined in the budget would help accelerate investments, create jobs and strengthen Andhra Pradesh's standing in emerging sectors.

According to Lokesh, one of the key positives



for the state is the emphasis on connectivity and strategic sector de-

velopment. He highlighted initiatives such as enhanced transporta-

tion corridors and opportunities for high-speed rail connectivity, which are expected to improve regional linkages and boost commerce. He also pointed to tax incentives aimed at promoting data centres and electronics manufacturing units as catalysts for technology driven job creation in the state.

Lokesh emphasised that the renewed focus on tourism and critical mineral corridors under the Union Budget would further attract private investment and

support local enterprise development. "Andhra Pradesh stands to gain significantly from this budget," he said, adding that state leaders are eager to leverage these opportunities to power the next phase of growth.

The minister's remarks underscored the coalition government's strategy to align state priorities with national policy directions, especially in areas that promise substantial economic returns. Lokesh said that by tapping into the budget's provisions, the government hopes to attract greater investment and improve em-

ployment prospects for the state's youth.

Concluding his comments, Lokesh reiterated the state government's commitment to working closely with the Centre to turn budgetary provisions into tangible outcomes for the people of Andhra Pradesh. He stressed the importance of collaborative effort and effective implementation to ensure that the promises of the Union Budget translate into sustained development and improved livelihoods throughout the state.

Union Budget Boosts Organic Farming in Andhra Pradesh – Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Accheannaidu has praised the Union Budget 2026 for its strong focus on organic farming, highlighting the allocation of Rs 155.32 crore for its expansion in the State. He described the move as a reflection of the Central Government's farsighted vision and a solid foundation for promoting sustainable agriculture across Andhra Pradesh.

Minister Accheannaidu emphasized that the Budget, introduced



by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, clearly demonstrates the Centre's commitment to farmer welfare. He said that organic farming not only helps increase farmers' incomes but also protects soil fertility, which is critical for long-term agricultural sustainability. For a predominantly agriculture-based state like Andhra Pradesh, such focused funding is highly beneficial, he added.

He further noted that coordination between the Central and State governments will be essential to expand organ-

ic farming as a movement, providing farmers with greater opportunities for economic growth. The Budget also promotes rural employment by emphasizing activities such as fish farming in reservoirs and the overall development of the fisheries sector. Additionally, increased support for the animal husbandry sector will strengthen financial security for livestock farmers, ensuring diversified rural incomes.

The Minister also highlighted the Centre's encouragement of high-value crops to boost

agricultural revenue. Coastal crops like coconut and sandalwood will receive special incentives, while schemes supporting the replacement of old trees with new plantations will enhance orchard productivity. These measures, he said, will significantly increase crop yields and provide long-term benefits to farmers.

Minister Accheannaidu expressed confidence that under the NDA government, the collaboration between the Centre and the States will further strengthen Andhra Pradesh's agricultural

and rural economic systems. He said the Budget injects new energy into farming communities and supports overall rural development.

He congratulated the Central Government, and particularly Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, for presenting a farmer-centric Budget that prioritizes income growth, employment opportunities, and sustainable agricultural practices. The Minister called the budgetary allocations a major step toward ensuring economic stability for rural communities in Andhra Pradesh. He noted that

this holistic approach to agriculture, combining financial incentives, rural employment schemes, and development of high-value crops, will inspire farmers and strengthen the State's position as an agriculture-driven economy.

The announcement, officially released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation, Marketing, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries, underscores the Government's commitment to building a sustainable and prosperous future for Andhra Pradesh farmers.

AP Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav Hails Union Budget for Boosting Economy



Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav on Sunday warmly welcomed the Union Budget 2026 27, describing it as a strong, growth-oriented financial roadmap that will give fresh momentum to the national and state economy. Speaking to the media in Amaravati, Keshav said the budget provides meaningful policy direction and practical support that will help strengthen economic activity, promote jobs and enhance the well-being of citizens across all sections of society.

Keshav explained that the budget's emphasis on key infrastructure projects and strategic sectors will particularly benefit Andhra Pradesh. He highlighted the announcement of high speed rail corridors linking major cities as an opportunity for expanding connectivity and boosting trade and commerce throughout the region. According to him, improved transportation infrastructure will help bridge gaps between markets and attract new in-

vestment to the state.

The minister also praised provisions that support the expansion of the semiconductor mission, predicting significant benefits for Andhra Pradesh's emerging technology and electronics sectors. Keshav said incentives for semiconductor production, data centres and textile clusters will help generate employment opportunities, especially for the state's youth and skilled workers. He emphasized that such industry focused policies are essential for building a more competitive economic base and encouraging innovation led growth.

Keshav further noted that the budget's support for agriculture and rural livelihoods will offer relief to farmers and improve incomes. He pointed out that specific measures for commercial crops like coconut and pigeon pea, along with schemes promoting exploration of rare earth minerals, are expected to increase revenue streams for rural producers and enhance export potential. These initiatives, he said, under-

score the government's commitment to inclusive development that supports both urban and rural communities.

According to the minister, the budget also prioritizes the upliftment of the poor and middle income groups by creating a supportive ecosystem for their economic advancement. He said that prioritizing job creation and enterprise development will help strengthen the middle class and expand opportunities for those striving to improve their living standards.

Keshav lauded the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister for presenting a budget that balances growth with sustainability, noting that its forward-looking measures will ensure long term economic resilience. He said that, with effective implementation and cooperation between the central and state governments, Andhra Pradesh is well positioned to fully leverage the opportunities created by the national budget and accelerate its development agenda.

Minister Durgesh Applauds Union Budget for AP Development



Rajahmundry, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Minister Kandula Durgesh has welcomed the Union Budget 2026, calling it historic and capable of positioning India as the third-largest economic power globally. He expressed optimism that the budget will significantly contribute to the overall

development of Andhra Pradesh.

Highlighting the focus on tourism, Minister Durgesh praised the Central Government's initiative in allocating substantial funds to the sector. He noted that the Centre has already provided around Rs 450 crore for tourism development in the State. With the upcoming international-level projects, he expressed confidence that additional funding and support will further enhance Andhra Pradesh's tourism profile.

The Minister detailed key allocations announced in the budget, which are expected to play a transformative role in the State's growth. These include Rs 3,320.39 crore for the Polavaram project, Rs 1,128.91 crore for Amaravati capital development, Rs 432.09 crore for integrated urban

development in Amaravati, Rs 500.99 crore for rural road projects, Rs 800 crore for urban water supply and sewage management, Rs 350 crore for roads and bridge reconstruction, and Rs 155.32 crore for organic farming initiatives.

Minister Durgesh emphasized that the budget strongly focuses on youth skill development and employment opportunities, aiming to equip the younger generation with practical training to meet modern economic challenges. He said that investments in high-speed corridors and infrastructure will position the country at the forefront of development, while prioritizing environmental protection and technology access for citizens.

He highlighted that efficient utilization of these funds will be crucial for en-

suring sustainable growth. Minister Durgesh expressed confidence that under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, Andhra Pradesh will continue its trajectory toward inclusive and accelerated development.

The Minister also appreciated the budget's efforts to balance economic growth with technological advancement and environmental sustainability, ensuring that both urban and rural communities benefit from the planned allocations.

He concluded by urging the effective implementation of the announced schemes, which he said will bring tangible improvements in infrastructure, agriculture, urban development, and employment generation across the State.

Ram Mohan Naidu Welcomes Union Budget, Highlights Benefits for AP

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Union Minister and senior Telugu Desam Party leader Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu on Sunday offered a positive assessment of the recently presented Union Budget, saying it provides substantial opportunities for Andhra Pradesh and reflects a broader vision for national growth. Ram Mohan Naidu's response comes amid varied reactions from political leaders across the state, with many focusing on how the budget will impact Andhra Pradesh's development and resource allocation. Addressing the media and party workers, Ram Mohan Naidu expressed his appreciation for the Union Budget's emphasis on inclusive growth, economic em-

powerment, and infrastructure development. He said the budget lays a foundation for long-term prosperity, with measures that will support job creation, technological advancement, and rural upliftment. The minister stressed that the allocations and policy directions in the budget resonate with the aspirations of the state's citizens, particularly youth, farmers, and small enterprises. Ram Mohan Naidu highlighted that Andhra Pradesh stands to benefit from key provisions such as enhanced focus on critical sectors including manufacturing, logistics, and information technology. He also pointed to incentives for emerging industries and the support for initiatives such as data centres and semiconductor

manufacturing, which he said would attract investment and generate employment across the state. The Union Minister underlined the importance of extending and strengthening national schemes that have direct relevance to state priorities, such as water supply programmes and rural development initiatives. He said these measures demonstrate the central government's commitment to fostering balanced regional growth, even as states pursue their individual development agendas. Ram Mohan Naidu additionally acknowledged the crucial role played by Andhra Pradesh's leadership in advocating for the state's interests at the national level. He said close coordination between state and central

authorities has helped position Andhra Pradesh to take full advantage of the budget's provisions. He praised efforts to secure funding for infrastructure projects and stressed the significance of sustained dialogue to ensure timely implementation. Political observers noted that Ram Mohan Naidu's remarks reflect a broader strategy of aligning state development objectives with national policy directions, particularly in areas that promise substantial economic returns. By emphasising opportunities for technology driven growth, connectivity improvements, and enhanced support for youth and farmers, the minister presented the budget as a catalyst for Andhra Pradesh's development.

Pawan Kalyan Welcomes Union Budget, Calls It Growth Oriented

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan on Sunday welcomed the Union Budget 2026-27, describing it as a forward-looking, reform-driven financial roadmap that can accelerate economic growth and expand opportunities for the youth, farmers and middle class. Posting his reaction on social media, Kalyan expressed appreciation for the national budget's focus on strengthening India's economic foundations and fostering inclusive development across regions.

In his statement, Pawan Kalyan said the Union Budget presented by the NDA government under the leadership of the Prime Minister reflects years of decisive governance and strategic priorities aimed at empowering citizens and building a self-reliant nation. He praised the Finance Minister for framing a budget that, in his view, balances reform, resilience and people-centric policies, and said it offers several avenues that Andhra Pradesh can leverage for rapid growth.



The Deputy Chief Minister emphasized that the budget's focus on investment growth, infrastructure expansion and job creation aligns with the aspirations of Andhra Pradesh's population, particularly its young workforce. He said that measures to promote industrial development, connectivity enhancement and technological innovation are likely to attract new investment and generate employment on a large scale, benefiting both urban and rural areas.

Kalyan also pointed to initiatives aimed at empowering states and strengthening the middle class, asserting that these elements contribute to the nation's journey toward holistic development. He noted that the budget's emphasis on Sankalp (commitment), Kartavya (duty) and Yuva Shakti (youth power) demon-

strates a vision of governance that places people's welfare at the centre of policymaking. As the state government assesses the budget's implications, Pawan Kalyan urged state officials to engage closely with the Centre to translate budget provisions into tangible outcomes that benefit communities across Andhra Pradesh. He reiterated his belief that cooperative federalism and proactive planning are essential for maximizing the advantages offered by the Union Budget. Political observers say Kalyan's supportive stance complements similar reactions from other leaders in the state government, positioning the budget as a catalyst for growth rather than a source of contention. By emphasizing opportunities rather than shortcomings, Kalyan's

comments align with the coalition government's broader strategy to frame the budget as beneficial for the state's long-term development agenda. The Deputy Chief Minister concluded by expressing hope that the focus on economic reforms and people-centric policies will fuel sustained progress and uplift the livelihoods of citizens throughout Andhra Pradesh.

TDP Leader C. Ramachandraiah Criticizes Jagan's Political Strategies

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Senior Telugu Desham Party (TDP) leader and MLCC. Ramachandraiah on Sunday launched a sharp critique of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, alleging that his political strategies are increasingly dependent on rowdy elements and disruptive tactics. Ramachandraiah's remarks came amid rising tensions between the ruling party and the opposition over political rhetoric and public discourse in Andhra Pradesh.

In a statement from Amaravati, Ramachandraiah condemned recent remarks by YSRCP leaders targeting Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, describing them as inappropriate



and detrimental to the political culture of the state. He said the use of abusive language and inflammatory statements reflects poorly on the party's commitment to democratic norms and social harmony.

The senior TDP leader accused YSRCP leaders of encouraging lawlessness and creating an atmosphere of social unrest. He alleged that some party members have been speaking without restraint, disregarding

constitutional norms, and attempting to intimidate political opponents. "A political party cannot sustain itself in the long term if it operates with rowdy elements at its core," Ramachandraiah said, emphasizing that governance and public welfare cannot thrive in an environment dominated by fear and disruption.

Ramachandraiah also highlighted that such tactics could negatively impact Andhra Pradesh's development and investment climate. By focusing on personal attacks and political theatrics rather than policy solutions, he said, the ruling party risks undermining public trust and slowing progress on crucial development initiatives.

The TDP leader further urged YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to rethink the tone and strategy of his party, stressing that political discourse must remain respectful, transparent, and grounded in democratic values. He warned that continued reliance on disruptive forces and abusive rhetoric would eventually backfire, eroding both the party's credibility and its ability to govern effectively.

Political analysts note that Ramachandraiah's statements signal growing friction

between the state's major political parties as they prepare for future elections. The exchange also highlights the broader challenge of maintaining civil political debate while navigating an increasingly combative political landscape.

Ramachandraiah concluded by asserting that TDP remains committed to principled politics, governance transparency, and the development agenda for the state, positioning itself as a party that addresses issues constructively rather than through intimidation or sensationalism. His comments underline the ongoing contest over political culture, public perception, and the role of ethical conduct in Andhra Pradesh's evolving political scenario.

YS Sharmila Slams NDA Government Over Andhra Pradesh Budget Allocation

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

YS Sharmila, president of the YSR Telangana Party, on Sunday strongly criticized the Union Budget presented by the NDA government, alleging that Andhra Pradesh has been deliberately shortchanged despite its alliance with the ruling coalition. Speaking to the media in Amaravati, Sharmila claimed that the budget ignores the developmental needs of the state and undermines the expectations of its citizens.

Sharmila expressed deep dissatisfaction with the allocations, describing the Centre's approach as unjust and discriminatory. "Andhra Pradesh has been offered very little in this budget despite being part of the NDA alliance," she said. "The government has failed to provide funds to implement projects



crucial for the growth and welfare of the people." One of Sharmila's main criticisms focused on the Amaravati capital project. She pointed out that instead of receiving substantial central support for building the capital, the state has been offered only a token loan. "The Centre's approach forces Andhra Pradesh to bear a significant portion of the cost, which is unfair and unacceptable," she said. Sharmila also highlighted inadequate funding for the Polavaram irrigation project, warning that insufficient allocations could hinder the completion of the dam at its designed height, affecting water security and irrigation for large parts of the state. She emphasized that this neglect would disproportionately impact farmers and rural communities, particularly in Rayalaseema and Uttarakhand

regions. In addition, she criticized the lack of meaningful allocations for industrial and infrastructure projects, including the Visakhapatnam and Kadapa steel plants, as well as metropolitan rail and industrial corridor initiatives. Sharmila claimed that the budget fails to support projects designed to boost employment, investment, and economic growth in the

state. The leader accused the NDA government of abandoning Andhra Pradesh's interests and ignoring its obligations under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. She stressed that the promises of special status and other commitments remain unfulfilled, leaving the state at a financial disadvantage compared to others in the country. Concluding her remarks, Sharmila

TDP Leader Kanna Lakshmi Narayana Criticizes YSRCP Leadership and Conduct



Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Senior Telugu Desham Party (TDP) leader Kanna Lakshmi Narayana on Sunday delivered a blistering critique of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), targeting its leaders for what he described as disruptive political behaviour and irresponsible rhetoric. Speaking at a press briefing in Amaravati, Lakshmi Narayana accused the opposition of repeatedly engaging in conduct that he said undermines democratic norms and threatens public confidence in governance.

Lakshmi Narayana's remarks come amid an increasingly charged political atmosphere in Andhra Pradesh, where disagreements between the ruling coalition and the opposition have frequently spilled into the public domain. He highlighted what he called a series of "irresponsible and inflammatory" comments by YSRCP leaders, saying such language fuels division rather than contributing to constructive debate.

At the heart of his criticism was the recent wave of controversial statements from several YSRCP figures aimed at senior government leaders and policies. Lakshmi Narayana claimed these remarks are less about public welfare and more about sensationalism and political point scoring. He argued that this trend reflects a diminishing respect for civil discourse and democratic engagement, stressing that political parties should offer substantive policy critique instead of personal attacks.

The TDP leader also accused YSRCP leaders of attempting to create an atmosphere of unrest for political advantage.

He said that aggressive language and provocations often escalate tensions, ultimately burdening law enforcement and diverting attention from issues such as education, infrastructure, and economic development.

Lakshmi Narayana insisted that political competition should be rooted in ideology and performance rather than antagonism. "In a vibrant democracy, opposition voices play a crucial role," Lakshmi Narayana said. "But this responsibility must be exercised

with respect for people's sentiments and with commitment to peaceful expression. What we are witnessing instead is rhetoric that incites anger and deepens societal fault lines."

He urged the YSRCP to reconsider its approach and focus on constructive engagement that addresses real issues facing citizens, including unemployment, agriculture distress, and public services. Lakshmi Narayana also called on law enforcement and election authorities to ensure that political discourse remains within the bounds of the law, warning against the normalization of incendiary speech.

Political analysts note that Lakshmi Narayana's comments echo broader concerns among sections of the public and political class about the tone of current political discourse in Andhra Pradesh. With mounting pressure from both sides of the political divide, observers say the state is at a crossroads where the quality of political engagement could shape public trust and stability in the months ahead.

Chandrababu Naidu Responds Firmly to SIT Report on Tirumala Laddu Ghee Controversy

Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday issued a strong response to the recently released Special Investigation Team (SIT) report on the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) laddu ghee adulteration case, describing the matter as serious and emphasizing the importance of protecting the faith of devotees. The SIT report, the Chief Minister said, identified adulterated substances mixed in ghee used for sacred prasadam, prompting him to call for transparency and accountability from all officials involved in the probe.

Addressing reporters, Naidu said the controversy surrounding the purity of the ghee used in preparing the famous Tirumala laddus has deeply affected the sentiments of devotees across the country, particularly because the temple holds immense religious significance. He stressed that maintaining the sanctity of temple offerings must remain a priority for authorities and that any irregularities in the supply chain must be thoroughly investigated

and addressed.

Naidu reiterated that when concerns first emerged about the quality of the ghee, the state government acted as a responsible administrator by commissioning a Special Investigation Team to uncover the truth. He underscored that the SIT's findings pointed to adulterated material in the ghee, and he urged officials to exercise full transparency as the investigation progresses to ensure there is no ambiguity about the facts.

The Chief Minister also directed senior officers to implement measures that would prevent similar incidents in the future, pledging enhanced oversight of supply procedures for temple prasadam ingredients. Naidu said that while it was unfortunate that the matter had es-

calated into a political controversy, his focus remained on safeguarding devotional trust and upholding ethical standards in the temple administration.

Naidu addressed political criticism from opposition parties, who have questioned earlier statements and demanded clarifications or apologies relating to allegations about the ghee's composition. He defended his statements, explaining that his initial public remarks were grounded in preliminary laboratory findings and were made in the interest of public awareness and devotion. The Chief Minister asserted that his intention was never to politicize the issue but to ensure due diligence and protection of religious sentiment.



ED Clears CM Chandrababu in Skill Development Case: Kinjarapu Atchannaidu Hails Integrity

Vijayawada, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu on Saturday praised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) gave him a clean chit in the high-profile Skill Development scheme case, calling it a strong testimony to his honesty and integrity.

Speaking to reporters, Atchannaidu said, "Truth has prevailed, and honesty has been vindicated. This is a landmark moment in the unblemished political career of CM Chandrababu Naidu. The latest development clearly reinforces that he is a leader who stands firmly on the side of justice, fairness, and righteousness."

The minister highlighted that the ED's finding of no involvement on the part of the Chief Minister is a matter of pride for both the leadership and the state. "Despite facing politically motivated scrutiny and multiple conspiracies by the previous government, CM Chandrababu maintained his composure and respect for the law at every step," he remarked.

Atchannaidu strongly criticized the previous



YSRCP government for politicizing the Skill De-

velopment initiative, which was launched to

create employment opportunities for the youth of Andhra Pradesh. "It is unfortunate that a program designed to shape the future of the state was turned into a political issue. Attempts were made to discredit a genuine scheme that could have benefited thousands of young people," he added. The minister further praised the Vijayawada ACB Court's decision to close the case, stating that it sends a clear message to individuals who had made false allegations. "Both the AP CID and the ED have independently confirmed that

CM Chandrababu had no role in this case. This not only validates his administrative competence but also highlights his unwavering commitment to good governance," Atchannaidu noted. He emphasized that the Chief Minister's steadfastness under pressure demonstrates the importance of integrity in public life. "No matter how many personal attacks or conspiracies are directed at him, the truth ultimately prevails. CM Chandrababu has once again shown that honesty and dedication are central to his leadership and political philosophy," he

said.

Atchannaidu also praised the Chief Minister for initiating the Skill Development program with a vision for long-term economic growth and employment generation. "This program was not just a policy initiative; it was a commitment to the youth of Andhra Pradesh. Efforts to undermine it were not just politically motivated—they were an attack on the state's development agenda," he observed.

The minister concluded by reaffirming that the government's focus remains on the state's progress. "Under CM

Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, our priority is the holistic development of Andhra Pradesh. We will continue to work together, putting the welfare of the state and its citizens above all else," he said.

This development marks a significant political vindication for the Chief Minister, strengthening his image as a leader committed to transparency, accountability, and public welfare. Analysts say the outcome will boost confidence in governance and set a precedent for future initiatives aimed at youth empowerment and state development.

Attack on Jogi Ramesh's House Sparks Tensions; Leader Warns Opponents



Vijayawada, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Tensions rose in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district on Sunday after the residence of former minister and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader Jogi Ramesh was attacked, prompting sharp political criticism and concerns over public safety.

According to reports, a large group of protesters gathered at Jogi Ramesh's home in Ibrahimpatnam, alleging that he had made objectionable remarks against leaders of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), including IT Minister Nara Lokesh. The protest escalated into violence, with demonstrators reportedly pelting stones and setting parts of the property on fire. Police quickly intervened to restore order in the area.

At the time of the attack, Jogi Ramesh was not at home, but family members, including his wife and father, were inside, raising concerns about their safety. Authorities reinforced security around the residence to prevent further escalation.

Reacting to the violence, Jogi Ramesh condemned the attack and questioned why such aggression was directed at him over

political differences. In a defiant statement, he warned his opponents, saying that they would be held accountable for their actions. "My home is as far from your home as from mine," he said, asserting that no wrongdoing on his part could justify such attacks.

The incident is said to have stemmed from Ramesh's earlier public statements criticizing the state government and certain political figures, which the TDP claimed were provocative. Party supporters responded with demonstrations that turned violent, targeting his residence.

YSRCP leadership also condemned the attack, highlighting it as an example of political intimidation. They stressed that violence against elected representatives or party leaders undermines democracy and law and order. Party officials warned that such tactics would not silence criticism and vowed to continue their work for the welfare of the state's citizens.

Police officials confirmed that an investigation has been launched into the incident. CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts are being reviewed to identify and

Chandrababu Naidu Focuses on Kuppam Development After Assuming Office

Kuppam (Chittoor District), February 1, 2026 — Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has made his home constituency of Kuppam a focal point of governance and party strategy following his swearing in, addressing cadre performance, local development and wider political challenges in a key review meeting held here on Sunday.

In a gathering with local party workers and leaders, Naidu delivered a strong message on performance and accountability, assuring that dedicated and effective workers would be recognised while those who failed to deliver results would have to make way for others. "Those who work will be honoured; those who do not improve will be respectfully asked to step aside," he said, underscoring his results-oriented approach to leadership.

The Chief Minister reviewed organisational readiness and developmental work in the constituency, which has long been a stronghold of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and has represented Naidu for decades. He emphasised that the "Kuppam model" of governance and development would be replicated across the state to drive sustainable growth and improve public welfare.

Naidu highlighted the completion of major infrastructure efforts, including the supply of Krishna river water through the Handri Neeva Sujala Sravanti project to Kuppam in a single season, which he said had transformed local water security and agricultural prospects. He reiterated his commitment to elevating the entire region's socio-economic status and called on party activists to work closely with the people to achieve it.

At the event, he also inaugurated a new song to commemorate three years of the 'Yuvagalam' foot march initiated by his son, IT Minister Nara Lokesh, to strengthen grassroots engagement. Naidu said that committed party workers would continue to be given opportunities for leadership and contribution, citing the rise of those who worked from the grassroots to higher responsibilities in the party.



On development, Naidu reaffirmed commitments to expanding welfare schemes and enhancing local infrastructure. Officials present noted ongoing efforts to develop educational and tourism facilities, strengthen water resources, and boost employment through targeted projects. A renewed focus on agriculture, health and skill development was also emphasised as part of the broader Kuppam vision for growth.

The Chief Minister's address reflected both organisational discipline and developmental ambition, blending performance expectations with promises of accelerated progress in his own backyard. Party workers, in turn, welcomed the clarity of direction and pledged to work in close coordination with government officials to translate policy into visible outcomes for the people of Kuppam and beyond.

AP High Court Strikes Down Ration Dealer Selection Process

Vijayawada, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Sunday struck down the state government's selection process for ration dealers, declaring it legally invalid and inconsistent with earlier judicial directions. The court ordered that the recruitment process be halted until fresh guidelines are issued in compliance with the law.

Analysts noted that incidents like this can escalate tensions between political parties, particularly in districts with heightened political competition. They stressed the importance of maintaining public order while ensuring freedom of expression and democratic debate.

This episode underscores the challenges facing Andhra Pradesh as political rivalries occasionally spill into public spaces, with repercussions for community safety and political stability.

Authorities have called for calm and assured citizens that measures are being taken to prevent such incidents in the future.



The court also noted that the government had ignored its previous

orders to revise the selection criteria. Despite prior rulings quashing the guideline that gave equal importance to interviews and written tests, the authorities had continued the selection under the same framework. This, the bench said, amounted to a blatant violation of judicial directions and undermined the integrity of the process.

The ruling followed an appeal by a candidate who had topped the written examination but lost out on a ration dealer position due to comparatively lower interview marks. The petitioner argued that the system was unfair and in breach of court orders. Allowing the appeal, the High Court declared the entire selection process legally untenable and directed the state government to restart the recruitment only after issuing fresh, legally compliant guidelines.

The bench expressed

disappointment over the government's failure to implement earlier instructions and reminded officials that court orders are binding and must be executed promptly. Continuing with an invalid selection process caused undue harm to candidates and eroded public trust in recruitment for welfare services. The government has been directed not to proceed with further appoint-

ments until a revised selection framework is notified. Legal observers say the order underscores the judiciary's insistence on fairness, transparency, and strict adherence to due process in public recruitment exercises. The ruling is expected to impact thousands of applicants awaiting appointment as fair price shop dealers across Andhra Pradesh and has reignited debate on reforming welfare distribution channels. Civil society groups welcomed the judgment, saying it upholds candidates' rights and reinforces accountability in public service selection. The Andhra Pradesh government is expected to issue a fresh notification for ration dealer recruitment with revised criteria, ensuring that future appointments comply fully with statutory norms and judicial guidance.

Kambala Srinivas Donates Rs 10 Lakh for Vivekananda Maharogi Health Center

East Godavari, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

BJP leader Kambala Srinivas Rao on Sunday donated Rs 10 lakh towards the development of Sri Vivekananda Maharogi Health Center in Bommuru, East Godavari, during the center's golden jubilee celebrations. The health center, which has been providing uninterrupted medical services for the past five decades, is widely recognised for its efforts in treating leprosy patients and serving marginalized communities.

The donation was presented as a cheque to the center's president, Pativada Ramaraju, as part of a special ceremony at-



tended by prominent leaders, volunteers, and local residents. The event saw participation from RSS All India Sah-Sarakaryavah Mukund

C.R., who lauded the center's contribution in controlling leprosy through youth involvement and sustained efforts over 50 years. He

emphasized the importance of commitment, dedicated workers, resources, and effective execution in achieving the organization's mission.

Minister Kandula Durgesh highlighted the center's close association with community service and the preservation of Sanatana

Dharma through its activities. He noted that the center had set an example of dedication and service, and stressed that collaboration between the government and voluntary organizations could yield significant social impact.

Rural MLA Gorantla Buccchayya Chowdary praised the center for its role in promoting Hindu unity and community welfare, acknowledging its five decades of service in treating leprosy patients. He assured that infrastructure improvements such as road access and drainage would be completed by the upcoming festive occasions and pledged government support when-

ever required.

Other dignitaries, including Paramesh Biotech MD Anand Swaroop Adavani, R.K. Jain, and local TDP leaders, spoke about their personal association with the center and expressed willingness to support its ongoing initiatives. Dr. Pidugu Vijaykumar mentioned that several patients had undergone free operations at the center, underscoring its medical impact. MPs Daggubati Purandhwari and Rajya Sabha MP Vijayendra Prasad announced contributions of Rs 50 lakh each towards a 20-bed hospital facility being constructed at the center.

The celebration also

featured speeches reflecting on the center's historical significance, the tireless work of its founders, and the importance of youth participation in social welfare. The event concluded with the singing of *Vande Mataram* and the national anthem, with participation from numerous residents and community members.

The donation by Kambala Srinivas Rao and the support from multiple leaders highlight the continued commitment of individuals and organizations toward strengthening health-care and community services in East Godavari.

Tiger Attack in Rajahmundry Rural Claims Three Animals



Rajahmundry, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

A wild animal attack in Thorredu village, Rajahmundry Rural, resulted in the death of

three livestock, including a tiger, on early Saturday morning, the District Forest Officer B. Prabhakar Rao confirmed. The tiger reportedly attacked the ani-

mals in a banana plantation, leaving the carcasses behind.

Following the incident, MLA Gorantla Buccchayya Chowdary and Rajanagaram MLA Battula Balaramakrishna visited the site to assess the damage and console affected farmers. They assured the victims of government support and measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Officials explained that the area surrounding the village is predominantly rice, banana, and maize fields, creating a habitat conducive for wild animal movement. Forest department staff have been deployed for con-

tinuous patrolling, and recent reports indicate the tiger may still be roaming nearby.

The DFO confirmed that compensation for the livestock loss would be provided to the affected farmers in accordance with government norms. Residents living near forested areas were urged to exercise caution, especially during night hours, and to avoid going to fields alone. The Forest Department has also requested villagers to immediately report any unusual or suspicious wildlife activity to authorities.

This incident highlights the ongoing challenge of human-wildlife coexistence in East Godavari, where expanding agricultural fields often intersect with animal habitats. Authorities emphasized preventive measures, including increased vigilance, proper fencing, and community awareness, to mitigate risks posed by wild animals.

Local officials and forest authorities continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure the safety of both residents and livestock in the region. The MLA and DFO also stressed the importance of collaboration between farmers and the forest department to address wildlife concerns and provide timely support in case of emergencies.

DRM Lalit Bohra Conducts Surprise Inspection at Kottavalasa & S. Kota Stations



Waltair Division, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Waltair Division, Shri Lalit Bohra, carried out a surprise inspection of Kottavalasa and Shrungavarapu Kota railway stations to review ongoing developmental works, including the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, infrastructure upgrades, and passenger amenities.

Accompanied by Senior Divisional Engineers A.K. Moharana and B. Sairaj, along with officials from various departments, the DRM began the inspection at Kottavalasa. He visited the Railaway Colony, inaugurating a newly developed Shuttle Badminton Court in the colony park for residents' recreation. During his interaction with the residents, he addressed grievances and requirements and praised both the community and engineering teams for the excellent maintenance of the colony.

Shri Bohra also inaugurated a newly constructed Rest Room for women employees of the Civil Engineering Department at Kottavalasa station.

He engaged with the women staff, inquiring about their work environment and requirements. The employees expressed appreciation for the improved facility, highlighting its contribution to a better working atmosphere.

The DRM participated in a Safety Seminar at Kottavalasa, focusing on welding techniques, safety measures, and adherence to protocols. The seminar included Civil Engineers, Permanent Way Inspectors (PWIs), Gangmen, and Gangwomen, emphasizing the importance of safety in ongoing operations.

Shri Bohra further inspected the progress of Amrit Bharat Station projects at both Kottavalasa and Shrungavarapu Kota stations. He reviewed station yards and conducted a safety inspection.

Successful Awareness Seminar at Tirumala Educational Institutions



East Godavari, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

An awareness seminar for students and parents of classes 5 to 10 was successfully held on Sunday at the Tirumala Educational Institutions campus in Payakaravupeta, East Godavari. The event drew an overwhelming response, with around 3,000 students and parents attending, according to the Chairman of the institutions, Nunnal Thirumala Rao.

Speaking at the seminar, Tirumala emphasized the intense competition students face in national-level exams such as JEE (Main & Advanced) and

NEET. He urged parents to provide consistent encouragement and emotional support to help children handle academic pressures. He also highlighted the importance of preparing students physically and mentally to face challenges and succeed in their educational pursuits.

The seminar focused on common problems students face in national competitive exams and provided guidance to parents on how to help their children overcome them. Tirumala pointed out the growing distraction posed by electronic gadgets, which often reduces the time children devote to

studying. He encouraged parents to guide their children in balancing gadget use and academic activities to avoid adverse effects on their performance.

Vice-Chairperson Srirashmi stressed that children often emulate their parents, making them key role models. She urged parents to actively participate in shaping their children's behavior and values, noting that a collaborative approach within the family and society enhances a child's overall development.

The seminar also highlighted the institution's efforts to

support students' physical and mental well-being. Hostel students are provided morning yoga sessions and evening recreational activities, ensuring a holistic learning environment that balances academics, health, and personal growth.

Alumni parents, including Chinni Master, whose child studies at IIT Dhanbad, praised the institution for treating students like their own children, paying close attention to academics, health, and nutrition. They appreciated the commitment of staff and teachers in providing value-based education and nurturing the students' overall development.

Other parents, including alumni, shared their experiences and expressed gratitude for the guidance and care provided by the institution.

The seminar was attended by College Principal K. Vijay Kumar, School In-charge M. Sunita, teaching and non-teaching staff, along with the parents and students, highlighting the institution's commitment to fostering strong parent-teacher-student collaboration for student success.

Anil Kumar Singhal Transferred as TTD EO; Ravichandra to Take Charge

Tirupati/Amaravati, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government has transferred Anil Kumar Singhal from his post as Executive Officer (EO) of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), with immediate effect. Singhal has been directed to report to the General Administration Department for further posting, stepping down from his responsibilities at TTD.

Senior IAS officer Muddada Ravichandra, currently serving as Principal Secretary in the Chief Minister's Office, has been given additional charge of the TTD EO post. Until he formally assumes the position, C. Venkaiah Chowdary, Joint Executive Officer of

TTD, will oversee the administration to ensure continuity in management.

Anil Kumar Singhal, a 1993 batch IAS officer, had been reappointed as TTD EO in September 2025, after previously serving in the same role from May 2017 to October 2020. His transfer, coming just months into his second tenure, has drawn attention within administrative circles due to its timing.

The move follows the submission of a report by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) concerning the controversial ghee procurement and laddu preparation case at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. The SIT highlighted procedural irregu-



larities in tender conditions during Singhal's earlier tenure, which allowed participation by non-traditional suppliers, raising concerns about transparency in procurement. Officials indicate that the SIT's findings may have influenced the decision to transfer Singhal, though no official reason has been publicly confirmed. The decision reflects the state leadership's intent to reinforce administrative oversight at TTD amid ongoing scrutiny and public sensitivity surrounding temple affairs.

The Andhra Pradesh government has emphasized that the transition is part of routine administrative procedures and aimed at maintaining smooth functioning

of TTD, which manages the Sri Venkateswara Temple and its extensive pilgrim services. Ravichandra's appointment is expected to ensure experienced oversight during the interim period.

The transfer of Anil Kumar Singhal and the appointment of Muddada Ravichandra are considered important developments in TTD administration and are likely to influence discussions on governance and accountability in temple management. This personnel change signals the state's continued focus on maintaining procedural integrity and efficient management in one of the country's most significant religious institutions.

A Careful Budget for Uncertain Times: Why Caution and Balance Define This Year's Fiscal Strategy

The Union Budget this year arrives at a moment when economic optimism is tempered by global uncertainty and domestic constraints. Rather than unveiling dramatic reforms or populist giveaways, the government has chosen a noticeably cautious path — one that prioritises stability, fiscal discipline and gradual progress over bold experimentation. This approach has led many observers to describe the Budget as a prudent balancing act, attempting to hold together competing priorities in a complex economic environment.

At its core, the Budget reflects an understanding that the current moment does not allow for fiscal adventurism. Inflationary pressures, geopolitical tensions, volatile global financial markets and uneven recovery across sectors have all shaped the government's choices. In this context, restraint is not necessarily a weakness. Instead, the Budget signals that safeguarding macroeconomic stability remains the foremost objective, even as growth continues to be nudged forward through targeted public investment.

One of the clearest indicators of this cautious approach is the emphasis on fiscal consolidation. The government has reiterated its commitment to gradually reducing the fiscal deficit over the medium term. While borrowing levels remain substantial, they are framed within a roadmap that seeks to reassure markets and investors that debt will remain manageable. This is particularly significant at a time when global interest rates are high and capital flows are sensitive to signs of fiscal indiscipline. By resisting pressure to expand spending aggressively, the Budget aims to preserve credibility and keep borrowing costs under control.

At the same time, caution does not mean stagnation. The Budget continues to place strong emphasis on capital expenditure, especially in infrastructure. Roads, railways, ports, logistics networks and



urban development remain central to the government's growth strategy. The logic is straightforward: public investment in physical infrastructure can stimulate demand in the short term while enhancing productivity and competitiveness in the long run. In an environment where private investment is still recovering and global demand remains uncertain, the state's role as a growth catalyst becomes even more important.

This focus on capital expenditure also reflects lessons learned over the past decade. Compared to revenue spending, which often delivers immediate but short-lived benefits, infrastructure investment has a multiplier effect that extends across sectors and regions. It creates jobs, improves connectivity, lowers costs for businesses and encourages private players to invest alongside the state. The Budget's continued

tilt towards capex therefore signals a preference for durable growth rather than temporary consumption-led boosts.

However, the Budget's caution is equally visible in its treatment of taxation. There are no sweeping changes to personal income tax structures or dramatic reductions aimed at boosting consumption. Instead, the government appears to be relying on the tax reforms introduced in recent years to do the heavy lifting.

The assumption seems to be that stability and predictability in the tax regime are more valuable at this stage than frequent tinkering. For taxpayers hoping for immediate relief, this may feel underwhelming, but from a policy perspective, it reinforces the message that fiscal consolidation takes precedence.

The same philosophy extends to indirect taxes. Rather than announcing major rate changes, the Budget focuses on incremental ration-

alisation and compliance. This suggests a belief that the tax system has reached a stage where refinement, rather than overhaul, is required. By broadening the tax base and improving efficiency, the government aims to increase revenues without imposing new burdens that could disrupt economic activity.

Another area where the balancing act is evident is social spending. Allocations for welfare schemes, rural development and agriculture have been maintained or modestly enhanced, but without large expansions. This reflects an attempt to protect vulnerable sections of society while avoiding unsustainable expenditure growth. Rural demand remains a concern, particularly given uneven income recovery, and the Budget acknowledges this through continued support programmes. Yet the absence of major new schemes underscores the government's re-

luctance to open new fiscal commitments that could strain public finances in the future.

The agriculture sector, in particular, continues to receive attention through targeted interventions rather than sweeping reforms. Investment in irrigation, storage, logistics and allied activities is intended to improve farm productivity and resilience. While structural issues in agriculture remain unresolved, the Budget's approach suggests a preference for gradual improvement rather than disruptive policy shifts.

Support for small and medium enterprises is another important component of the Budget's cautious strategy. MSMEs are widely recognised as engines of employment and innovation, but they also face persistent challenges related to credit access, compliance and scale. The Budget addresses these concerns through credit fa-

cilitation, guarantees and institutional support rather than large subsidies. This reflects an effort to strengthen the ecosystem in which small businesses operate, instead of offering short-term relief that may not lead to sustainable growth.

From a broader perspective, the Budget's restraint can also be interpreted as political and economic realism. With elections either approaching or recently concluded, there is often pressure on governments to loosen fiscal controls and prioritise immediate gains. The decision to resist this temptation suggests confidence that long-term stability will ultimately serve both economic and political interests better than short-term populism.

Critics, however, argue that the Budget lacks ambition. They point out that structural reforms in areas such as labour markets, land acquisition, education and

healthcare remain limited. According to this view, caution has come at the cost of boldness, and the opportunity to accelerate transformation has been deferred once again. While this criticism has merit, it must be weighed against the risks of reform fatigue and policy overreach in an uncertain global environment.

Markets have responded in a measured manner, reflecting both approval and disappointment. Investors have welcomed the commitment to fiscal discipline and infrastructure spending, but some have expressed concerns about the pace of reform and the impact of certain tax-related decisions on specific sectors. This mixed reaction mirrors the Budget itself — steady, careful and deliberately unspectacular.

Ultimately, this Budget is less about headlines and more about reassurance. It seeks to convince stakeholders that the government remains focused on stability, continuity and long-term growth, even if that means avoiding dramatic announcements. In a world marked by volatility and rapid change, such an approach may not excite everyone, but it does offer predictability — a valuable commodity in uncertain times.

Whether this cautious strategy will deliver the desired outcomes will depend on execution. Infrastructure spending must translate into real projects, fiscal discipline must be maintained without stifling growth, and social support must reach those who need it most. If these conditions are met, the Budget's quiet pragmatism may prove more effective than louder, riskier alternatives.

In the final analysis, this is a Budget that reflects the mood of the moment: careful, balanced and aware of its limitations. It may not promise transformation overnight, but it does attempt to keep the economy on a steady path — and in today's environment, that may well be the most prudent choice of all.

West Bengal's Political Stalemate: How the TMC-BJP Clash Has Frozen Voters in a Binary Choice



West Bengal's political landscape has always been vibrant, intense, and fiercely debated — but as the state hurtles toward its next Assembly elections, the space for meaningful political alternatives appears increasingly constrained. Instead of a multi-layered political contest involving diverse voices and visions, voters find themselves trapped in a stark binary: support the Trinamool Congress (TMC) led by Mamata Banerjee or align with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) attempting to dethrone her. This binary has shaped narratives, influenced discourse and narrowed options in ways that limit the scope for new thinking in Bengali politics.

The TMC has ruled West Bengal for over a decade. Under Mamata Banerjee's leadership, the party has fashioned politics around identity, welfare schemes and strong regionalism. Banerjee's persona — fiery, grassroots-oriented, and fiercely protective of Bengal's autonomy — has been central to this narrative. Particularly among those wary of the BJP's sway, she symbolizes resistance against what they perceive as overreach by national forces. Meanwhile, the BJP continues to present itself as the alternative, promising development, national integration and a break from entrenched regional power.

However, this clash has crystallised into a political deadlock where little space remains for perspectives outside of these two poles. Voices from the Congress, Left parties or emerging regional groups

struggle to gain traction. Their contribution to discourse — whether in terms of policy priorities or fresh ideas — gets overshadowed by the relentless TMC-BJP rivalry. Ordinary voters are left with a choice between two camps that both command strong loyalties and polarise opinions sharply.

In recent months, this political rivalry has intensified dramatically. A central flashpoint has been the actions of national investigative agencies, especially the Enforcement Directorate (ED), against entities linked with the TMC. Searches and raids at locations associated with the Indian Political Action Committee — a strategic consultancy involved in election planning — have generated a fierce political battle. The TMC claims the action is an attempt to undermine its electoral strategy and rights ahead of elections, while the BJP characterises these operations as a lawful pursuit of investigation. What might have been a technical or legal episode has instead been swept up into the political narrative, further stoking contention.

Mamata Banerjee's response has been forceful. She has framed the ED's actions as politically motivated and an example of institutional reach engendered by the rival party. Banerjee and her supporters have held protests, rallied public sentiment and criticised the central agencies for allegedly targeting political opponents with the aim of influencing the electoral environment. In doing so, she has strength-

ened her image as a defender of the state's interests — a role that appeals across traditional voter groups who might otherwise be less partisan.

At the same time, the BJP uses these same events to spotlight what it sees as a failure of governance in the state. From its perspective, the TMC's confrontation with central agencies underscores alleged tolerance of corruption and misuse of power. BJP leaders often argue that law enforcement and investigative mechanisms are simply fulfilling their duties, and any pushback against them is evidence

of political entrenchment rather than victimisation. This position seeks to mobilise voters who prioritise law and order, accountability and national cohesion.

The impact of these competing narratives is significant. Instead of a debate centred around policy differences — development models, employment opportunities, education reforms, infrastructure growth — public discussion has largely revolved around allegations, counter-allegations and questions of political legitimacy. For many voters, the elections have become a refer-

endum not just on governance, but on deeper ideological questions about the nature of federal power and institutional independence.

This scenario has profound implications for democratic engagement in West Bengal. On one hand, strong political identities can energise the electorate and increase participation. On the other hand, when the political conversation reduces complex issues to binary choices, it risks marginalising nuanced discussion and sidelining constructive alternatives. Younger voters, especially those who might be seeking fresh ideas or better governance models beyond the dominant narratives, may feel disenfranchised.

Furthermore, this binary contest has implications for smaller political organisations and independent voices struggling to break through. The Congress and Left parties, once central to Bengal's political history, find it increasingly difficult to command attention in a narrative dominated by TMC-BJP clashes. Their efforts to form strategic alliances or present independent policy platforms are overshadowed by the larger drama of two giants pushing against one another.

Ultimately, the narrowing of political imagination poses a challenge not only for voters but for the democratic process itself. Democracy thrives on choice — meaningful, diverse and substantive. When the options presented to the electorate are limited to two poles with entrenched positions, the

space for experimentation, reform and alternative solutions diminishes. This not only affects voter satisfaction but can stagnate political innovation.

The current political climate in West Bengal reflects deeper trends in Indian politics, where strong personalities and polarised contests dominate discourse. Locally and nationally, this reinforces cycles where elections are fought as battles for supremacy rather than forums for problem-solving and governance improvements. The result is a political environment that prizes loyalty over debate, confrontation over collaboration.

West Bengal now stands at a crossroads. As the election approaches, both major parties will intensify their campaigns, sharpen their narratives, and mobilise supporters. Yet the larger question that remains is whether the state's political culture can reclaim space for broader engagement — where issues, ideas and inclusive policy debates regain prominence over binary partisanship.

For the voter in Bengal, the stakes are high. The choice is powerful, but in its current form, it is also constrained. What emerges from this contest will not only shape the next government but could set the tone for the nature of democratic discourse in the state for years to come. Whether West Bengal can move beyond a binary political trap into a more expansive and inclusive dialogue will be a key test of its democratic health.

Budget 2026: Election Commission Gets 25% Funding Boost Ahead of Major State Polls

In the Union Budget 2026-27, India's Election Commission has received a substantial increase in budgetary allocation, signalling enhanced support for the conduct of upcoming elections across the country. The increased funding comes at a crucial time, as several states — including Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala and others — gear up for Assembly polls over the next two years. This hike reflects the government's intention to ensure that electoral processes are well resourced and smoothly executed.

The Election Commission's total allocation for the next financial year has risen sharply from the previous year. The revised figures show that overall funding has jumped by roughly one quarter compared to the last budget, giving the poll body more financial muscle to manage election related activities. A large portion of this enhanced amount is earmarked specifically for election expenses, including logistics, staffing, technology and voter outreach, while the rest will be utilised for regular administrative and operational costs.

Election preparations in a country of India's size are complex undertakings involving millions of voters, thousands of polling stations and extensive coordination between central and state agencies. Adequate funding is critical to meeting these logistical challenges, especially as the Elections Commission works to maintain the integrity, transparency and fairness of the democratic process.

The timing of this budgetary boost — just months before major elections in several states — has drawn attention from political analysts and commentators. They note that increased allocations for the Election Commission are often closely watched because they can indicate the priority given to electoral preparedness and the credi-



bility of the democratic framework. With a voter base nearing 100 crore citizens, the scale of electoral operations is vast, and resources must match that scale to deliver efficient administration.

Budget support for the Election Commission typically covers a range of functions. It includes funds for setting up polling stations, hiring temporary election staff, public information cam-

paigns, and deploying electronic voting machines and other technologies designed to improve voting efficiency and accuracy. Voter education, especially in remote or newly enrolled voter segments, is another key area that benefits from increased financial backing.

In addition to operational funds, the budget also provides for related voter services, such as the issuance and maintenance of Election

Photo Identity Cards (EPICs). These cards are essential for voter authentication during elections and represent a significant part of the administrative workload. Funds for this purpose are shared between the central government and individual states based on their number of registered voters, ensuring that both levels of government contribute to the electoral infrastructure.

Officials involved in the budgeting process highlighted that part of the increase is intended to help the Election Commission prepare for the coming cycle of Assembly elections and the general environment of heightened electoral activity. Planning, training and logistics for such a large democratic exercise requires both foresight and flexibility, and the additional funds are expected to give the commis-

sion greater capacity to manage these responsibilities effectively.

Some observers see the allocation as more than just administrative support. In a federal democratic system, budgets often serve as an instrument of policy signalling. Enhanced funding for the Election Commission can be interpreted as an affirmation of the government's commitment to upholding election standards and supporting democratic institutions, especially when multiple high stakes state elections are on the horizon.

At the same time, the increase may draw political scrutiny. Opposition parties occasionally raise questions about how funds are managed and whether resource allocations could influence electoral processes. However, election bodies in India operate with statutory independence, and budget provisions for their work are usually designed to bolster their capacity rather than dictate outcomes.

The allocation comes amid other key budget decisions, as the government balances fiscal discipline with economic priorities such as infrastructure investment, social welfare, health and education. While general tax slabs and many subsidy structures remained relatively unchanged, areas such as capital expenditure and strategic sector support received attention from policymakers in this year's budget.

For the Election Commission, the funding boost represents a recognition of the enormous task ahead. With multiple state polls in the near term and considerable organisational demands, having robust financial backing helps the commission focus on delivering free, fair and efficient elections. For voters across the country, it means that the democratic process is being resourced at a level designed to meet the challenges of administering elections at an unprecedented scale.

Madhya Pradesh Farmers Feel Let Down by Budget 2026: Why Expectations Didn't Match Reality

When the Union Budget 2026-27 was presented earlier this week, farmers in Madhya Pradesh — one of India's largest and most productive agricultural states — reacted with disappointment and frustration. Despite the government's emphasis on agriculture and rural development, many farmers in the state feel that the Budget failed to address their most pressing problems and fell short of long standing demands.

Madhya Pradesh plays a vital role in India's food basket, producing vast quantities of wheat, pulses and soybeans. Many local farmers had hoped this year's Budget would include concrete steps to improve income security, procurement policies and market support. Instead, the measures announced seemed distant from the daily realities of farm life in much of the state.

One of the biggest grievances among farmers is that the Budget did not provide assurances on fair prices for staple crops like wheat and soybean. Farmers had hoped for stronger backing for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system, particularly guaranteeing to purchase at MSP levels that cover their costs and ensure a reasonable profit. Instead, the announcements focused on newer or niche crop promotion schemes — for example, incentives for cultivating coconut, sandalwood, almonds and cashew nuts. While such diversification efforts may benefit some, many farmers feel these do not apply to their existing land, experience and soil conditions. As one farmer put it, they are told to grow plantation crops like almonds, but their farms are suited to staples like wheat and soy — crops central to feeding the country every day.

The frustration runs deeper among younger farmers who had pinned their hopes on the Budget delivering tangible support that would lift agricultural incomes and improve market stability. Many said they felt "handled something shiny but useless": promises of new crop schemes without price or market guarantees that could help them meet the cost of production.

Another disappointment cited by farmers is the absence of any increase in direct support amounts under schemes such as the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. This income support programme has been a lifeline for many marginal and small farmers, and there were expectations that the assistance amount or eligibility threshold would be expanded in line with rising input costs and inflation. The omission of significant enhancements here left many feeling overlooked.

Beyond pricing, farmers also highlighted concerns about market infrastructure and procurement mechanisms. They argue that



without reliable, state supported procurement at MSP — especially for key staples — they are often forced to sell at distress prices in local markets. This has been exacerbated by insufficient storage and handling facilities, which puts downward pressure on prices during peak harvest seasons.

Political voices in the state echoed farmers' disappointment, pointing out that earlier budget promises often did not translate into meaningful relief on the ground. Critics argued that despite repeated declarations of years dedicated to farmers, the actual benefits reaching cultivators have been limited. Local leaders stressed that broader issues such as rural employment schemes, irrigation support and water supply infrastructure — all central to farming success — require more focused and higher funding allocations than what the Budget proposed.

There were also concerns that the Budget's agricultural focus leaned too heavily toward technological and export oriented solutions, while neglecting the structural challenges faced every season, from unpredictable rainfall to escalating costs of fertiliser, seeds and diesel.

In contrast, some political leaders from the ruling party hailed the Budget as pro-farmer and development oriented, highlighting initiatives aimed at strengthening rural growth and economic opportunities. Yet, for many farmers themselves, these high level narratives did little to mask the gap between policy language and their everyday struggles.

For the farming community in Madhya Pradesh, the Budget 2026 will be remembered not as a breakthrough but as another cycle of unmet expectations. With major state elections on the horizon, the disappointment among such a crucial voter base could have wider political implications. But for now, in the fields and markets across the state, farmers are clear about what they want more urgently: price security, reliable procurement, better infrastructure and direct relief that reflects the true cost of farming life.

Mass 'Save Manipur' Rally Demands Resettlement of Displaced People and Preservation of Unity



Thousands of people from across Manipur's diverse communities took to the streets of Imphal in a massive demonstration calling for peace, resettlement of those displaced by prolonged conflict, and the preservation of the state's territorial integrity. Organisers described it as one of the largest public rallies in recent years, bringing together people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, reflecting deep concern over the humanitarian and political impact of unrest in the region.

The rally, known locally as the 'Save Manipur' march, was organised by an umbrella body of civil society groups. Participants assembled at Tiddim Ground and marched nearly five kilometres to Thou Ground, carrying placards and raising slogans such as "Stop proxy war," "Long live Manipur," and "No compromise on Manipur's integrity." Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have lived in relief camps since ethnic violence erupted also joined the march, walking alongside people from different communities including Meitei Muslims, tribal groups, and others.

Throughout the rally, demonstrators stressed their demand for a clear and time-bound plan to resettle displaced families and ensure their safe return. Manipur has seen widespread displacement since ethnic violence broke out in May 2023, leaving tens of thousands uprooted from their homes and reliant on camps or temporary shelter arrangements. Despite ongoing government efforts to rehabilitate IDPs, many protesters argued that progress has been slow, and they want faster action with accountability and dignity for those affected.

A major theme of the protest was also preserving Manipur's territorial and administrative unity. Activists and rally participants expressed strong opposition to any proposals or perceived moves that could

fragment the state or alter its current administrative boundaries. Many believe that debates over separate administrative arrangements for certain communities risk undermining Manipur's cohesion and long-term stability. This concern was reflected in chants and statements throughout the march, as well as in resolutions adopted at the rally's conclusion, which reaffirmed a unified Manipur as a non-negotiable priority.

The public meeting that followed the march resulted in a series of resolutions being issued. Key among them were demands that the central and state governments abrogate the existing Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreements with certain armed groups — which some residents allege have allowed militant activity to continue unchecked — and enact stronger measures against cross border arms and narcotics flows that

can fuel local tensions. Protesters also urged authorities to recognise and address their perception that the situation has been portrayed narrowly as an ethnic clash rather than a wider crisis with deeper roots and responsibilities.

The involvement of IDPs in the rally was particularly significant. Many of those displaced have been living in uncertainty for months, with disruptions to their livelihoods, education for their children, and community life. Their participation highlighted the human cost of ongoing instability and put pressure on policymakers to accelerate efforts to return these families to their homes with adequate support for rebuilding and recovery.

The demonstration also had an immediate effect on daily life in Imphal, with businesses, schools, and colleges observing closures in response to calls for

solidarity from civil society leaders. Organisers and many participants emphasised that the rally was peaceful, meant to send a clear message to authorities that the people of Manipur — across ethnic and cultural lines — want peace, stability, and a future where all communities can live and work together.

As political leaders and government officials respond to these public demands, the rally adds new urgency to discussions about peacebuilding, governance, and humanitarian relief in Manipur. The large turnout underscored just how deeply the conflict's effects are felt by ordinary citizens, and how crucial it is for coordination between state and central authorities to address both the immediate needs of displaced people and the broader structural issues that have fuelled the crisis.

Canada Issues Warning to International Students Over Study Permit Scams and Five-Year Entry Bans

Canada continues to be one of the most sought-after destinations for international students, attracting thousands each year with its high-quality education system, post-study work opportunities and inclusive society. However, Canadian immigration authorities have issued a strong warning to prospective students, urging them to exercise extreme caution while applying for study permits. The warning highlights growing concerns over fraud, misinformation and scams that could lead not only to visa rejection but also to a five-year ban on entering Canada.

The alert comes amid a rise in cases where students have unknowingly submitted false or misleading information in their applications, often due to reliance on unlicensed agents or fraudulent intermediaries. Canadian authorities have made it clear that applicants are fully responsible for the accuracy of their applications — even if they have hired a consultant or third party to assist them. Any form of misrepresentation, intentional or otherwise, can result in severe consequences.

To study in Canada for a long-term programme, foreign nationals must obtain a study permit. The process begins with securing a letter of acceptance from a recognised Designated Learning Institution (DLI). Without this official acceptance, a study permit application cannot proceed. Once the letter is obtained, applicants must sub-



mit their documents along with the required processing fee, which is fixed and publicly listed.

Immigration officials have stressed that no legitimate government official will ever ask for extra money, promise guaranteed approvals, or offer faster processing in exchange for unofficial fees. Despite this, many students fall victim to scams through social media, messaging apps and unofficial websites that claim to provide "guaranteed visas" or "special immigration packages." These often involve forged admission letters, fake financial documents or incorrect personal information — all of

which can trigger misrepresentation charges.

Submitting false documents or misleading details is treated as a serious offence under Canadian immigration law. If authorities find discrepancies or fraudulent elements in an application, the study permit can be refused immediately. In more serious cases,

the applicant may be banned from entering Canada for up to five years. Such a ban can also negatively impact future visa applications to other countries, as immigration records are often shared internationally.

To counter these risks, Canadian authorities have strengthened their verifica-

tion systems. Educational institutions are now required to confirm acceptance letters directly, reducing the chances of forged documents being used. Applications are also being scrutinised more carefully, with enhanced checks on financial proof, academic history and intent to study.

The increased vigilance has

led to a noticeable rise in refusal rates, particularly among applicants whose documentation does not meet requirements or shows signs of inconsistency. While this has raised concerns among genuine students, officials maintain that these measures are necessary to protect the integrity of Canada's education and immigration systems.

Prospective students are strongly advised to apply through official government portals or seek help only from authorised representatives such as licensed immigration consultants or lawyers. All application forms, instructions and guidelines are available online free of cost, and no third party is required to access them. Students are encouraged to double-check all documents before submission and ensure that every detail is truthful and verifiable.

Canada's warning serves as a reminder that shortcuts in the immigration process can be costly. While studying abroad is a major investment and life decision, rushing through applications or trusting unverified agents can lead to long-term consequences. By staying informed, following official procedures and avoiding dubious offers, students can protect themselves and pursue their educational goals safely and legitimately.

In an increasingly competitive global education landscape, Canada's message is clear: honesty, preparation and caution are essential — and cutting corners could cost years of opportunity.

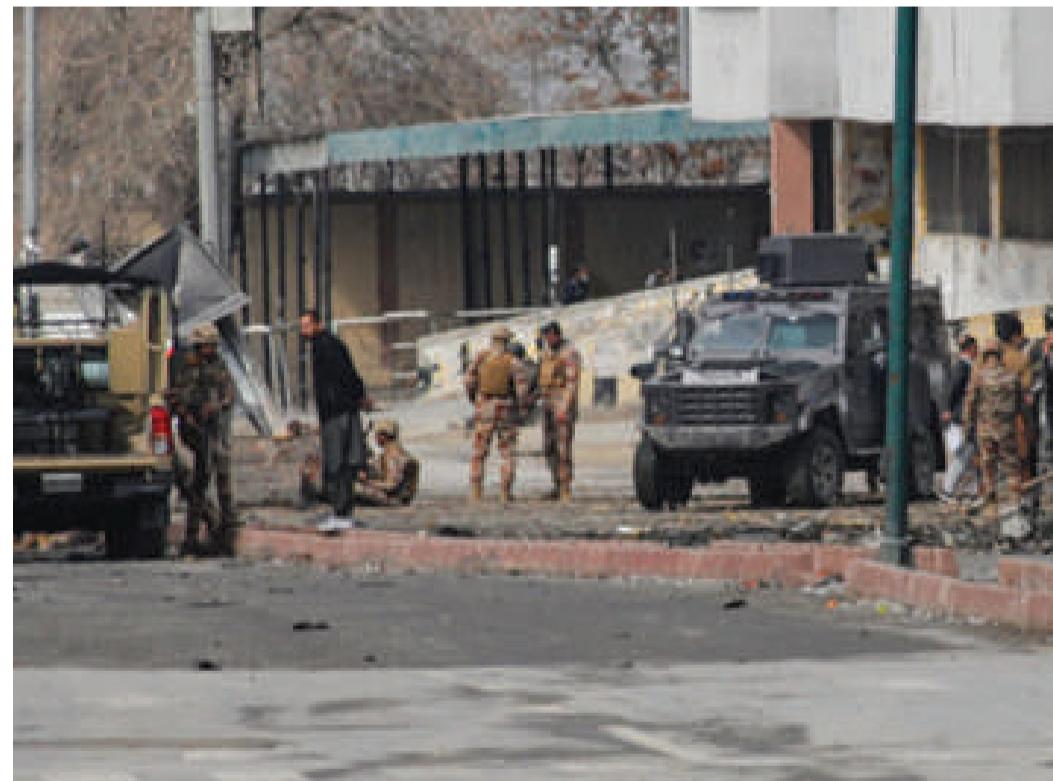
Deadly Militant Assaults Rock Balochistan as Security Forces Mount Major Counter-Offensive

A wave of coordinated militant attacks in Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan has plunged the region into one of its most intense periods of violence in years, claiming dozens of lives and prompting an aggressive response from the country's security forces. The assault, described by officials as highly organised and wide-ranging, targeted civilians, police, paramilitary units and strategic installations across multiple districts, underscoring the ongoing challenges Pakistan faces from separatist insurgency within its borders.

The militant offensive unfolded over recent days as fighters launched simultaneous strikes in several major towns and cities, including the provincial capital and key locations along major transport and administrative routes. The attacks — involving both gunfire and suicide bombings — were among the most complex seen in the region for a long time, with assailants attempting to overrun police stations, storm a high-security prison, and disrupt communication and transport infrastructure in a concerted effort to destabilise the province.

According to Pakistani military and provincial officials, dozens of civilians and law enforcement personnel were killed in the initial wave of violence. Security forces responded swiftly, engaging in intense clashes with the militants that extended across a broad swath of Balochistan. In the ensuing counter-operations, the military reported that a significant number of militants were killed as troops, police and special operations units worked to regain control of affected areas and prevent further advances. The scale of militant casualties was described by local authorities as one of the largest in a single confrontation in recent years, reflecting both the ferocity of the clashes and the intensity of the security response.

The insurgent group that claimed responsibility for the attacks is the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a banned separatist organisation that



has been active in the province for decades. The BLA has long campaigned for greater autonomy and control over Balochistan's substantial natural resources, and its fighters have regularly clashed with Pakistani forces in an enduring conflict marked by periodic escalations.

In this latest assault, the group reportedly initiated operations across several districts at nearly the same time, demonstrating a high degree of coordination and planning. Among the dead were civilians who were caught in the crossfire or targeted during attacks on public spaces, as well as members of police and paramilitary forces who were defending key installations. The violence also sparked secondary threats and disruptions, with hospitals in several districts placed on emergency footing to handle the influx of casualties and train and transport services temporarily suspended in the most affected areas. Reports also emerged of militants freeing inmates from at least one prison facility during the chaos of the assault, further complicating the security situation and heightening

concerns about wider unrest.

In response to the attacks, Pakistan's leadership condemned the violence and praised the bravery of its security personnel, while emphasising a firm resolve to counter insurgent threats.

High-level officials underscored that the coordinated nature of the attacks would not succeed in weakening state authority, and vowed sustained pressure against militant networks. In strategic locations where clashes occurred, including urban centres and remote districts, security forces launched extensive clearance operations to flush out residual fighters and re-establish order.

The scale and intensity of these attacks have drawn international attention, with observers noting that Balochistan's long-running insurgency remains a significant internal security challenge for Pakistan. The province, rich in untapped natural resources and strategically located along major trade routes, has been plagued for years by separatist militancy and periodic outbreaks of violence. Militants have used both guer-

illa tactics and sophisticated assaults against government and security targets, continually testing the capabilities of Pakistan's counter-insurgency apparatus.

While the recent offensive appears to have been pushed back through decisive action by the state's forces, the situation remains tense. The sheer number of locations hit during the assault suggests that militant groups retain the ability to coordinate operations across large geographic areas, raising concerns about future outbreaks. Security experts warn that without addressing underlying political and economic grievances in the region, such flare-ups could recur, threatening wider stability.

As Balochistan works to return to normalcy, the government's emphasis remains on restoring security, ensuring civilian safety and preventing further insurgent activity. For ordinary residents, the cycle of violence and counter-operations serves as a stark reminder of the persistent instability in their province and the heavy human cost that accompanies it.

Why Donetsk Remains Central to Russia–Ukraine Peace Talks and Putin's Negotiating Strategy

As diplomatic efforts to end the prolonged conflict between Russia and Ukraine continue, one issue has consistently emerged as a major stumbling block: the future of the Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine. Despite renewed attempts at dialogue involving international mediators, the question of territorial control — particularly over Donetsk — remains one of the most difficult challenges to resolving the war.

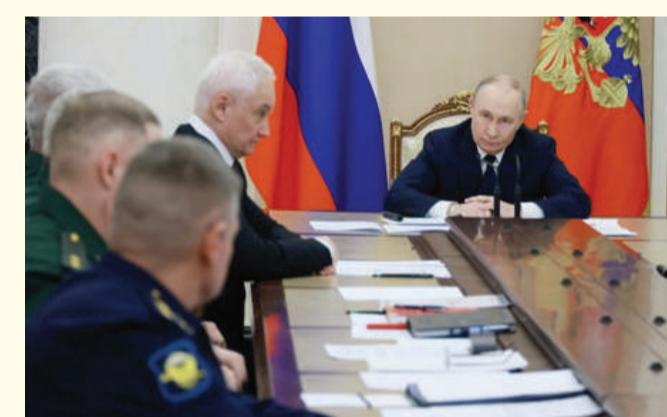
Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has seized large portions of eastern and southern Ukrainian territory. Among these areas, Donetsk holds particular strategic, political and symbolic importance for Moscow. Although Russian forces control much of the region, Ukraine still retains pockets of territory there, making Donetsk a contested zone rather than a settled front. This incomplete control is central to why the region features so prominently in peace negotiations.

For Russian President Vladimir Putin, full control over Donetsk is viewed as a core objective of the war. Moscow has repeatedly indicated that any peace agreement must recognise Russia's claims over territories it says are now part of the Russian Federation. From the Kremlin's perspective, resolving the Donetsk issue is essential to legitimising its military campaign and presenting a tangible outcome to domestic audiences.

Ceding this demand would weaken Russia's negotiating position and undercut the narrative of success that has been built around the conflict.

Ukraine, however, sees the matter very differently.

For Kyiv, surrendering any territory it still controls is unacceptable, both legally and politically. Ukrainian leaders argue that giving up land under pressure would violate the country's constitution, undermine sovereignty



and set a dangerous precedent for future aggression. Public opinion in Ukraine strongly supports this stance, with many citizens viewing territorial concessions as a betrayal of those who have fought and died defending the country.

The dispute over Donetsk encapsulates the broader deadlock in peace talks. While negotiators may find common ground on humanitarian issues, prisoner exchanges or temporary ceasefires, territorial sovereignty remains a red line for both sides.

Efforts to explore compromise solutions — such as freezing current frontlines or deferring territorial decisions — have so far failed to bridge the gap.

Donetsk's importance is not only political but also military. Control over the region affects supply routes, defensive depth and leverage on the battlefield. For Russia, consolidating its hold would strengthen its strategic position in eastern Ukraine. For Kyiv, retaining control over remaining areas in Donetsk is crucial to preventing further advances and maintaining bargaining power in negotiations.

Beyond territorial claims, the Donetsk issue is linked to broader security concerns. Russia has tied its demands to conditions about Ukraine's future alignment, including opposition to Western military alliances and security guarantees.

Ukraine, on the other hand, insists that any peace agreement must include safeguards to prevent renewed aggression. These competing visions further complicate talks and make compromise more elusive.

International mediators continue to push for dialogue, arguing that a negotiated settlement is preferable to an indefinite conflict. However, even they acknowledge that the disagreement over Donetsk is one of the hardest obstacles to overcome. Without a breakthrough on territorial questions, progress on other aspects of peace remains limited.

Putin's strategy appears to rely on maintaining territorial demands as leverage, betting that prolonged pressure will eventually force concessions. Ukraine, meanwhile, hopes that continued resistance and international support will preserve its territorial integrity and strengthen its position over time. This fundamental clash of objectives explains why peace has proven so difficult to achieve.

As things stand, Donetsk represents more than a region on the map — it symbolises the wider conflict over sovereignty, security and the post-war order in Europe. Until both sides find a way to reconcile these opposing goals, the prospects for a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement will remain uncertain.

Budget 2026 Brings Relief for Cancer Patients: Duty Exemption Aims to Cut Treatment Costs

In a significant move aimed at reducing the financial burden of cancer care, the Union Budget 2026-27 announced the exemption of basic customs duty on 17 critical cancer drugs, making some of the most expensive treatments more affordable for patients across the country. This decision is part of a broader effort by the government to improve access to essential medicines and ease the out-of-pocket expenses faced by families battling cancer and other life threatening diseases.

The Finance Minister emphasised that the measure is intended to provide relief to patients, particularly those undergoing long and costly treatment regimens. Many advanced cancer therapies rely on imported medications, including targeted therapies, immunotherapies and cell based therapies, which often come with steep price tags once customs duties and other levies are added. By removing the basic customs duty on these 17 drugs, the government hopes to lower the final cost faced by hospitals and patients, enabling broader access to life saving treatments.

The list of medicines covered under the duty exemption includes high cost oncology drugs that are commonly used in the treatment of various cancers, such as breast, lung, prostate cancer, leukaemias, lymphomas and melanoma. For many of these therapies, imported formulations are the only or most effective treatment option available, and their affordability has been a major concern for clinicians and patients alike.

Cancer treatment in India is frequently financed through personal savings or family support, as insurance coverage for



advanced therapies remains limited. With treatment cycles costing several lakhs of rupees per month and some specialised therapies costing much more, removing customs duty is expected to deliver immediate financial relief and reduce one key component of overall treatment costs. This is particularly important for targeted therapies, which are designed to work on specific molecular pathways in cancer cells and can dramatically improve survival and quality of life.

In addition to the cancer drug duty exemption, the Budget also expanded duty free import provisions for medicines and specialised nutrition products used in the treatment of rare diseases. Seven additional rare diseases were included in the list eligible for customs duty exemption on personal imports of drugs, medicines, and food for special medical purposes. Patients suffering from rare genetic or chronic conditions often depend on imported medications and nutritional products that

are not readily manufactured domestically, and exemptions can help lessen the financial burden these families face.

Healthcare experts and industry leaders welcomed the move, noting that it aligns with broader health policy goals of improving affordability and access to advanced treatments. Removing customs duty on essential drugs can make a meaningful difference for patients with limited financial resources — especially those dealing with prolonged and complex treatment journeys. There is

also optimism that lower import costs could encourage wider availability of these medicines in cancer centres and hospitals across India.

The decision comes at a time when non-communicable diseases like cancer are on the rise, and the demand for sophisticated treatments is increasing. India's cancer burden has been growing steadily, and advanced therapies have become an integral part of treatment protocols. By intervening at the level of import taxation, the government is at-

tempting to tackle one of the structural cost barriers that has historically limited access to these therapies for many patients.

This tax relief measure builds on earlier efforts by the government to support healthcare affordability. Previous budgets had already provided duty exemptions on select critical medicines and devices, and this year's expansion marks another step in that direction. Beyond tax exemptions, the Budget includes other health sector initiatives aimed at

strengthening healthcare infrastructure, training allied health professionals, and enhancing regulatory frameworks to support domestic drug manufacturing and innovation — all geared toward improving patient outcomes and health system resilience.

While the full impact of the customs duty waiver will depend on implementation and the extent to which cost savings are passed on to patients, the policy has been welcomed by many as a patient centric step. Clinicians point out that even modest reductions in treatment costs can improve adherence to therapy, reduce financial distress and ultimately contribute to better survival outcomes. Lower costs can also help broaden access to advanced treatments outside major metropolitan centres, potentially reducing disparities in care across regions.

In summary, the Budget's decision to exempt basic customs duty on 17 high cost cancer drugs represents a significant policy shift toward making cancer care more affordable and accessible. By easing one of the financial barriers to critical medicines, the government aims to support patients and families affected by cancer and rare diseases, aligning fiscal policy with broader public health objectives. As India continues to grapple with the rising burden of non-communicable diseases, such targeted interventions could play an important role in reducing financial hardship and improving the overall health landscape for vulnerable populations.

Budget Day Shock: Indian Markets Slide as Sensex Drops Over 1,500 Points and Nifty Slips Below 24,900



Indian stock markets reacted sharply to the presentation of the Union Budget 2026-27, with benchmark indices tumbling in what turned out to be one of the most dramatic market responses on a Budget day in recent years. The BSE Sensex plunged by more than 1,500 points, while the NSE Nifty 50 slipped below the 24,900 mark, as investor optimism gave way to disappointment and uncertainty following the fiscal announcements.

The downturn in equity markets was broad-based, with most sectors ending the day in the red. Only a few pockets of the market, such as select information technology stocks, managed modest gains, but these were insufficient to offset the widespread selling pressure across key segments like metal, banking, oil & gas, and capital goods. The steep fall underscored how sensitive Dalal Street remains to policy signals and how quickly market sentiment can deteriorate when expectations are not met.

One of the key triggers of the sell-off was the increase in the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) on equity derivatives trades, particularly futures and options. Traders and investors reacted negatively to the decision to raise this levy, as it significantly raises the cost of trading in the derivatives segment — a market that accounts for a large portion of turnover on Indian exchanges. Increases in STT were seen as a dampener on liquidity and trading activity, especially among frequent traders and institutional participants who rely on the derivatives market for hedging and arbitrage.

When markets opened for trade during a rare special weekend session on Budget

day, the mood was already cautious, with indices showing modest weakness in early deals. However, the mood shifted sharply after key announcements were made in the Finance Minister's budget speech. As the implications of higher trading costs became clearer, selling intensified and indices sank further, erasing weeks of recent gains.

By the close of the session, the Sensex was down by around 1.88 per cent, reflecting heavy selling across sectors. The Nifty 50 also fell sharply, with benchmark stocks feeling the pressure as investors reassessed their positions. Midcap and small-cap segments underperformed the main indices, with both registering steeper declines — a sign that riskier segments were hit even harder as market breadth weakened.

Sectoral performance also painted a grim picture. Banking shares — typically among the most traded — came under pressure, while metal stocks suffered some of the largest percentage losses of the day. Oil and gas, capital goods and other cyclical sectors were also in the red, reflecting broad-based risk aversion among investors. Large numbers of stocks touched new 52-week lows, highlighting the depth of the sell-off.

Despite the overall negativity, a handful of defensive and quality names bucked the trend. Select IT and healthcare stocks managed

to hold their ground or post modest gains, driven by their relative stability in volatile conditions. However, their performance was not enough to lift the broader market.

Investors have expressed disappointment not only about the STT hikes but also about the absence of bold, growth-oriented measures that could have provided a clearer boost to economic activity and corporate earnings. Many market participants were looking for incentives aimed at boosting investment, attracting foreign capital or encouraging expansion — none of which featured prominently in the fiscal announcements. The lack of strong pro-market measures, combined with higher trading costs, weighed on sentiment.

The market reaction also highlighted broader concerns over liquidity and foreign investment flows. With global market conditions remaining fragile and foreign institutional investors already showing caution in previous months, any fiscal moves perceived as unfriendly to trading or investment can exacerbate outflows or reduce participation.

Overall, Dalal Street's steep slide on Budget day reflects a combination of policy disappointment, increased trading costs and investor caution. While the long-term implications of the budget on economic growth and corporate profits will take time to play out, the immediate reaction makes clear that markets were hoping for more supportive signals. In the near term, investors are likely to remain cautious and focused on how corporates and the broader economy respond to the fiscal direction set by the government.

In addition to higher transaction costs, uncertainty around foreign institutional investor (FII) flows weighed on sentiment. Markets were already under pressure before the Budget as global volatility and emerging market outflows had put risk assets on the defensive. The combination of external headwinds with the Budget's micro level tax changes resulted in inten-

Budget 2026's Market Impact: Analysts See a Mix of Positives and Negatives for Stocks



The Union Budget 2026-27 has triggered sharp reactions across Indian stock markets, with investors and analysts dissecting its implications for equities. While the overall economic framework introduced by the government contains elements that can support long-term growth, several fiscal measures have unsettled traders and dampened near-term sentiment. The result has been a mixed bag for Dalal Street, with both positive themes and significant concerns emerging from the Budget announcements.

Immediate Market Reaction: Nervous Sentiment and Sell Off

Equity markets saw notable weakness on and immediately after Budget day. Benchmarks such as the Sensex and the Nifty experienced broad-based declines as investors quickly priced in the impact of key budget measures. A sharp increase in the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) on derivatives trading — particularly in futures and options segments — triggered heavy selling pressure, as market participants reassessed the cost of active trading. This move raised trading expenses for frequent traders, arbitrageurs and hedgers, contributing to reduced liquidity and higher impact costs. Many analysts view the STT hike as one of the major negatives for markets, especially in the short term, as it could dampen participation and trading volumes in the derivatives space.

In addition to higher transaction costs, uncertainty around foreign institutional investor (FII) flows weighed on sentiment. Markets were already under pressure before the Budget as global volatility and emerging market outflows had put risk assets on the defensive. The combination of external headwinds with the Budget's micro level tax changes resulted in inten-

sified selling, particularly in financial and cyclical sectors.

Positives: Fiscal Discipline and Long Term Growth Themes

Not all reactions have been negative. Several analysts highlighted aspects of the Budget that are supportive of long-term economic growth — and, by extension, stock markets.

One key positive is the government's continued emphasis on capital expenditure, especially in infrastructure, defence, and manufacturing. A sustained push on physical investment has the potential to generate broad economic activity, strengthen industrial capacity, and boost corporate earnings over time. Markets generally respond well to visible commitments to infrastructure outlays, as these can enhance growth prospects for sectors ranging from capital goods to logistics and engineering.

Fiscal prudence — maintaining overall deficit discipline even amid elevated capex — was also seen by some strategists as reassuring for markets. Stability in public finances can help keep in-

flationary pressures and interest rates in check, which benefits equity valuations in the longer term. Analysts noted that a thoughtful balance between growth-oriented spending and responsible fiscal management could support investor confidence over time, even if the immediate market reaction was volatile.

Another potential positive noted by experts relates to sectoral focus areas highlighted in the budget. Strategic attention to technology, manufacturing, renewable energy and export-oriented businesses could unlock opportunities in these segments, especially if backed by incentives, policy clarity and improved infrastructure. Stocks aligned with these themes may find themselves better positioned as government spending and policies gradually translate into measurable economic outcomes.

Key Concerns: Trading Costs, Liquidity and Near Term Pain

Despite the positives, several concerns raised by analysts relate to investor psychology and market mechanics rather than broader macro fundamentals. The sharp hike in derivatives

transaction costs is likely to discourage participation from high-frequency traders and certain foreign funds that rely heavily on liquid, low-cost market structures. Reduced activity in futures and options may also have knock-on effects on underlying cash markets, making it harder for investors to manage risk.

Further, the lack of major tax incentives or reliefs — such as reductions in capital gains taxes that many in the market had hoped for — disappointed some investors. The absence of such measures, especially in a period marked by cautious foreign flows and volatile global equities, reinforced the perception that the Budget offers limited immediate support for stock valuations.

Looking Ahead: Markets Will Adjust Over Time

Analysts stress that while the initial reaction has been negative, broader market trends will depend on how corporates adapt to the new fiscal landscape and how key budget measures are implemented. Short-term volatility may persist as traders digest the implications of higher transaction costs and adjust positions accordingly.

However, longer-term trends could be shaped by the underlying growth narrative — especially if capital spending delivers tangible economic results and investor confidence gradually returns.

In summary, Budget 2026 presents both challenges and opportunities for the Indian stock markets. While certain tax changes and higher trading costs have spooked markets in the near term, structural priorities such as fiscal discipline and capex focus carry the potential to support growth-oriented sectors over time. The market's ultimate direction will likely emerge as the implications of policy choices play out in corporate earnings, investment flows, and broader economic momentum.

Kind Stranger's Help to Blind Couple in Delhi Touches Hearts and Goes Viral



A touching video of a man helping a blind couple and their young child has captured the hearts of social media users across the country. The clip, filmed on a busy road in Delhi, shows the couple struggling to navigate traffic as they try to board a bus, when a compassionate passerby steps in to assist them.

In the footage, the visually impaired couple can be seen standing on the roadside with their child, clearly finding it difficult to move forward amid honking vehicles and bustling crowds. While many bystanders hurry past, one man — later identified as Mohammad Salman — notices their distress and approaches them with genuine concern.

Salman gently asks the couple if he can help them get to where they're headed. The blind man responds that they want to catch a bus, explaining that their destination is near a monastery in the Kashmere Gate area. Realising that they might have difficulty finding transport and may not afford it, Salman quickly calls an autorickshaw for them.

Initially, the blind man hesitates, expressing concerns about paying the fare. Salman reassures him warmly and pays for the autorickshaw himself, making sure that the driver is ready to take the family safely to their destination. His calm and respectful manner throughout the interaction added to the emotional impact of the video.

The moment Salman offers help and successfully gets the couple into the autorickshaw struck a deep chord with viewers online. The video soon went viral, racking up over a million views within a short time and drawing hundreds of comments praising his

kindness. Many viewers applauded Salman's selfless act and lamented that more people don't take the time to look out for those in obvious need.

Social media users expressed admiration and gratitude, with some sharing heartfelt messages such as "May God bless you for helping those in need," and others reflecting on how society should do more to support specially abled citizens. Several people pointed out that the act was a reminder of the power of empathy in a world that often seems preoccupied with its own concerns.

The story didn't end with just the video going viral. After the attention the post received, viewers and followers of the video reached out with offers of financial support. The couple had needed a modest sum to manage their journey and basic needs, but within hours of the video being shared widely, generous donors contributed more than the required amount. This outpouring of support highlighted how one good deed can inspire many others to act with compassion.

Salman's intervention contrasts sharply with the indifference shown by others on the street at that moment, reminding people everywhere that small acts of kindness can make a big difference. His actions not only helped a family in distress but also sparked a wave of positive discussion online about humanity, empathy and community responsibility.

In a fast-paced world where people often rush past struggling strangers, this video became a powerful example of how a simple gesture — giving time, care and help to someone in need — can restore faith in human goodness.

Tiny Hole in Nail Clippers Triggers Online Curiosity and Debate



A simple everyday item — nail clippers — recently became the subject of lively discussion on social media after an online post drew attention to a small hole found in most designs. What many people had previously overlooked or assumed was merely decorative sparked curiosity, humour and debate as users shared their guesses about its true purpose before the actual explanation emerged.

The online buzz began with someone admitting in a public post that they had never known what the tiny hole on their nail clippers was for. This candid confession quickly attracted reactions and theories from across the internet. Some joked that the hole might be meant for storing clipped nails or even dental floss, while others offered more imaginative and humorous guesses.

As the conversation gained traction, more practical explanations started to appear. It turned out that the hole is not a random design feature, but rather a purposeful part of the clipper's design with several useful functions. One of the most common uses highlighted by users is attaching the nail clipper to everyday items so it doesn't get lost. By threading a key ring, lanyard or small chain through the hole, the clipper can be kept on a keychain, toiletry pouch or travel kit, making it easier to find and harder to misplace.

People found this explanation eye-opening — many admitted they had owned nail clippers for years and never paid attention to this small detail until the debate. Comments like "I'll

never look at my nail clippers the same way again" became common as users reflected on the simple yet ingenious purpose behind the tiny hole.

Beyond attachment to keychains, the hole also plays a practical role in everyday use for some. It can help organise grooming tools together, for example hooking multiple clippers (for fingernails and toenails) or hanging them inside cabinets. Some people even discovered that slipping a finger through the hole while clipping can provide extra grip or control, especially when trimming nails in awkward positions.

There's also a mechanical aspect to the design: the hole is part of how the clipper's lever and cutting mechanism rotate and align. In certain models, the hole can act as a pivot point, allowing the lever to be removed for cleaning or adjustment, and ensuring smooth operation each time it's used.

What captured people's attention wasn't just the function itself, but how something so small and so commonly overlooked could have a thoughtful purpose. It served as a reminder that even everyday objects we take for granted often have design features with clear intent and usefulness. The debate also highlighted how quickly small curiosities can spread online and lead to surprising "aha" moments for many users.

In the end, the tiny hole in a nail clipper became more than just a curiosity — it turned into a shared moment of discovery, humour and appreciation for the little details in the tools we use every day.

Budget 2026 Triggers Meme Storm as Social Media Has a Field Day During Sitharaman's Speech



Budget Day was not the announcements themselves, but the memes that followed. The phrase "Budget samajhna mushkil hai, memes samajhna aasan" summed up the sentiment for many.

The Finance Minister's calm and composed delivery style also became meme material, with users pairing screenshots from the speech with witty captions reflecting everyday frustrations or sarcastic commentary on household expenses. Some memes focused on the gap between public expectations and policy outcomes, while others adopted a lighter tone, celebrating the internet's ability to find humour even in serious moments.

Well-known public figures and entrepreneurs also joined the online chatter, adding to the buzz with their own reactions. Stock market movements following the budget announcements became another popular meme subject, with exaggerated expressions and dramatic visuals used to depict gains, losses and investor emotions.

Despite the humour, the Budget 2026 speech itself addressed significant issues such as economic growth, infrastructure development, employment generation and long-term fiscal planning. However, for many citizens following the event online, memes served as an accessible way to engage with the budget, making a traditionally formal exercise feel relatable and participatory.

The meme frenzy around Budget 2026 once again highlighted how social media has become an integral part of public discourse in India. What was once limited to post-budget debates among economists and politicians is now instantly interpreted, critiqued and celebrated by millions online — often with humour leading the way.

In the digital age, even the most serious policy announcements are no longer immune to satire. Budget Day 2026 proved that while numbers may define the economy, memes define the mood of the nation.

US-Based Techie Shines Light on Indians' Talent, Counters Online Stereotypes

A New York-based tech professional recently drew widespread attention online after speaking out in defence of his Indian colleagues and challenging negative stereotypes circulating on social media about Indians in the technology industry.

The exchange began when an anonymous user on a popular social platform posted a critical comment suggesting that Indian professionals tend to exaggerate the urgency of their tasks and labelled them as generally incompetent.

In response, the tech employee — a software engineer working in the United States — took the unusual step of publicly refuting these claims and offering a very different perspective based on his first-hand experience.

In his reply, the engineer highlighted that many of the people he works with in his team are Indian, including his team lead, his direct manager, and senior leaders above them. He pointed out that these colleagues are not only highly skilled and knowledgeable about

their work, but also cooperative, communicative, and enjoyable to work with. According to him, these interactions completely contradict the stereotype painted in the anonymous post, and he made it clear that he has never encountered Indians who fit the negative portrayal cited by the critic.

He emphasised that competence and skill are not dependent on nationality, and he questioned the validity of making sweeping generalisations about any group of professionals. In fact, he noted that in his experience — both in his current role and in previous jobs — he has consistently found Indian colleagues to be sharp, capable and strong contributors to their teams.

Many people who saw his response online reacted positively, praising him for standing up against prejudice and for offering a balanced, evidence-based perspective. Supporters echoed his belief that sweeping stereotypes are harmful and do not re-

flect the diversity of talent found in today's global workplaces. Several commenters also pointed out that negative generalisations about any national, identity or ethnic group create unnecessary divisions and undermine efforts to foster inclusive professional spaces.

Others said that his message was a refreshing change from the usual negativity that can sometimes dominate social media discussions, especially around topics of race, na-

tionality and competence in the workplace. Some users remarked that personal experience and direct interaction with individuals from different backgrounds often paint a far more nuanced picture than broad stereotypes.

The engineer's comments also prompted broader conversations about diversity and inclusivity in the tech industry, with many people noting the valuable contributions that Indian professionals have made

to global technology organisations. His perspective underscored how critical it is to challenge unfounded assumptions and to recognise merit where it exists.

In an era where social media can quickly amplify negative narratives, the techie's response served as a reminder that thoughtful, respectful dialogue can still cut through bias and misinformation — and that personal testimony can be a powerful tool for changing minds.

Indian Man in Dubai Recovers Lost Wallet Within an Hour, Says He Was 'Shocked'



A man living in Dubai recently shared an experience that left him pleasantly surprised and quickly caught the attention of social media users. After accidentally losing his wallet during a taxi ride, he managed to recover it within just an hour — an outcome he described as both unexpected and reassuring.

According to the man,

who is originally from Lucknow, the incident occurred after he completed a cab journey in Dubai. Unaware that his wallet had slipped out of his pocket, he only realised it was missing sometime later. What could have turned into a stressful situation instead unfolded in an astonishingly smooth manner. The taxi driver found the wallet soon after the passenger had exited the vehicle. Instead of ignoring it or keeping it, the driver promptly handed the wallet over to the authorities. Thanks to the well-coordinated system in place, officials were able to trace the wallet's owner quickly and contact him without any hassle.

Unbeknownst to him,

ing it, the man was reunited with his wallet. Sharing the story online, he said he was "shocked" by how efficiently the entire process worked. Upon checking the contents, he noticed that almost everything was intact. Only a small amount of cash was missing, which he assumed was likely used to cover the taxi fare.

The post resonated strongly with online users, many of whom praised the honesty of the taxi driver and the efficiency of Dubai's public services. Several commenters highlighted how rare it is to recover lost belongings so quickly, especially items as important as a wallet containing cash and personal documents.

Others reflected on how strict enforcement of rules and a strong sense of accountability contribute to such outcomes. Many users contrasted the experience with similar situations in other countries, where lost wallets are often never recovered or take days or weeks to

trace. The story sparked a broader discussion about honesty, civic responsibility and the role of efficient systems in creating trust among residents and visitors. People shared their own experiences of losing valuables and expressed admiration for environments where returning lost items is the norm rather than the exception.

For the man, what could have been a moment of anxiety instead became a positive memory and a reminder of the benefits of living in a city with well-organised services and responsible citizens. He said the incident strengthened his belief that good systems, when combined with individual integrity, can make everyday life significantly easier.

In a world where losing personal belongings often leads to panic and frustration, this incident stood out as a heartening example of how honesty and efficiency can work together to deliver unexpectedly happy endings.

Pakistan Spinner Usman Tariq Fires Back After Cameron Green's 'Chucking' Gesture

A controversy flared during the second T20I between Pakistan and Australia when Australia's all-rounder Cameron Green appeared to signal his displeasure at the bowling action of Pakistan spinner Usman Tariq after being dismissed. The gesture — widely interpreted as an accusation that Tariq was "chucking" — quickly sparked debate online, with Tariq responding in his own style the following day.

The incident unfolded in Lahore during Pakistan's dominant 90 run win. Green had been batting well and looked poised to anchor Australia's chase before Tariq dismissed him. As Green walked off the field, broadcast cameras captured him making a motion with his arm that many fans interpreted as mocking Tariq's bowling action — implying that it resembled an illegal throw rather than a conventional spin delivery.

Usman Tariq reacted swiftly on social media. The Pakistan spinner posted an Instagram Story showing a clip of a child crying and captioned it "After getting out" with a laughing emoji, a clear jab at Green's visible frustration after losing his wicket. This move turned the on-field drama into a social media exchange, fueling



ching chatter among fans and pundits alike.

Tariq's bowling action has been unusual from the start, featuring a brief pause before release and a somewhat unconventional arm movement that has drawn attention before. He has been reported for a suspected illegal action on multiple occasions in domestic T20 leagues, and each time he underwent biomechanical testing. In every instance, cricket authorities cleared his action as legal, allowing him to continue bowling in professional competition.

Despite these clearances, sceptics remain vocal. Some critics argue that his unique style — with a distinctive arm movement that can look like a bent elbow — should be examined more closely, while others say such scrutiny is simply part of the game when someone bowls effectively. Supporters of Tariq point out that cricket's rules allow for natural variations in action as long as a bowler's elbow does not extend beyond permitted limits during delivery, and that official tests have validated his

action. The exchange between Green and Tariq has reignited the broader conversation about bowling actions in cricket. Bowling legality is a key part of maintaining fair play, and historically some bowlers with unusual deliveries have faced intense scrutiny. But in this case, Tariq's social media response — a humorous meme — shows how modern players can engage in light-hearted banter even as debates about technical legality continue.

Fans have taken to social

networks in droves to weigh in. Some backed Tariq, noting that his action has been cleared under formal testing and that Green's gesture was simply a display of frustration after getting out. Others criticised the post, arguing that mocking an opponent's reaction was unsportsmanlike. Still more commentators framed the incident as a reminder of how emotions run high in cricket, especially in heated rivalries and important series.

For Pakistan, Tariq's performance — including his key wicket of Green — was part of a dominant display that secured their series lead. But the off-field story has captured nearly as much attention as the on-field result, illustrating how even minor moments can take on a life of their own in the age of instant replay and social media.

As the series progresses, the discussion around Tariq's bowling action and Green's reaction is likely to continue. Whether it leads to further review by cricket's governing bodies or simply remains a flashpoint among fans, the episode highlights both the passion of players and the scrutiny that modern cricket attracts at every level.

Ganguly Warns India to 'Peak at the Right Time' Ahead of T20 World Cup 2026



As Team India gears up to defend its title at the T20 World Cup 2026, former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly has sent a clear message to the current squad: success in big tournaments isn't just about reputation or past achievements — it's about timing and performance when it matters most.

Ganguly's comments come at a crucial moment. India enters the marquee event as one of the favourite teams, having won the

previous edition and remaining unbeaten in several recent T20 International series. But the ex-skipper emphasised that large tournaments like the World Cup require more than just momentum. According to him, the most critical factor is the ability to peak at the right time: executing skill, strategy and teamwork precisely when the stakes are highest.

In a message widely shared through social media

in all departments — a powerful batting lineup, a balanced spin attack, and a seam bowling unit led by experienced bowlers. This combination, he believes, gives the team depth and flexibility, provided they harness that strength effectively during crucial matches.

While he backed India as a strong contender for the trophy, Ganguly's warning was not merely positive; it carried a strategic edge. He urged players to focus on consistency, sharpness and performance under pressure, rather than resting on laurels from previous victories. His remarks serve as a reminder that even top teams must continually adapt and improve, especially in formats as unpredictable as Twenty20 cricket.

Team India's preparation for the T20 World Cup has included a busy schedule of international fixtures, fitness work and tactical practice sessions. Under the leadership of captain Suryakumar Yadav, the squad has been building momentum, experimenting with combi-

nations and trying to address balance issues in both batting and bowling departments. Ganguly's message reinforces the idea that preparation must translate into peak form at the right moment.

For Indian fans and commentators, his warning adds an intriguing layer to the World Cup narrative. It suggests that while India is well placed on paper, its ultimate success will depend on how well it manages form, fitness and adaptability throughout the tournament. Staying sharp and delivering clutch performances — particularly in the knockout phases — will be essential if India hopes to lift the trophy again.

In summary, Ganguly's advice to India ahead of the T20 World Cup 2026 is straightforward but profound: don't rely on past glory, focus on performing when it counts, and aim to peak at the exact moment the world's biggest T20 stage demands it. As the countdown to the tournament continues, the message is one that players, coaches and fans alike will be keeping in mind.

No Handshake Between India and Pakistan Captains at Under-19 World Cup Toss



In a highly anticipated ICC Under-19 World Cup 2026 Super Six clash between India U-19 and Pakistan U-19, the customary pre-match handshake between captains at the coin toss was notably absent, highlighting the intense rivalry between the two sides. India's skipper, Ayush Mhatre, and Pakistan's captain, Farhan Yousaf, completed the formalities of the toss without the traditional exchange of pleasantries, continuing a trend seen in recent India-Pakistan cricket encounters.

Pakistan won the toss and opted to bowl first against India. With only one semifinal spot left in the Super Six group, both teams entered the match under pressure to win and keep their World Cup hopes alive.

Observers noted that skipping the handshake is

part of a broader pattern following India's senior men's team declining the traditional gesture against Pakistan during the 2025 Asia Cup amid heightened political tensions. Similar incidents have since oc-

curred in age group and development-level fixtures, including India A and Pakistan Shaheens matches.

The absence of the handshake drew attention because it is widely re-

garded as a symbol of mutual respect and sportsmanship in cricket. Fans reacted strongly on social media, with many seeing the gesture — or lack thereof — as emblematic of broader political and

emotional tensions surrounding India-Pakistan sporting contests. Even though the players are youth-level athletes, the weight of historical rivalry continues to influence such interactions.

Despite the missed handshake, focus quickly shifted back to the match itself.

India had been un-

beaten in the tournament

leading up to this clash,

while Pakistan had deliv-

ered mixed results in the

Super Six stage. This en-

counter was therefore piv-

otal in determining which

team would advance to the

semifinals.

The moment adds another chapter to the storied cricketing rivalry between India and Pakistan, demon-

Gavaskar Backs Ishan Kishan Over Sanju Samson for India's T20 World Cup XI



As India prepares for the T20 World Cup 2026, former captain Sunil Gavaskar weighed in on the ongoing debate over who should be India's wicketkeeper batter: Sanju Samson or Ishan Kishan. Gavaskar made it clear that current form is likely to influence the selectors' decision, suggesting that Kishan's recent performances give him the edge.

Gavaskar pointed out that Samson has had opportunities in recent matches but has struggled to capitalize, scoring only 46 runs in five innings during India's series against New Zealand. In contrast, Kishan has been in exceptional form, including a maiden T20I century and a string of impactful innings that have helped India gain early momentum. Gavaskar emphasized that in a high stakes tournament like the World Cup, it is crucial to back players in good form rather than persisting with those struggling for confidence.

The debate has been intensified by team management decisions, such as giving Kishan the gloves even when Samson was nominally designated as the wicketkeeper. Fans and analysts have voiced mixed opinions, with some emphasizing Samson's talent and experience, while others highlight Kishan's recent match-winning contributions and aggressive batting style.

Pakistan Trolled After Giving Vaibhav Suryavanshi Two Chances on One Ball in U19 World Cup



India's Under-19 batsman Vaibhav Suryavanshi was handed two lifelines off a single delivery during a high pressure ICC U19 World Cup 2026 Super Six match against Pakistan, a moment that quickly went viral on social media and became the subject of widespread jokes and memes.

The unusual sequence occurred early in India's innings. On the third ball of the eighth over, Suryavanshi attempted a big shot, top edging the ball into the air. A Pakistani fielder at short mid wicket failed to complete what should have been a routine catch, giving Suryavanshi his first reprieve.

Immediately after the drop, the fielding side had a second opportunity to dismiss him. The fielder's throw to the stumps came quickly, and Suryavanshi was out of his crease. However, the ball was not collected cleanly, and a run out chance was missed, allowing him to make his ground safely. This sequence gave him not one but two lifelines on the same ball, a rare occurrence in professional cricket.

Fans and commentators quickly reacted online, sharing the clip widely and mocking Pakistan's fielding effort. Many humorous posts labeled the incident as a "comical moment," highlighting how both a dropped catch and a missed run out unfolded in just

seconds, turning the delivery into a social media sensation.

Despite the double reprieve, Suryavanshi was dismissed on the very next delivery, caught by the wicketkeeper after scoring 30 runs off 22 balls, which included a few boundaries. While his innings showed promise, he was unable to capitalize on the fortunate moment to play a bigger, match-defining knock.

The match itself was crucial for both teams' semifinal aspirations, making every wicket significant. The twin reprieve incident, while amusing to spectators, highlighted how pressure and nerves can affect even trained fielders, especially in high-stakes India-Pakistan contests.

In the broader context of the tournament, the episode became a talking point among fans and analysts, with many noting that such unusual moments can influence momentum in youth cricket, where emotions run high and experience varies. For Suryavanshi and India, it was a missed opportunity to make the most of a rare advantage in an important game.

Ultimately, the double reprieve will be remembered as one of the quirky episodes of the U19 World Cup — a moment that provided laughter and commentary, even as the competitive stakes of the match remained high.

Creators of "Joe" Begin Shooting for New Film "Haiku"



After the critical and commercial success of Joe, its creators have officially kick-started shooting for their next project titled Haiku, starring Aegan in the lead. The film went on floors today, February 1, 2026, marking a significant milestone as global OTT giant Netflix has already secured the digital streaming rights even before the film's completion.

Netflix, known for its selective and content-focused acquisitions, backing Haiku at such an early stage has generated strong buzz within industry circles. The early acquisition reflects the platform's confidence in the film's narrative strength and creative team, making Haiku a rare case where digital rights were locked in without waiting for theatrical release or audience response.

The film's shoot commenced with a traditional pooja and first clap ceremony held at Eddiki. Renowned filmmaker

Ram, celebrated for acclaimed films such as Peranbu and Taramani, gave the inaugural clap and extended his warm wishes to the team, lending the project a prestigious and auspicious start.

Haiku is directed by Yuvaraj Chinnasamy and produced by Dr. D. Arulandhu and Mathew Arulanandhu under the Vision Cinema House banner. Adding further creative strength to the project, the film features additional screenplay by Hari Haran Ram, who earlier directed the well-received Joe. This collaboration has raised expectations that Haiku will continue the makers' reputation for emotionally rooted, content-driven cinema.

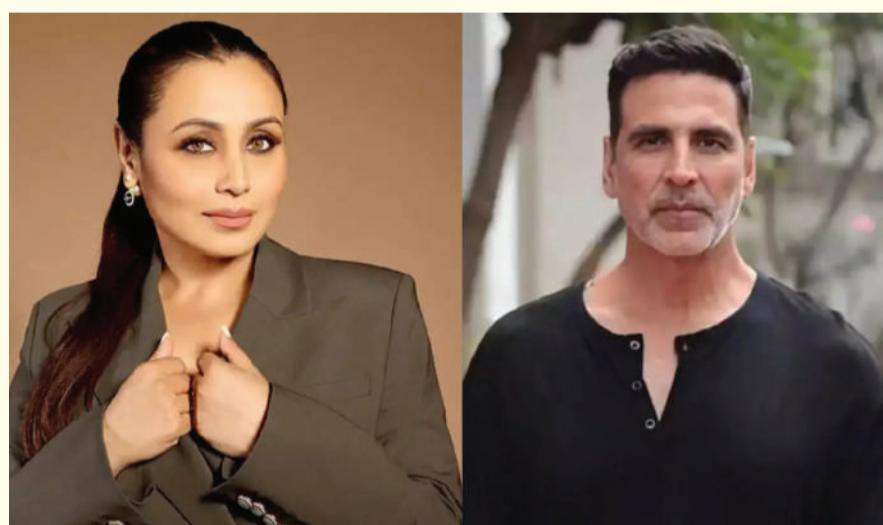
The technical crew brings together several talented names. Priyesh GuruSwamy serves as the Director of Photography, promising visually compelling storytelling, while Sakthi Pranesh handles editing duties. Music is composed by Vi-

jai Bulganin, who has previously impressed audiences with his work in films like Court and Baby, adding further weight to the project's creative credentials.

Leading the cast is Aegan, who earned praise for his performances in Joe and Kozhi Pannai ChellaDurai. He is joined by Femina George, known for her roles in Minnal Murali and SeSham Mike-il Fathima, and Sridevi Apalla, who recently appeared in Court. The ensemble promises a blend of strong performances and fresh on-screen dynamics.

With an experienced creative team, a promising cast, and Netflix's early endorsement, Haiku is shaping up to be one of the most anticipated Tamil films in the content-driven space. The makers have indicated that further updates regarding the film's progress and release plans will be announced in the coming months.

Akshay Kumar Hails Rani Mukerji as 'Goddess of Acting' as Mardaani 3 Roars at the Box Office



Bollywood star Akshay Kumar has come out in strong support of Rani Mukerji and her latest release Mardaani 3, praising her performance and urging audiences to watch the film in theatres. Taking to social media, Akshay described Rani as the "goddess of acting" and applauded her powerful portrayal in the film.

"Go watch the 'goddess' of acting in her most powerful avatar. I saw it. I loved it. Don't miss it!" Akshay wrote, adding to the growing wave of appreciation for the film.

Akshay's endorsement coincided with a thunderous opening day for Mardaani 3, which is

fast turning into a nationwide box office wildfire. The hard-hitting, message-oriented thriller exceeded all expectations on Day 1, registering the biggest opening ever for the Mardaani franchise as well as the highest opening for a solo Rani Mukerji film.

With exceptional audience response and solid critical acclaim, Mardaani 3 is expected to maintain strong momentum in the coming days. The film's success once again reinforces Rani Mukerji's stature as one of Indian cinema's most respected performers and highlights the box office potential of content-driven, female-centric films.

Fahadh Faasil's "Don't Trouble the Trouble" Goes on Floors in Hyderabad

Hyderabad turned into a hub of excitement as the shooting of Don't Trouble the Trouble officially commenced, marking Fahadh Faasil's direct foray into Telugu cinema. The film went on floors today amid a buzzing atmosphere, with fans gathering in large numbers at the shooting location to catch a glimpse of the acclaimed actor.

Adding to the celebratory mood, Fahadh Faasil briefly paused his shoot to warmly acknowledge the fans who had assembled. With his trademark humility, the actor greeted the crowd, triggering loud cheers and applause. The moment quickly became memorable, setting an energetic tone for the film's journey from day one.

Don't Trouble the Trouble is jointly produced by Arka Mediaworks and Showing Business, bringing together an impressive production team. The film marks the production debut of SS Karthikeya, a passionate producer who earlier made a strong mark as a distributor with the blockbuster Premal. Karthikeya is also associated with the much-anticipated big-ticket project Varanasi. Joining him are celebrated producers Shobu Yarlagadda and Prasad Devineni of Arka Mediaworks, globally renowned for delivering the iconic Baahubali franchise.

The film is helmed by debut-



tant director Shashank Yeleti, who is positioning Don't Trouble the Trouble as a fantasy entertainer layered with strong emotional depth and content-driven storytelling. With Fahadh Faasil headlining the project, expectations are naturally high, as audiences look forward to seeing the versatile performer bring his nuanced acting style to a Telugu narrative.

A short video clip from the sets has already gone viral on social media, featuring Fahadh Faasil alongside director

Shashank Yeleti and producer SS Karthikeya greeting fans during a night shoot. The clip has further amplified the buzz around the project, with many praising the team's grounded approach and the star's warmth toward his admirers.

Music for Don't Trouble the Trouble will be composed by Kaala Bhairava, whose background scores and songs have consistently added emotional weight and intensity to films. The technical and creative team is currently working on a tight

schedule, with plans to wrap up the shoot by April.

The makers are aiming for a grand theatrical release in the second half of 2026, promising a fresh cinematic experience that blends fantasy, emotion, and strong storytelling. With an acclaimed actor, a powerful production house, and a promising new director coming together, Don't Trouble the Trouble has already positioned itself as one of the most intriguing Telugu projects to watch out for in the coming year.

"Devagudi" Emerges as Audience-Backed Success



The recently released Telugu film Devagudi has emerged as a major success at the box office, earning appreciation from audiences across all sections. The film's director and producer, Bellam Sudha Reddy, attributed the achievement to strong content, positive word of mouth, and the unwavering support of viewers. The team celebrated the film's success

at a grand success meet held in Hyderabad.

Produced under the Pushyami Film Makers banner and presented by Bellam Sudha Reddy, Devagudi is written, directed, and produced by Bellam Sudha Reddy himself. The film features Abhinav Shauarya, Narasimha Toshi, Anu Sri, and Raghu Kunche in prominent roles. Released on Friday,

the film quickly gained momentum and has been running successfully with consistently positive reviews.

Speaking at the event,

Bellam Sudha Reddy expressed gratitude to the media and audiences for standing by the film.

He said the response has been overwhelmingly positive,

with viewers praising the gripping screenplay, ab-

undance of unnecessary lag, and strong production values. He noted that the action sequences, song picturization, and emotional depth have struck a chord with audiences. Special mention was made of Raghu Kunche's portrayal of Veerareddy, which has been widely hailed as one of the film's biggest highlights. Performances by Abhinav Shauarya, Narasimha Toshi, and Anu Sri have also received strong appreciation, with many viewers reportedly leaving theatres emotionally moved.

Actor Abhinav Shauarya shared that the response to Devagudi has been deeply fulfilling. He said audiences connecting with his character Dharmma, even referring to him by the character's name rather than his real name, was a moment of pride. He credited Bellam Sudha Reddy for shaping him as an actor and noted that a high-octane action sequence set against a jathara

backdrop has been especially well received. Narasimha Toshi thanked audiences for making the film a success, calling the experience special for both him and his family. Actress Anu Sri said portraying Shweta Reddy has earned her true recognition, with viewers addressing her by the character's name. She added that the powerful dialogues and fight sequences performed by her are drawing cheers in theatres.

Actor Raghu Kunche highlighted that Devagudi once again proves audiences will support small films with strong content. He praised the director-producer's careful planning in both film-making and promotion, calling Veerareddy the most satisfying role of his career.

With its strong performances and content-driven appeal, Devagudi stands as a notable success story in contemporary Telugu cinema.

'Honey' Promises a Hauntingly Different Theatre Experience

The upcoming psychological horror film Honey, starring Naveen Chandra and Divya Pillai in the lead roles, is gearing up for its theatrical release on February 6. Written and directed by Karuna Kumar, the film is produced by Ravi Peetla and Praveen Kumar Reddy under the OVA Entertainments banner and presented by Shekhar Studios. Blending psychological depth, social relevance, and horror elements, Honey has already generated strong buzz, with its promotional content receiving an impressive response. The makers recently unveiled the film's trailer at a launch event, where the cast and crew shared insights about the project.

Speaking at the trailer launch, hero Naveen Chandra described Honey as a film that must be experienced in theatres. He said the overwhelming response to the trailer made the team extremely happy and added that he thoroughly enjoyed the filmmaking process. Naveen emphasized that Honey is a word-of-mouth-driven

film designed to give audiences a completely different cinematic experience within its available budget. Urging viewers to watch the film on the big screen, he said the intensity and atmosphere work best in theatres. He praised co-stars Divi and Divya Pillai, calling them exceptional performers, and predicted a bright future for Divi. Naveen also highlighted the haunting nature of the film, its thought-provoking theme, strong background score, and the impressive performance by the child artist. He noted that the character he plays demanded high intensity and even affected him emotionally during the shoot, underlining the psychological impact of the role.

Director Karuna Kumar, addressing the gathering, said Honey is one of his most experimental works. He revealed that the story draws inspiration from real-life incidents and explores the dark corners of the human mind. According to him, the film revolves around a disturbing ob-

ject called "Pilli Maya" and portrays how obsession and hope can lead people down dangerous paths. He stated that the core message of Honey is that there is no demon more terrifying than the human mind itself. Calling it a family story with a psychological horror backdrop, Karuna Kumar said audiences will witness a never-before-seen version of Naveen Chandra. He also praised the

performances of Raja Ravindra, Divi, and Divya Pillai, along with the dedication of the technical team, adding that the film has been made with international-quality standards.

Actor Raja Ravindra

said he was initially curious about how such a complex story would be executed but was shocked by the final output. He described his role as one of the most memorable characters of his career and expressed hope that the film would help some viewers break free from superstitions. Actresses Divi and Divya Pillai echoed similar sentiments, calling Honey a unique, haunting, and performance-driven film. They urged audiences to watch it in theatres on February 6, promising a truly new and unsettling cinematic experience.

