



BUZZ POINTS

Sajjala Condemns Attack on  
Jogi Ramesh's House, Calls  
for Peaceful Politics



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Nimmala Slams  
Ambati Rambabu's  
Remarks, Demands  
Accountability



# HOMAGE



VVS MADHU BABU  
JOURNALIST

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THE MAN WHO STOOD WITH US FROM THE BEGINNING

THE MANAGEMENT  
TRUE POINT ENGLISH DAILY



# Pawan Kalyan Lashes Out at Janasena Leaders Over Inaction

Mangalagiri, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Janasena Party president Pawan Kalyan expressed strong displeasure with his party leaders over their performance and lack of proactive engagement, during a crucial Janasena general body meeting held on Monday. His sharp remarks underscored growing internal concerns about organisational discipline, accountability, and public outreach within the party.

Sources present at the meeting said the atmosphere turned tense as Pawan Kalyan openly

questioned the role and effectiveness of several elected representatives and office-bearers. He reportedly criticised leaders for remaining silent on important political and public issues, stating that such inaction was weakening the party's presence and credibility among the people.

Pawan Kalyan is said to have asked pointed questions about why party leaders were not actively responding to criticism from political opponents or effectively communicating the party's stand on key issues. He expressed dissatisfaction over the limited visibility of Janasena leaders at the grass-



roots level and their failure to counter negative narratives, particularly on social media platforms. Emphasising the

need for accountability, the Janasena chief reportedly instructed leaders to submit detailed reports on their activities and performance within a stipulated timeframe. He made it clear that holding positions or winning elections was not enough, and that continuous engagement with the public was essential to uphold the party's ideology and responsibilities as part of the ruling coalition.

The meeting also reportedly touched upon recent political controversies involving Janasena leaders. Pawan Kalyan is said to have questioned why party representatives were

not taking a firm stand or defending the party effectively during such situations. He warned that indiscipline and negligence would not be tolerated and called for a more committed and responsive leadership.

At one stage, the intensity of the discussion reportedly escalated, reflecting the seriousness of Pawan Kalyan's concerns. His remarks were seen as a clear message to the party cadre that performance, discipline, and public connect would be key parameters going forward.

Political observers believe that Pawan Kalyan's stern tone signals an attempt to

strengthen the party's organisational structure and ensure that its leaders remain accountable to both the party and the people. As Janasena continues to play a significant role in Andhra Pradesh politics, the party president appears determined to instil a culture of responsibility and active participation among its leadership.

The developments at the general body meeting have sparked wide discussion within political circles, with many viewing the episode as a wake-up call for Janasena leaders to realign themselves with the party's vision and expectations.

# Chandrababu Warns Party Leaders in Teleconference on Security and Discipline

Hyderabad, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday held an urgent teleconference with ministers, senior party leaders, and activists to address concerns over rising political tensions and reinforce discipline within his party ranks. The virtual meeting, convened amid reports of attempts by opposition forces to mislead public perception and stir unrest, saw the Chief Minister issue key warnings and guidance to his team.

In his remarks, Chandrababu cautioned party leaders not to fall into what he described as traps set by the YSR Congress Party (YS-



RCP). He alleged that opposition leaders were indulging in strategies to divert attention from governance issues by creating distractions and inflammatory narratives. He advised Janabhoomi Praja Parishad and other party functionaries to remain vigilant and not allow themselves or their cadres to be drawn into situations that could undermine peace or discipline. The Chief Minister emphasised the importance of maintaining peace and public order across the state, urging party ministers and senior leaders to take responsibility for ensuring that grassroots workers adhere to law and order. He underlined that lead-

ers must set an example of restraint and coordinated action rather than contributing to tensions or confrontations that could affect social harmony.

Chandrababu's teleconference came at a time when political temperature in Andhra Pradesh has been high, with instances of criticism between rival parties and sporadic incidents stirring media attention. Against this backdrop, the Chief Minister reiterated that party leaders must adopt a strategic and responsible approach in countering opposition narratives without engaging in provocations.

He urged the TDP leadership to focus on development issues,

welfare measures, and public outreach to strengthen the party's connection with citizens. By keeping the emphasis on constructive governance achievements and avoiding unnecessary controversies, Chandrababu stressed that his party would be better positioned to project its performance effectively.

Party functionaries present in the teleconference acknowledged the Chief Minister's concerns and expressed readiness to support the direction provided. They reiterated their commitment to upholding party discipline, working closely with district and grassroots units to maintain

steady organisational momentum. Chandrababu's teleconference reflects his broader strategy of keeping party workers aligned with central goals, especially in challenging political environments. By balancing firm guidance with clear expectations of conduct, he signalled an intent to both manage internal cohesion and respond assertively to external political pressures. Observers say the teleconference underlines the Chief Minister's focus on stable governance, disciplined party functioning, and proactive communication as key pillars of political leadership in Andhra Pradesh at this stage.

## SIT Files Petition to Cancel Jogi Ramesh's Bail in Fake Liquor Case

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a major development linked to the ongoing spurious liquor investigation, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case has approached the Vijayawada Excise Court seeking cancellation of the bail granted to senior YSR Congress Party leader and former minister Jogi Ramesh. The petition, filed on Monday, has stirred fresh political and legal debate across Andhra Pradesh.

The SIT has asked the court to revoke the bail recently granted to Jogi Ramesh and his brother in the fake liquor case, arguing that their continued release could jeopardise the investigation. According to the petition submitted by the SIT, there is a risk that critical witnesses and evidence may be influenced or tampered with if the accused remain out of custody. The investigating team has asked the court to consider these concerns ahead of the next hearing, which is expected soon.

Jogi Ramesh and his brother were earlier arrested in connection with the illegal production and distribution of adulterated liquor from a network allegedly operating in and around Vijayawada. The SIT's probe followed statements from key accused and detailed raids at various locations to uncover financial and logistical links in the illicit liquor operation. After spending 83 days in custody, the brothers were granted



bail by the Tumballapalli court in Annamayya district, releasing them on certain conditions.

However, their release has been followed by heightened political tension. Shortly after securing bail, Jogi Ramesh made scathing comments targeting senior government leaders, including Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh. These remarks reportedly triggered counter-reactions from political opponents, and in one incident, supporters of another party allegedly attacked Jogi's residence in Ibrahimpatnam, leading to multiple cases being registered against individuals involved.

The SIT's petition now contends that the accused's out-of-custody status and continued political posturing might disrupt the course of justice by exerting undue influence over witnesses and evidence. The petition

calls for the bail to be cancelled and the accused to be remanded again, at least until crucial parts of the investigation are completed.

The developments have become a subject of intense debate among political circles, with leaders from different parties reacting sharply. Supporters of Jogi Ramesh's party have condemned the move as politically motivated, while ruling alliance members have defended the SIT's action as necessary to safeguard the integrity of the investigation.

The court is expected to take up the matter for hearing soon, with attention focused on how the legal process will balance the rights of the accused against the investigative concerns raised by the SIT. The outcome could have significant implications for both the case trajectory and the broader political climate in the state.

# Ambati Rambabu Sent to 14 Days' Judicial Remand



Guntur, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Former Andhra Pradesh minister and senior YSR Congress Party leader Ambati Rambabu was sent to 14 days' judicial remand by a court in Guntur on Monday. The remand followed his arrest in connection with cases registered over his alleged remarks and conduct that, according to police, led to law and order concerns.

Rambabu was taken into custody late Saturday night after complaints were lodged accusing him of making objectionable state-

ments targeting Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and allegedly obstructing public officials in the discharge of their duties. After being detained, he was subjected to a medical examination as per procedure and later produced before the court.

During the hearing, the prosecution informed the court that multiple complaints had been received against Rambabu in different police station limits. Police argued that his statements had the potential to disturb public peace and

that custodial remand was necessary to ensure a fair and unhindered investigation. Taking these submissions into consideration, the court ordered judicial custody for 14 days.

As per the court's directions, Ambati Rambabu was shifted to judicial custody and lodged in a central prison under tight security arrangements. Police officials stated that adequate precautions were taken during his transfer to prevent any untoward incidents, given the political sensitivity surrounding the

case. Meanwhile, Rambabu's legal counsel opposed the remand, stating that the allegations were exaggerated and politically motivated. The defence argued that the former minister had only expressed his views and had no intention of provoking unrest or violating the law. However, the court noted that the matter required further investigation and accepted the prosecution's request for remand at this stage.

The arrest and remand of Ambati Rambabu have triggered sharp political reactions across Andhra Pradesh. Leaders of the YSR Congress Party have condemned the action, alleging misuse of police machinery to silence opposition voices. They claimed that democratic dissent was being criminalised and demanded his immediate release.

On the other hand, leaders from the ruling alliance defended the police action, stating that no individual is above the law and that strict action is necessary if public order is threatened. They asserted that the case was being handled strictly as per legal provisions.

The developments have intensified political tensions in the state, with both ruling and opposition parties trading charges and counter-charges. As Ambati Rambabu begins his judicial remand, the case is expected to remain a key point of political debate in the coming days.

# APJAC Amaravati to Hold Fourth State Conference in Vijayawada on February 5

Amaravati | Vijayawada, February 02, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Joint Action Committee (APJAC) Amaravati has announced that its fourth State General Conference will be held on February 5 at the Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada. Leaders of the JAC have called upon government employees, pensioners, contract and outsourcing staff from across the state to participate in large numbers and make the conference a grand success.

APJAC Amaravati, which represents a collective of 96 employee associations, has grown into the largest employees' joint action committee in the state. Addressing a press conference held on Monday at the



Revenue Bhavan in Vijayawada, APJAC State Chairman Boppiraju Venkateshwarulu and State Secretary General Palishetty Damodar Rao said the conference would reflect the unity and strength of employees across all departments.

They informed that the State government has sanctioned Special Casual Leave for employees on February 4 and 5 in view of the conference. Utilising this opportunity, employees, pensioners and outsourcing staff from all departments have been urged to attend in large numbers. As part of the event, a massive rally will be organised on February 5 at 9 am from Lenin Centre, proceeding via Eluru Road to Tummalapalli Kalakshetram, marking the formal inauguration of the conference.

The leaders also announced that a new 21-member APJAC Amaravati State Committee would be unveiled on the same day. The committee is expected to play a proactive role in addressing the issues faced by employees and pensioners across the state.

Recalling the journey of APJAC Amaravati, the leaders said the organisation was formed on February 5, 2017, in Tirupati with the support of 17 department associations. Over the years, it has expanded to include 96 associations, consistently fighting for the rights, welfare and concessions of employees, pensioners, contract and outsourcing staff.

The conference will

witness the participation of employees from all 28 districts of the state, showcasing solidarity and collective resolve. Cabinet Ministers Payyala Keshav, Nandla Manohar and Satyaprasad Yadav have been invited as chief guests and have assured their attendance, APJAC leaders said.

During the conference, the benefits extended to employees after the formation of the coalition government will be highlighted, and pending issues will be brought to the notice of the ministers for resolution. Highlighting key demands, Palishetty Damodar Rao urged the government to take early decisions on the long-pending 12th Pay Revision Commission (PRC), Interim Relief (IR), pending Dearness Allowances (DAs) and arrears. He expressed confidence that the coalition government, elected with the trust of employees, would do justice to their demands.

Special emphasis has also been laid on women employees, who constitute nearly 60 percent of the workforce. APJAC women leaders have called upon them to attend the conference in large numbers with a special pink dress code, symbolising unity and strength.

Several APJAC leaders and representatives from various departments were present at the press meet, reaffirming their commitment to making the February 5 conference a historic success.

# Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Hosts Tea Meet with TDP, Other MPs

Hyderabad, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla recently hosted a tea-time gathering for Members of Parliament from different parties, including leaders from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and other national parties, aimed at fostering cordial relations and informal interaction among parliamentarians after the conclusion of a parliamentary session. The event took place at the Speaker's residence in New Delhi following the end of the Winter Session of Parliament 2025, when lawmakers often

meet in a relaxed setting to share views beyond the formalities of House proceedings. The tea meeting was described as a friendly platform where MPs from diverse political backgrounds engaged in conversation, demonstrating a spirit of collegiality despite the often heated debates on the floor of the Lok Sabha. Leaders present included not only members of the ruling coalition but also representatives from opposition parties, signalling an effort by the Speaker's office to encourage dialogue across party lines. During the informal

gathering, conversations ranged from legislative work to personal rapport, and it was noted that the atmosphere was far more congenial compared to the usual intensity of parliamentary debates. The presence of TDP MPs at the function highlighted the ongoing engagement of Andhra Pradesh's representatives at the national level and underscored the tradition of cross-party interaction facilitated by the Speaker.

Om Birla, who was re-elected as Lok Sabha Speaker for a second consecutive term in June 2024, has emphasised on multiple occasions the importance of maintaining decorum in Parliament while also building consensus. Such tea meetings are



seen as an extension of that ethos, providing members a chance to connect informally, exchange perspectives, and ease tensions that may arise during legislative sessions.

The gathering brought together parliamentarians at a time when political differences and debates often dominate headlines. Participants appreciated the opportunity to step away briefly from formal agendas and strengthen interpersonal bonds, which they said can contribute to more constructive engagement during official business.

While tea meetings are customary after major parliamentary sessions, this particular event gained attention because of the broad representation of parties, including the TDP's delegation from Andhra Pradesh. Observers noted that such interactions reflect the democratic spirit of the House, where elected representatives set aside partisan divides to engage as colleagues in the nation's law-making institution. Overall, the tea party hosted by Speaker Om Birla was welcomed by MPs as a positive gesture towards fostering goodwill and mutual respect in India's parliamentary democracy, with many expressing optimism that informal dialogue can complement formal parliamentary processes and contribute to more effective legislative cooperation.

## APSRTC MD Krishna Babu Reviews Operations and Sets Future Directions

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) Managing Director M.T. Krishna Babu conducted a comprehensive review of the corporation's operations, passenger services, infrastructure, and future plans at the RTC headquarters in Vijayawada. The review brought together senior officials and department heads to assess the current status and chart a roadmap for improvements in the coming months.

Krishna Babu highlighted the strong perfor-

lakh and 25 lakh women passengers are using APSRTC services daily. This has led to a 65-67 percent share of women riders and an overall bus occupancy ratio nearing 90 percent, strengthening RTC's operational stability.

A key part of the review was an assessment of passenger feedback. An internal survey revealed that around 80 percent of commuters expressed satisfaction with RTC services, but concerns were raised about cleanliness of toilets and availability of drinking water at bus stations. The MD instructed

comfort.

Looking ahead, Krishna Babu reaffirmed APSRTC's commitment to transitioning from diesel buses. Under the Prime Minister's e Bus Sewa scheme, 1,050 electric buses are planned for induction this year, with an additional 1,450 electric and CNG buses to follow in phased deployments. This initiative aims to modernize the fleet, reduce emissions, cut operational costs, and improve sustainability.

The meeting also focused on diversifying APSRTC's revenue streams by enhancing non-fare income, including better commercial utilization of vacant land at bus stations and expanding cargo services. Officials were tasked with exploring ways to boost these segments to strengthen the corporation's financial position.

Employee welfare was another key highlight. Krishna Babu urged that staff be supported through government welfare schemes and confirmed that pending grievances and service-related issues would be addressed systematically. Measures are also being taken to provide alternative employment or benefits to medically unfit employees, a move welcomed by the workforce.

This review marked Krishna Babu's first major exercise as MD, emphasizing service quality, infrastructure upgrades, environmental goals, and employee support. Officials stated that the focus would remain on enhancing public trust in APSRTC as a reliable and modern transport provider across Andhra Pradesh.



mance of the 'Stree Shakti' free bus travel scheme, noting that between 23

officials to address these issues promptly to enhance commuter

## AP Minister Narayana Visits London to Study Urban Development Models

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Municipal Administration & Urban Development Minister Narayana has arrived in London along with a high-level delegation to study international models of urban planning and infrastructure development that could benefit the state, particularly Amaravati. The tour aims to gather insights and explore global best practices to replicate in Andhra Pradesh's urban transformation programmes. During the visit, Minister Narayana and his team met senior officials of the London City Corporation Planning and Development Directorate to discuss modern urban design frameworks. Discussions focused on smart city planning, riverfront develop-



ment, and integrated transport systems, which are key elements of the state's vision for Amaravati.

The delegation toured notable sites such as the Battersea Power Station district, a successful example of heritage revitalisation, and the Thames Riverfront, known for advanced urban landscaping and mixed-use developments. They also visited the London Bridge

area to study integration of transport infrastructure with urban design for better connectivity and commuter convenience. Accompanying the minister were the Municipal Administration principal secretary and senior representatives from the Amaravati Growth and Infrastructure Corporation. Minister Narayana emphasised that the purpose of the tour is not merely observation but to identify actionable ideas and technical solutions that can be adapted to Andhra Pradesh, especially in developing the state capital's infrastructure sustainably and efficiently. The delegation also held discussions with international urban development experts and planners to explore potential collaborations and partnerships. Focus areas included mod-

ern utilities, public spaces, and integrated transport corridors to enhance urban living standards.

The London visit will continue through February 3, after which the team will travel to Doha, Qatar, to further study innovative urban solutions and investment opportunities. The insights and learnings from both trips are expected to be incorporated into proposals for urban renewal and investment plans for Andhra Pradesh.

Minister Narayana's London tour reflects the state government's proactive approach in adopting global urban development standards to create world-class infrastructure that supports economic growth, enhances quality of life, and ensures environmental sustainability.

## Varla Ramaiah Demands Jagan Apologise to Chandrababu

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh BJP leader Varla Ramaiah on Monday called on Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to apologise to former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu over allegations related to the state's skill development programme. Ramaiah's demand came amid continued political clashes between the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and the opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) over accusations surrounding the implementation of government schemes.

Addressing the media in Vijayawada, Varla Ramaiah asserted that the entire controversy surrounding the skill development initiative was politically motivated and unjustly targeted at Chandrababu Naidu, who had launched the programme during his tenure.

He said the Chief Minister should publicly acknowledge and apologise for what he described as "baseless allegations" against Naidu instead of perpetuating a narrative that he claimed was designed to score political points. Ramaiah argued that the skill development programme was aimed at empowering youth and improving employability, and that efforts to politicise its shortcomings were unfair. He said any shortcomings in execution should be examined objectively rather than used as a tool for personal attacks. "Instead of indulging in continuous vilification, the Chief Minister should have the courage to admit that political rhetoric has overshadowed the real purpose of the programme," Ramaiah said. He accused the YSRCP of repeatedly resorting to tactics that target leaders of rival parties to di-



vert attention from pressing governance issues such as unemployment, inflation, and public service delivery. Ramaiah claimed that the opposition's perspective was being unfairly stifled and used as a scapegoat in discussions on state development plans. Varla Ramaiah also criticised the government's communication strategy, saying that it lacked clarity and often misrepresented facts about key schemes. He urged the Chief Minister to foster a more transparent and constructive dialogue on public policy matters rather than inflaming partisan sentiment.

Ramaiah's remarks reflect the increasingly charged political environment in Andhra Pradesh, where leaders from rival parties frequently exchange sharp criticisms over governance performance and accountability. His call for an apology comes as part of a broader push by the BJP and TDP to highlight what they describe as inconsistencies and political motivations in the handling of developmental issues by the ruling dispensation. Political analysts say that such public demands for apologies are becoming common in the state's political discourse, signalling deepening tensions and intensifying rivalry ahead of future electoral battles. As the controversy around the skill development case unfolds, it is expected to remain a focal point in political debates across Andhra Pradesh.

# Nimmala Slams Ambati Rambabu's Remarks, Demands Accountability

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Water Resources Development Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu on Monday strongly criticised senior YSR Congress leader Ambati Rambabu over his controversial remarks regarding state governance and ongoing political disputes. The minister's reaction comes amid heightened political tensions following Rambabu's recent arrest and judicial remand in a case related to his derogatory comments against Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and other leaders.

Addressing the media and party workers, Nimmala accused Rambabu and his party of engaging in politically motivated rhetoric aimed at diverting public attention from pressing issues facing the state. The minister questioned the propriety of using inflammatory language and insisted that those in public life must exercise responsibility in

their statements, especially when addressing matters concerning constitutional authorities and governance structures.

Nimmala pointed out that Ambati Rambabu's remarks appeared to be part of an attempt to shift focus from substantive development matters—including ongoing infrastructure and welfare projects—towards misleading narratives. He said that if Rambabu genuinely had evidence to support his allegations, he should present it publicly rather than making broad claims that risk inflaming political tensions.

The minister also emphasised the importance of truthful discourse in public life, asserting that criticism should be rooted in facts and not based on distortion or exaggeration for personal or political gain. He underscored the responsibility of elected representatives to uphold decorum and respect democratic institutions, especially when addressing sensi-



itive topics that can influence social harmony and public sentiment.

On the larger issue of political accountability, Nimmala stated that governance and policy implementation should be continuously scrutinised, but through proper channels and with respect for legal boundaries. He reiterated that political disagreements should not cross the line into personal attacks or defamatory language that undermines respect for public offices.

Political observers say Nimmala's remarks reflect a broader effort by the ruling coalition to counter opposition narratives and reinforce a message of disciplined political engagement. His comments come at a time when political rhetoric has grown increasingly heated in Andhra Pradesh, with major leaders from different parties exchanging sharp criticisms amid ongoing legal and political battles.

By urging accounta-

bility and questioning reckless rhetoric, Nimmala sought to position his party's stance as one that values responsible political dialogue and adherence to legal norms. His appeal to leaders across the political spectrum—to maintain dignity in public discourse and respect for institutional integrity—was aimed at tempering political hostilities while reinforcing the importance of constructive engagement in democratic governance.

# Purandeswari Says YSRCP Leaders Lack Basic Understanding of Budget

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

BJP MP Daggubati Purandeswari on Monday sharply criticised the responses of opposition leaders, particularly from the YSR Congress Party, regarding the 2026-27 Union Budget, accusing them of not having a basic understanding of the document and its implications for Andhra Pradesh and the country.

Speaking to the media in New Delhi soon after the presentation of the Union Budget, Purandeswari dismissed criticisms coming from the YSRCP and other opposition quarters as uninformed. She said that many of the charges levelled against the budget were made without a clear grasp of the figures, allocations, and policy priorities

outlined by the Finance Minister. Purandeswari stressed that the focus of the budget was on growth, welfare, and infrastructure, and that its benefits extend to various segments of society, including farmers, women, youth, and rural communities. She highlighted key allocations such as significant funding for Polavaram irrigation project support and substantial provisions for Amaravati's infrastructure development, which she said would positively impact the people of Andhra Pradesh. According to the BJP MP, opposition leaders have overlooked or misunderstood these allocations, choosing instead to launch broad criticisms. She stated that critics failed to appreciate the larger picture of how budgetary provisions are designed to enhance economic

development, improve rural livelihoods, and support key sectors crucial to the state's growth. Purandeswari defended the budget's approach to consolidating fiscal stability while aiming to increase investment in foundational sectors. She reiterated that provisions for local body infrastructure, drinking water schemes, roads, and healthcare would create lasting benefits if implemented effectively. She also sought to clarify misconceptions about the budget's figures and schemes that had been circulating in political debates. By characterising the opposition's critique as rooted in a lack of fundamental understanding of budgetary mechanics, Purandeswari signalled her party's confidence in the document's merits. She urged leaders across the political



spectrum to engage with the specifics of the budget rather than resort to generalised or misleading narratives. Her comments come amid a wider political discourse on budget allocations and state interests, with various parties expressing divergent views on how resources should be shared and prioritised. While some opposition figures have raised concerns about what they perceive as neglect of

certain regional needs, Purandeswari maintained that the Union Budget holds considerable value for universal development and should be evaluated on its comprehensive content rather than through partisan critiques. Overall, her remarks underscored the BJP's defence of the budget and its emphasis on factual engagement with economic policy over rhetorical criticism.

# Roja Slams TDP Government Over Attacks on YSRCP Leaders

Amaravathi, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Senior YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader Roja on Monday launched a fierce attack on the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government in Andhra Pradesh, holding it responsible for a series of assaults on YSRCP leaders and workers. Roja accused the ruling party of fostering an environment of political intimidation and stifling democratic dissent.

Speaking to media in Hyderabad, Roja said the TDP government has failed to ensure basic safety for opposition leaders, pointing to multiple incidents in which YSRCP workers were allegedly attacked by groups aligned with the ruling party. She claimed that these acts of violence were not isolated but appeared to be part of a pattern motivated by political ven-

detas rather than genuine disagreements.

Roja criticised the state administration for what she described as inaction and tacit approval of violence against opposition members. "When political workers cannot speak or move freely without fear of attack, it is a defeat for democracy itself," she said, urging the government to take immediate action to protect citizens regardless of political affiliation.

She cited recent incidents where senior YSRCP leaders, including Ambati Rambabu, faced hostility from rival groups shortly after his release on bail. Roja argued that such confrontations were symptomatic of deep political polarisation and of a governance culture that condones violence against opponents.

Roja further alleged that the TDP govern-

ment's law enforcement machinery has been selective in its approach, allegedly targeting opposition leaders while overlooking alleged misbehaviour by members of the ruling coalition. She accused the administration of being more interested in suppressing dissent than in upholding constitutional freedoms.

The senior YSRCP leader also criticised the police for delayed responses and inadequate protection for YSRCP cadres, saying that many victims were forced to file their own complaints to pursue justice. She demanded strict legal action against perpetrators of political violence, irrespective of party connections, and urged the Election Commission to monitor the situation closely.

Roja's remarks come amid heightened political tension in Andhra



Pradesh, with both ruling and opposition parties trading accusations over political violence and public safety. Her criticism underscores the growing concerns within the YSRCP that political rivalry is increasingly spilling over into aggressive confrontations, affecting the democratic space.

By highlighting alleged attacks and calling for accountability,

Roja stressed that political engagement should be grounded in respectful discourse and democratic norms, rather than intimidation and conflict. She urged party workers to remain steadfast and called upon citizens to reject violence as a means of political expression. The TDP leadership has yet to respond publicly to Roja's allegations.

## Sujana Chowdary Condemns Political Violence in Andhra Pradesh



Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

BJP leader Sujana Chowdary on Monday strongly condemned the recent incidents of political violence in Andhra Pradesh, emphasizing that such actions go against democratic values and public welfare. His remarks come amid growing confrontations and attacks involving leaders and activists of rival parties in the state.

Speaking on the issue, Sujana expressed concern over politicians resorting to physical aggression and abusive language instead of engaging in meaningful discussions on public issues. He stressed that harming opponents or using offensive rhetoric undermines democracy and creates fear among citizens. Political rivalry, he said, should be expressed through respectful dialogue and lawful methods, not intimidation or violence.

Sujana highlighted that while political competition is natu-

ral in a democratic system, crossing the line into personal attacks or confrontations destabilizes society. He called such behavior detrimental to the social fabric and warned that it distracts from addressing real public concerns, including development, employment, and good governance. He urged leaders of all parties to refrain from actions that could escalate tensions or incite unrest.

Referring to the current political climate in Andhra Pradesh, Sujana cautioned against the rising trend of factional politics, which he said poses a threat to peace and collective progress. He underscored the importance of maintaining law and order and accused a section of politicians of stoking conflict for narrow partisan gains instead of focusing on public welfare.

Sujana expressed confidence in the state leadership, particularly Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, noting that

episodes of violence would not be tolerated. He emphasized that the government has a duty to protect democratic processes and ensure that political discourse remains civil and within the bounds of law. He also called on authorities to take firm action against those engaging in unlawful acts and threatening public safety.

The BJP leader added that public awareness and active citizen participation are crucial in upholding democratic values. He appealed to politicians across parties to rise above provocative tactics and prioritize constructive dialogue that benefits the people of Andhra Pradesh.

Sujana's statements reflect growing concern among both political observers and citizens about the state of political discourse in Andhra Pradesh, where recent clashes and heated exchanges have sparked debates on the need for responsible and respectful politics.

## Gummidi Sandhyarani Says Public Reacted to Ambati Rambabu's Remarks

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

YSR Congress Party leader Gummidi Sandhyarani on Monday said the strong public reaction to senior party leader Ambati Rambabu's comments reflects widespread frustration with the political climate in Andhra Pradesh. Speaking to the media in Vijayawada, she defended the broader sentiments expressed by people and said the response was a natural democratic reaction to controversial statements that touched deep political and emotional chords among citizens.

Sandhyarani said that while political discourse must be tempered with responsibility and respect, it is equally important to recognise that people's voices and reactions—especially when they reflect disappointment—cannot be dismissed. According to her, the reaction seen across communities was less about personality and more about growing public concern over leadership and accountability in the state, particularly regarding how public figures conduct themselves in the political arena.

Addressing the protests and demonstrations that followed Rambabu's remarks, Sandhyarani described them as expressions of democratic will rather than isolated or orchestrated events. She said that citizens have the

right to voice dissatisfaction when elected representatives make statements perceived as offensive or divisive. "When public figures speak in a way that impacts public trust, people will react," she stated, noting that peaceful expression of public sentiment is a healthy part of democratic life.

Sandhyarani also acknowledged that political leaders should exercise greater maturity while making comments on sensitive issues. She stressed that lawful and peaceful reactions by the public should be respected, even as authorities work to ensure that public order is maintained. "People are not reacting out of anger alone but also out of concern for the dignity and direction of governance in the state," she added.

On the topic of law enforcement and public peace, she reiterated that protests and reactions should remain within the boundaries of law and that political groups must not indulge in violence or

intimidation. While defending the public's right to react, Sandhyarani emphasised the importance of maintaining harmony and avoiding escalation that could harm social stability.

Her comments came against the backdrop of heightened political tensions in Andhra Pradesh, with both opposition and ruling party leaders trading sharp statements over recent events. Sandhyarani's remarks sought to frame the public's reaction as a legitimate expression of democratic sentiment, while urging political actors to engage in responsible discourse.

Sandhyarani's stance highlights the ongoing debate over political accountability, public expression, and the role of leadership in shaping public confidence. She called for political dialogue that respects democratic norms and focuses on issues of development, governance, and people's welfare rather than personal attacks or inflammatory rhetoric.



# Vijayawada Unites for Cancer Awareness at Manipal Run for Cure 2026

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
Marking World Cancer Day 2026, Vijayawada came together in a powerful show of solidarity and awareness as Manipal Hospitals Vijayawada organised the Manipal Run for Cure 2026 on Sunday. Thousands of people gathered in the early hours at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium on MG Road, transforming the city streets into a vibrant platform for cancer awareness and preventive healthcare.

The primary objective of the run was to raise public awareness about cancer prevention and highlight the critical importance of early de-

tection through active community participation. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from people across age groups, including fitness enthusiasts, healthcare professionals, students, and members of the general public.

Runs were conducted in 5-kilometre and 10-kilometre categories, catering to both amateur and seasoned runners. The event commenced at 5 a.m., with participants flagged off from the stadium and running along designated routes on MG Road before completing the course amid loud cheers and encouragement.

Addressing the gath-



ering as the chief guest, M.V.R. Krishna Teja, IAS, Director of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development and Joint Secretary to the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, emphasised the impor-

tance of collective action in tackling the rising burden of cancer. He said community-driven initiatives like the Run for Cure help translate awareness into action, reinforcing the need for early

screening, healthy lifestyles, and timely medical intervention.

P. Venkata Ramana, Director General of the State Disaster Response and Fire Services, Andhra Pradesh, also highlighted the significance of public health awareness. He noted that challenges like cancer require preparedness and collective responsibility, similar to disaster management efforts. He stated that initiatives such as Run for Cure strengthen community resilience by promoting preventive healthcare and early diagnosis, which are crucial in saving lives.

The event further underscored the growing

importance of preventive healthcare in reducing cancer-related illness and mortality. Participants and speakers alike stressed that awareness at the community level plays a decisive role in improving health outcomes.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, J. Ramanjaneya Reddy, Hospital Director, Manipal Hospitals Vijayawada, reaffirmed the institution's two-decade-long commitment to community health. He said cancer care goes beyond hospital-based treatment and requires sustained pub-



lic engagement. Through initiatives like Run for Cure, Manipal Hospitals aims to encourage preventive measures and early diagnosis, which significantly improve long-term outcomes.

All participants who completed the run were awarded medals and certificates, acknowledging their contribution to the cause. The event concluded on a high note, with participants, volunteers, and organisers collectively reinforcing the message that awareness, prevention, and early action are the strongest weapons in the fight against cancer.

## Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Hosts Tea Meet with TDP, Other MPs

Amaravati, January 31, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
Andhra Pradesh Minister T.G. Bharath Reddy has fired back at political opponents over the controversial "fake ghee" issue, asserting that allegations circulating in public forums and opposition campaigns are misleading and politically motivated. In a strongly worded statement, the minister defended the state government's stance and criticised rival parties for attempting to exploit the matter to create unrest among devotees and the general public.

Minister Bharath, who holds key portfolios including Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, said the ghee used in the preparation of Tirupati temple prasadam had been subjected to multiple laboratory tests and has consistently met all quality and purity standards. He emphasised that the government had taken every necessary step to ensure that only certified and regulated products were used in the process, and that there was no intention of compromising on safety or religious sanctity.

Addressing the media in Vijayawada, Bharath said that certain political parties had seized on the controversy to score cheap points, spreading unverified claims and rumours for electoral advantage. He insisted that the allegations of



adulteration were part of a broader narrative being propagated without sufficient scientific evidence, and that the government was prepared to produce authenticated test reports to settle public concerns.

The minister also urged citizens, especially devotees and families who regularly participate in temple traditions, not to be swayed by sensationalised narratives. He stated that attempts to politicise religious practices were harmful to social cohesion and disrespectful to longstanding cultural traditions. Bharath emphasised that all food products provided for prasadam and religious offerings under go stringent quality control measures under government supervision.

Bharath's response comes amid an escalating political dispute, with rival parties alleging that poor quality ghee or adulterated ingredients were used in the preparation of sacred offerings. These claims have drawn significant public attention and elicited responses from religious organisations and community leaders, prompting a wider debate on food safety in

devotional contexts.

Political analysts say the minister's statement reflects the government's broader strategy of reframing the fake ghee controversy as misinformation, rather than systemic failure. By highlighting certified testing procedures and regulatory oversight, the administration aims to counter the narrative and reassure the public about the integrity of religious and cultural practices.

Opposition leaders, however, continue to press the issue, demanding independent investigations and access to laboratory reports. They argue that transparency and accountability are essential to rebuild public trust and ensure that religious sentiments are not exploited for political ends.

Despite the ongoing dispute, officials have reiterated their commitment to maintaining high standards of public health, food safety and religious respect, even as political debates rage on. The fake ghee issue remains a volatile flashpoint in Andhra Pradesh politics, drawing sharp exchanges and public scrutiny from all sides.

## Kollu Ravindra Condemns Comparing Ambati Rambabu to Vangaveeti Ranga

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
Andhra Pradesh Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra on Monday strongly criticised opposition leaders for drawing a comparison between senior YSR Congress Party leader Ambati Rambabu and the late Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga, a noted political figure whose murder in the 1980s left a lasting impact on state politics. Ravindra called the comparison "shameful" and said it trivialises both history and political accountability.

Speaking to the media in Vijayawada, the minister said that linking Ambati Rambabu to Ranga — who is remembered for his larger than life role during a turbulent era — was an "absurd and disrespectful" attempt to stoke political and communal sentiment. Ravindra asserted that the character and historical significance of Ranga, considered by many as a grassroots defender, cannot be equated with the actions of a contemporary politician who is merely an elected representative voicing political opinions.

Ravindra accused the YSRCP of trying to exploit caste and religious identities to divert attention from rising public discontent against their leadership. He said that the attack on Ambati Rambabu's residence

earlier this month was driven by public anger and not by any historical or community issue. By suggesting a caste linkage to the incident, Ravindra claimed that party strategists were indulging in irresponsible political tactics meant to polarise society.

Questioning the logic behind equating Ranga's legacy with the former minister's rhetoric, the BJP leader asked, "What is the level of Vangaveeti Ranga's sacrifice for people compared to Ambati Rambabu standing by the roadside and speaking?" Ravindra urged political rivals to desist from making such comparisons, which he said insult both the memories of past leaders and the intelligence of the public.

He also criticised the YSRCP for what he described as a pattern of provocative behaviour, claiming that their leaders frequently hurl baseless accusations against senior members of the ruling coalition while ignoring the consequences. Ravindra pointed out that attempts to use caste narratives for short term political gains would only deepen societal divides and undermine social harmony. The minister reiterated that any leader who violates the law or stirs unrest will be held accountable, regardless of political affiliation. He warned that strict legal action would



be pursued against those found guilty of inflammatory conduct or attempts to derail law and order. Ravindra's comments came amid ongoing political tensions in

the state, with parties trading sharp criticisms following Ambati Rambabu's recent arrest and judicial remand in connection with controversial remarks. His rejection of

the Vangaveeti Ranga comparison underscores an intensifying debate over how historical figures are referenced in contemporary political discourse.

## Ambati Rambabu's Daughter Targets Pawan Kalyan, Calls Out Hypocrisy

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
Senior YSR Congress Party leader Ambati Rambabu's daughter, Ambati Keerthi, on Monday launched a sharp attack on Janasena Party chief and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, accusing him of double standards and hypocrisy in his political conduct.

In a strongly worded statement, Keerthi said Pawan Kalyan had turned a blind eye to issues affecting ordinary citizens while projecting himself as a champion of the people. She questioned the Janasena leader's commitment to public welfare and criticised what she described as his selective outrage on matters of governance and law and order in the state.

Referring to recent political developments, Keerthi alleged that Pawan Kalyan's statements lacked consistency and were driven more by political positioning than

by genuine concern for democratic values. "A leader who talks about principles must stand for people, not just political convenience," she said, stressing that political rhetoric should not be used to mislead the public or shirk accountability.

Keerthi also took particular aim at Pawan Kalyan's criticism of the arrest and legal actions taken against her father, arguing that these matters should be evaluated within the framework of the law. She asserted that legal processes should be respected, and that political opposition should not result in a shield for alleged misconduct.

In her comments, she accused Pawan Kalyan of diverting attention from his party's own shortcomings by attacking rival leaders. Keerthi said that instead of addressing the grievances of voters, Pawan Kalyan was indulging in what she



called "political theatre," shifting focus from development issues and governance challenges facing the state.

She further claimed that Pawan Kalyan's politics were inconsistent with the needs of the common people and questioned his priorities as a leader holding responsibilities in the govern-

ment. "Leadership is about serving the people with integrity, not about scoring political points at every turn," she said.

Keerthi's remarks reflect mounting tensions between political camps in Andhra Pradesh, especially in the wake of her father's recent arrest and the ensuing debates over legal, political, and governance issues. Her state-

ments are likely to add fuel to the ongoing political discourse, reinforcing divisions between the YSR Congress Party and Janasena as they trade sharp criticisms.

Supporters of Ambati Rambabu have welcomed Keerthi's remarks, applauding her for defending her father's position and challenging what they see as unfair criti-

## 11 TDP Leaders Arrested in Attack on Jogi Ramesh's House

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
Police have arrested 11 leaders of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in connection with the attack on the residence of senior YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader Ambati Ramesh in Ibrahimpatnam. The arrests mark a significant development in the ongoing investigation into the violent incident that occurred shortly after Ambati Ramesh secured bail in a controversial case.

According to police sources, the 11 TDP leaders were taken into custody after evidence and eyewitness accounts pointed to their involvement in the attack on Jogi Ramesh's house. Law enforcement officials say that several complaints were filed alleging that a group of individuals forcefully entered the area around the leader's residence, damaging property and creating a situation that threat-

ened public order. The arrests came after a detailed investigation by local police teams, which reviewed CCTV footage, recorded witness statements, and gathered information from multiple sources. Police assert that prima facie evidence suggested the involvement of the arrested leaders in organising or participating in the aggressive actions that took place. The accused were produced before the court on Monday, and following judicial proceedings, they were remanded to custody. Court officials noted that the charges against them include public mischief, unlawful assembly, and criminal intimidation, among others. Police also indicated that further charges could be added pending the ongoing investigation.

Senior police officials stated that maintaining law and order is a priority, regardless of the political identi-

ties of those involved. They reiterated that violent acts, especially those targeting individuals' homes or undermining public peace, would not be tolerated. "Anyone found responsible for disturbing the peace will face legal consequences," said a senior officer.

The attack on Ambati Ramesh's house had sparked significant political tension in the state, drawing sharp reactions from both the YSR Congress and opposition parties. The YSRCP had condemned the incident as politically motivated intimidation, while the TDP had initially distanced itself from the violence, calling for a fair probe.

With the arrest of 11 TDP leaders, the investigation has taken a decisive turn, and police have assured that the probe will continue without bias. Officials said that more arrests could follow if further evidence implicates

Water Scarcity on Godavari Banks Raises Alarms in Pidimgoyyi Panchayat

East Godavari, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Even as the mighty Godavari flows alongside, residents of Pidimgoyyi Gram Panchayat in Rajamahendravaram Rural mandal are facing an alarming drinking water situation, exposing serious lapses in co-ordination between the Rural Water Supply (RWS) department and panchayat authorities. The issue has sparked concern over the on-ground implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission, especially ahead of the peak summer season.

With summer approaching, it is standard practice for officials to review drinking water infrastructure at least



two months in advance. This includes checking overhead tanks, pipelines, and submersible motors installed under government schemes. However, in Pidimgoyyi—classified as a Grade-I panchayat—such preparedness appears to exist only on paper, triggering sharp criticism from locals.

The issue came to light during a recent field inspection by the RWS Assistant Engineer, who was reportedly shocked to find that a submersible motor installed under the Jal Jeevan Mission in one of the hamlets was missing. Further verification revealed that in three inspected loca-



tions, the motors that should have been under RWS control were not found at all.

When questioned, panchayat staff reportedly informed the RWS official that the motors had been removed for repairs. However, this explanation has raised more questions than answers. As per established norms, any motor under RWS jurisdiction must be removed only after prior intimation to RWS officials and with written authorization from the Panchayat Secretary. In this case, officials admitted that no prior information was given to the RWS department.

Speaking on the issue, the Rajamahendravaram Rural RWS Assis-

tant Engineer acknowledged the absence of motors at the inspected sites and stated that panchayat staff cited repairs as the reason. However, the lack of documentation and official communication has intensified suspi-

cions of administrative negligence.

The episode has brought the coordination gap between RWS and panchayat authorities into sharp focus. Public representatives and villagers are questioning how such lapses

can occur in a panchayat located right on the banks of the Godavari, where access to water should ideally not be an issue.

“If this is the situation in a Grade-I panchayat, what about smaller villages?” residents ask. Concerns are also being raised about whether proper stock registers are being maintained and whether Jal Jeevan Mission assets are being adequately monitored.

As summer looms, unanswered questions persist: Are the missing motors traceable? Will a full-fledged inquiry be ordered? And are the mission’s objectives limited to files rather than field-level execution?

For now, the mystery of the “missing motors” has turned Pidimgoyyi into a symbol of governance gaps, with villagers fearing that water scarcity may soon become a harsh reality despite living beside one of India’s largest rivers.

Justice Kurian Joseph Nominated as National President of YMCA India

East Godavari, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The National Council of YMCA India (NCYI) Nomination Committee has officially proposed the name of Justice Kurian Joseph (Retired), former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, for the post of National President of YMCA India for the 2026–2029 term. The nomination has generated widespread appreciation across YMCA circles nationwide, with members viewing it as a recognition of value-based leadership and lifelong service.

Justice Kurian Joseph is a member of the Ockal YMCA under the South West India Region (SWIR), Kerala. Known nationally for his integrity, independence, and steadfast commitment to constitutional values, he enjoys immense respect both within and outside the judicial fraternity. Prior to his elevation to the Supreme Court of India, he served as the Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, where his judgments reflected clarity, courage, and a strong moral compass.

During his tenure in the Supreme Court, Justice Kurian Joseph delivered several landmark judgments that strengthened judicial accountability, protected individual rights, and upheld democratic principles. His legal legacy continues to inspire generations of lawyers, judges, and citizens alike. His often-quoted words, “You did not choose me...”, have come to symbolise a philosophy where responsibility outweighs power and service rises above position.

Often described as “The Chosen One,” Justice Kurian Joseph’s journey is seen as a testament to leadership earned through values rather than privilege. His life and career underscore the belief that authority must always be guided by conscience, compassion, and constitutional morality.

Beyond the courtroom, Justice Kurian Joseph has earned equal admiration for his humanitarian and charitable contributions. Following his retirement, the Supreme Court itself acknowledged his decision to donate mediation fees to charita-



ble causes, a gesture that drew national attention. He has been actively involved in initiatives aimed at eradicating hunger and

alleviating human suffering, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when he supported food relief programmes for distressed families.

He has also worked extensively with vulnerable communities, including persons with disabilities, widows, refugees, and tribal populations. Notably, he serves as a patron of the “Mother’s Meal” initiative, a nationwide effort aimed at building a hunger-free society. During the devastating Kerala floods, Justice Kurian Joseph played an active role in relief and rehabilitation efforts, assisting voluntary organisations in mobilising resources and coordinating aid.

Against this backdrop, his nomination as National President of YMCA India is being widely seen as a natural extension of his lifelong commitment to justice, service, and humanity. YMCA members across the country have expressed strong optimism that his leadership would further strengthen the organisation’s mission and values at the national level.

Ganta Srinivasarao Demands YSRCP’s Recognition Be Cancelled

Visakhapatnam, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Visakhapatnam MLA Ganta Srinivasarao on Monday strongly criticised the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), accusing its leaders of engaging in derogatory behaviour and undermining public confidence in democratic norms. Addressing the media, the Bheemili MLA said the actions of several YSRCP leaders had caused widespread public anger and hurt social sentiment.

Ganta condemned remarks made by senior YSRCP leaders, including offensive comments directed at Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, describing them as deeply disrespectful and unacceptable in political discourse, particularly against a leader who has served the state as Chief Minister multiple times. He emphasised that such language is harmful to peaceful political engagement.

He further alleged that the YSRCP was exploiting caste and community narratives to inflame tensions and retain political



relevance, rather than focusing on constructive governance. According to Ganta, these tactics risked deepening societal divides and negatively influencing the younger generation’s perception of politics.

In a significant move, Ganta announced his intention to write to the Election Commission of India seeking the cancellation of the YSRCP’s party recognition, citing repeated instances of irresponsible conduct and inflammatory speech by its leaders. He stated that documented evidence of derogatory remarks would support his complaint, arguing that the party’s behaviour was detrimental to democratic norms and public order. Ganta also referenced past incidents, including

what he described as mistreatment during the YSRCP’s tenure, such as being stopped at Visakhapatnam Airport, to highlight ongoing grievances between party supporters and the ruling establishment. He insisted that the party should prioritise policies and public welfare over provocative rhetoric.

These comments reflect growing political friction in Andhra Pradesh, with leaders from different parties sharply criticising each other over conduct, governance, and public messaging. Ganta’s demand for the Election Commission to review the YSRCP’s recognition adds a new dimension to the debate over accountability and political behaviour in the state.

Series of Thefts Shake Rajam Area in Vizianagaram District

Vizianagaram, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

A spate of thefts in and around Rajam town in Vizianagaram district has alarmed residents and prompted intensified police action following multiple reports of burglaries and lootings in the region on Sunday night. The incidents, occurring in locked houses and residential complexes, have raised concerns about rising criminal activity and gaps in local security.

According to police reports, miscreants struck multiple homes in Rajam, targeting valuable possessions including gold and silver ornaments while homeowners were away. In one major incident, thieves broke into residences located in prominent residential areas and forced open safes and almirahs, decamping with a significant quantity of jewellery. In one house, the burglars stole over a kilogram of gold, while another home was stripped of a substantial amount of gold and silver, collectively amounting to several hundred grams of precious metal.

The frequency and boldness of the thefts have left residents shaken, as both local



families and professionals reported losses of high-value items from premises that were securely locked prior to the break ins. Similar thefts have been reported in nearby villages as well, indicating a possible pattern that may be linked to inter district or interstate theft rings targeting affluent households and exploiting routine security lapses. Senior police officials visited the crime scenes early Monday to assess the situation and coordinate the investigative response. Forensic teams and police dog squads were deployed to gather evidence, while CCTV footage from nearby cameras is being reviewed to identify suspects. Preliminary leads suggest that three unidentified individuals may have been involved, but police are exploring all

angles as the probe unfolds.

In addition to the Rajam burglaries, another theft incident was reported in a nearby village under the Vepada mandal, where a locked home was broken into and gold and silver items were taken while the homeowners were working in the fields. Follow up has begun in that case as well, with officers collecting statements and tracking footprints and other clues left at the scene.

Responding to public unease, the Vizianagaram district police have stated that special teams have been formed to crack these cases swiftly and ensure local safety. Residents are being urged to report suspicious activity immediately and to take preventive measures such as verifying locks and alarm systems.

Sajjala Condemns Attack on Jogi Ramesh’s House, Calls for Peaceful Politics

Vijayawada, February 2, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Senior political strategist Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Monday strongly condemned the attack on the house of senior YSR Congress Party leader Jogi Ramesh in Ibrahimpatnam, calling the incident unacceptable and dangerous for democratic norms in Andhra Pradesh. He appealed to all political parties and their supporters to maintain decorum and refrain from violence, stressing that political differences must be resolved through peaceful dialogue and legal processes.

Addressing mediapersons in Vijayawada, Sajjala said democracy thrives on respect for law, order, and the dignity of individuals. He expressed deep concern that incidents of political violence, such as the attack on Jogi Ramesh’s residence, send the wrong message to citizens and risk creating an atmosphere of fear

and discord. Such acts, he argued, undermine the democratic principle of civil conduct, where dissent and disagreement must be expressed without resorting to force.

Sajjala pointed out that political activism and critique are natural in a vibrant democratic setup, but attacks on homes, offices, or personal spaces of leaders cross all boundaries of acceptable conduct. He said that irrespective of party affiliations or differences in political opinions, leaders must prioritise public safety and mutual respect. “Violence or intimidation tactics have no place in our political culture,” he asserted.

While condemning the attack, Sajjala also urged law enforcement agencies to take strict and impartial action against the perpetrators. He called for a thorough investigation to ensure that those responsible are identified and dealt with according to law, thus reinforcing confidence among



the public in the criminal justice system.

At the same time, Sajjala appealed to political parties to exercise restraint in their rhetoric. He emphasised that provocative language or polarising statements often contribute to tensions, making incidents like these more likely. Leaders, he said, bear the responsibility of setting an example of peaceful engagement, constructive debate, and democratic values for the public to follow.

Sajjala’s comments came amid widespread political reactions following the attack on Jogi Ramesh’s home, which occurred shortly after his release on bail in a separate case. The incident sparked heated exchanges among political camps, with both sides trading accusations and counter accusations.

By calling for calm and lawful conduct, Sajjala sought to defuse the charged atmosphere and bring focus back to

peaceful political dialogue and democratic processes. He reiterated that violence is never a solution and that political battles must be fought on the basis of ideas, policies, and public service commitments.

His appeal for responsible politics was welcomed by civil society members who have expressed concern over rising political tensions and the need for maintaining public order and harmony in the state.

# Budget 2026: Why Kerala Feels Overlooked



The announcement of India's Union Budget for 2026-27 was met with a mixture of anticipation and apprehension in Kerala. This southern state, known for its high literacy, dynamic workforce, flourishing tourism, and significant contributions to foreign exchange through remittances, had high hopes that the nation's financial blueprint would reflect its developmental priorities. When the Budget was finally presented, however, those hopes quickly turned into disappointment. The glaring omissions in key allocations left many Malayalis wondering whether Kerala had been rendered invisible in the national fiscal imagination.

For a state that regularly punches above its weight in education, healthcare, and human capital, the Budget's silence was loud. There was no announcement of a new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), no inclusion of Kerala in the upcoming high-speed rail corridors, no dedicated last-mile connectivity support for the strategically important Vizhinjam Port, and no special

financial packages to bolster critical infrastructure. This was especially surprising given that 2026 is an election year in Kerala — a context in which inclusive fiscal decisions are often expected.

The sting of these omissions was felt even more keenly because Kerala's own state budget had depended on an assumption of central support that the Union Budget did not fulfil. What was presented instead was a stark reminder of the political and economic realities that shape intergovernmental relations: without alignment with the central government's priorities, a state can find itself sidelined in national planning.

**The Political Calculus Behind the Numbers**

Part of the explanation for this perceived neglect lies in electoral mathematics. With political forecasts suggesting limited electoral prospects for the ruling national party in Kerala, the Budget's content appeared to reflect a calculated decision: if significant votes are unlikely to come from a state, why craft the

Budget to specifically serve it? This line of thinking, whether explicit or implicit, underscores the uncomfortable intersection of politics and policy.

Simultaneously, critics within Kerala argue that the state government has not been effective in putting forward credible, bankable proposals that could attract central investment. Instead of presenting well-funded, thoroughly planned projects, Kerala's leadership has sometimes offered abstract proposals or ideas that lack clear financial backing. In the absence of compelling proposals, even well-meaning intentions can appear weak in negotiations with the Centre.

Caught in the crossfire of these political and administrative tussles is the everyday citizen — the worker, the student, the entrepreneur, and the farmer. For many in Kerala, the budget feels less like a document of national progress and more like a distant list of priorities that have little relevance to their daily lives.

**Infrastructure Misses That Hurt**

Several specific omissions in the budget highlight how Kerala's development concerns were underplayed. Vizhinjam Port, envisioned as a gateway to global maritime trade with the depth and capacity to host the world's largest container vessels, was largely ignored when it came to supporting road and rail connectivity. This oversight could undermine the port's

potential, negating its economic value not only for Kerala but also for India's broader trade ambitions.

Similarly, while the central government announced the activation of numerous national waterways, it was unclear how many would tangibly benefit Kerala. The state, endowed with a unique inland waterway network and 44 rivers, could have been a natural candidate for projects that expand the utility of these waterways. Yet investment in Kerala's water transport infrastructure barely featured in the national plan.

Beyond transport, environmental and coastal concerns also went largely unaddressed. Kerala's coastline is increasingly threatened by erosion, with communities losing land and livelihoods to the encroaching sea. Concrete investments in seawalls, groynes, and other protective measures — critical for safeguarding coastal districts and fisherfolk — were absent from the Union Budget. In contrast to how the country reacts to external security threats, responses to internal environmental threats seemed muted.

Agricultural and allied sectors, where Kerala has significant strengths, also received limited targeted interventions. The state produces a majority of the country's rubber yet lacks substantial central support to rejuvenate aging plantations, support labour shortages, or improve tapping technologies. Such gaps in fiscal support undermine Kerala's comparative advantages and leave produc-

ers vulnerable.

The cultural heritage sector, another area where Kerala shines, was also sidelined. Despite the Budget's focus on developing archaeological sites into cultural destinations, major sites in Kerala — such as the remnants of Muziris and Pattanam — were overlooked. Likewise, tourism initiatives celebrated the Himalayas and mountain landscapes, while neglecting Kerala's backwaters — a world-famous ecosystem deeply woven into the state's tourism economy.

**Education and Research: A Missed Opportunity**

The absence of a new National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) for Kerala was another notable omission. With strong public health institutions and a thriving medical education ecosystem, Kerala appeared a natural choice for such an institute. Instead, the National Institutes were proposed for other parts of the country, leaving a glaring gap in research infrastructure for southern India. Expanding advanced research capacity in pharmaceutical sciences could have strengthened both health outcomes and economic competitiveness — not just for Kerala, but for the country as a whole.

**Small Mentions, Big Symbolism**

There was, however, one mention of Kerala — albeit in an unexpectedly minor context. The Budget included the state in a proposed "Turtle

Trail" initiative, aimed at highlighting key turtle nesting sites. While eco-tourism and conservation are important, many critics felt that this gesture paled in comparison to the absence of strategic investments in infrastructure, industry, and human development.

On a more positive note, the long-awaited Rare Earths Mission — an initiative to harness Kerala's mineral sands and build value chains in mining, refining, and processing — was finally announced. But the upside came with a caveat: the full implementation would take over a decade, illustrating once again how slow and uncertain fiscal attention can be when it comes to Kerala's developmental needs.

**The Broader Implications**

This Budget has prompted a broader debate about federalism, political representation, and economic inclusiveness. Kerala sees itself as an integral part of India's social and economic fabric — contributing disproportionately to the nation's skilled workforce, tourism brand, and foreign exchange stock. Yet the sense that it was almost invisible in the nation's fiscal blueprint has struck many as a profound disconnect.

For Kerala to thrive, critics argue, it needs more than sympathy or token mentions. What is required is sustained advocacy, coherent proposals, and political influence that can translate aspirations into tangible funding commitments. This challenge extends to political actors at the

state level, who must build coalitions, negotiate effectively with central authorities, and demonstrate readiness to implement ambitious projects.

Moreover, the broader political parties — particularly Congress and other opposition forces — see in this context an opportunity to reframe Kerala's relationship with the Centre. Rather than resorting to rhetoric, they argue, there needs to be a focused strategy that bridges regional identity with national purpose, aligning Kerala's development needs with India's growth trajectory.

**Conclusion: Visibility, Voice, and Value**

The Union Budget 2026 has certainly generated vigorous debate in Kerala. For many, it has brought into sharp relief the question of "visibility": whether Kerala's contributions and needs are genuinely acknowledged in national policy; whether its citizens feel represented in the allocation of resources; and whether fiscal federalism truly translates into equitable development.

Kerala may feel invisible in this Budget, but its economic and cultural engines remain powerful. Its diaspora, its workforce, and its unique social model continue to add value across India and beyond. The challenge now is to ensure that this value is matched with voice and vision — in budgets, in policy decisions, and in the future economic architecture of the country.

## India's Tax Burden Is Falling on the Wrong Shoulders

India's middle class entered the Union Budget season with cautious optimism. After years of rising inflation, stagnant wages, growing household expenses, and increasing job insecurity, especially in white-collar sectors like IT and services, salaried taxpayers hoped for meaningful tax relief. The expectation was simple: if the government wants consumption to drive economic growth, it must leave more money in the hands of those who spend the most. However, the latest budget failed to meet these expectations, reinforcing the growing belief that India's tax burden is increasingly falling on the wrong shoulders — the middle class.

At the core of this issue is a structural imbalance in India's taxation system. While the economy relies heavily on domestic consumption, the very group responsible for sustaining that consumption is under mounting financial pressure. Instead of broad-based relief, the government has chosen fiscal restraint, arguing that significant tax benefits were already extended in previous budgets. For middle-income households struggling to manage rising costs, this explanation offers little comfort.

**What the Budget Delivered — and What It Missed**

In the previous financial year, the government introduced a major tax reform by raising the tax-free income threshold under the new tax regime. This step provided immediate relief to a large segment of salaried individuals and was widely welcomed. As a result, expectations were high that the current budget would build on this momentum.

One of the most anticipated changes was an increase in the standard deduction for salaried employees. With living costs climbing steadily, raising this deduction could have provided meaningful relief to millions of taxpayers. Instead, the government chose to keep it unchanged, citing global economic uncertainty, trade pressures, and the need to adhere to fiscal deficit targets.

The market reaction reflected broader concerns. Stock indices declined sharply after

the budget announcement, signalling investor unease about demand prospects and consumer sentiment. When disposable incomes remain under pressure, consumption weakens, and that inevitably affects business confidence and investment outlook.

The government's defence has been that last year's tax relief was substantial and that repeating such measures annually is not fiscally sustainable. It also pointed to reductions in indirect taxes and improvements in compliance. While these arguments may be valid from a fiscal standpoint, they overlook the everyday realities faced by middle-class households.

**Why Consumption Is Critical for India's Growth**

India's economic model is fundamentally different from export-driven economies. Domestic consumption accounts for a dominant share of GDP, making household spending the single most important growth engine. Private investment, on the other hand, has remained relatively stagnant for years, limiting its role in driving economic expansion.

In such a scenario, sustaining consumption is not optional — it is essential. For consumption to grow, households need disposable income. Yet, rising taxes, stagnant wages, and increasing costs of essentials leave little room for discretionary spending. When families are forced to prioritise necessities over consumption, economic growth inevitably slows.

The budget's failure to significantly boost disposable income therefore raises a crucial question: how does the government plan to stimulate consumption without easing the tax burden on its primary contributors?

**Wages Lag Behind Inflation**

Compounding the problem is the widening gap between wage growth and inflation. Over the past several years, salary increases in many sectors have failed to keep pace with rising prices. This means that even when nominal incomes rise slightly, real purchasing power continues to decline.

Expenses related to housing, education, healthcare,



transportation, and food have increased sharply, leaving middle-class households squeezed from all sides. In this context, the absence of meaningful tax relief further reduces spending capacity. Any marginal gains from tax reforms are quickly eroded by inflation, making it harder for families to save or invest.

This erosion of real income does not just affect individual households; it has broader economic consequences. Lower spending reduces demand, weakens business growth, and discourages private investment — creating a vicious cycle.

**GST Reforms and the Illusion of Relief**

The government has repeatedly highlighted the next phase of Goods and Services Tax reforms as a major step toward simplifying taxation and lowering prices. While some sectors have benefited from lower rates, the impact on everyday household expenses has been limited.

For many consumers, prices of essential goods such as food items and medicines have not declined noticeably. In several cases, the benefits of tax reductions have been absorbed within supply chains rather than passed on to end consumers. Retail prices often remain unchanged, despite lower tax rates, leading to widespread scepticism about the effectiveness of these reforms.

While durable goods and big-ticket items may have become cheaper, these do little to ease the daily financial stress faced by middle-class families, whose largest expenses are recurring and unavoidable.

**An Unequal Tax Burden**

Perhaps the most striking aspect of India's current tax structure is the growing reliance on personal income tax. Despite the fact that only a

small fraction of the population pays income tax, individual taxpayers contribute a disproportionately large share of total government revenue.

In contrast, corporate tax collections remain lower, even though businesses benefit from various incentives and concessions. This has led to a situation where salaried employees — whose taxes are deducted at source and difficult to evade — bear a heavier burden than other sections of the economy.

This imbalance raises serious questions about fairness. Middle-class taxpayers often have limited avenues for tax planning and few buffers against economic shocks. Yet they continue to be the most reliable source of revenue for the state.

**The Way Forward**

The government undoubtedly faces complex challenges. Maintaining fiscal discipline, managing global uncertainties, and funding infrastructure and welfare programs are not easy tasks. However, over-reliance on the middle class as a revenue source is neither sustainable nor equitable.

If India wants consumption-led growth to remain strong, it must ensure that households have sufficient disposable income. This could be achieved through targeted tax relief, periodic adjustments to deductions, or policies that ensure wage growth keeps pace with inflation. Equally important is ensuring that indirect tax reductions translate into real price relief for consumers.

The middle class has consistently supported India's growth story — as taxpayers, consumers, and contributors to economic stability. Recognising their role and easing their financial burden is not just a matter of fairness; it is essential for the country's long-term economic health.

## Union Budget 2026–27: Big Promises for Growth, Small Steps for India's Children

When Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented her ninth consecutive Union Budget, the message was loud and confident: India is marching towards Viksit Bharat. With ₹12.2 lakh crore capital expenditure, new railway corridors, rare earth hubs, chemical parks, and a girls' hostel in every district, Budget 2026–27 makes a strong case for infrastructure-led growth.

Chapter 11 of Economic Survey 2025–26, "Education and Health: What Works and What's Next," notes that children and adolescents remain a significant portion of India's population.

"In 2024, nearly 27 per cent of India's population was in the school-going age group (3–18 years), even by 2047, this age group will account for over 20 per cent".

This demographic outlook positions children as central to India's sustained development trajectory, rendering the scope and quality of public investments in them a priority of lasting significance.

But as the nation marked its 77th Republic Day just days earlier, a fundamental question demands attention: where do India's children fit into this vision of growth?

At first glance, the numbers seem reassuring. The Budget for Children (BfC) has increased by 13.92 per cent in absolute terms, rising from ₹1.16 lakh crore in 2025–26 to ₹1.32 lakh crore in 2026–27. The share of children in the Union Budget has inched up from 2.29 per cent to 2.47 per cent. Yet, beneath this incremental rise lies a sobering truth: children's share in the national budget remains below pre-COVID levels, and far below what a country with 27 per cent of its population under 18 should be committing.

As per the HAQ: Centre for Child Rights Analysis. The sectoral composition of this allocation reveals long-standing imbalances. Education continues to dominate the Budget for Children, absorbing nearly three-quarters of total allocations. While education is undeniably critical, this concentration masks serious under-investment in other equally vital areas. Child health, though seeing a noticeable rise in its share of the Un-

ion Budget—from around 0.09 per cent in earlier years to 0.22 per cent in 2026–27—still remains modest given India's nutrition and health crisis. Child development has marginally declined, while child protection stagnates at a worrying 0.04 per cent of the Union Budget, once again the least prioritised sector.

This pattern becomes even clearer when examine Statement 12, the government's principal accounting of child-related schemes. Since its introduction in 2008–09, the number of ministries and programmes tagged to children has steadily increased, but the share of financial resources allocated to children has not kept pace. In 2012–13, children received 4.76 per cent of the Union Budget—the highest in recent history. In 2026–27, despite 83 programmes across multiple ministries, the share stands at just 2.47 per cent. Fewer programmes, slightly more money—but still a shrinking fiscal imagination for children.

A striking feature of this year's Statement 12 is the near-doubling of allocations under Part C—schemes where less than 30 per cent of spending is child-specific. This jump is largely due to the inclusion of the Jal Jeevan Mission. While access to safe drinking water is essential for children's health, the lack of clarity on the actual child-specific component raises concerns about inflated figures without corresponding accountability.

Flagship schemes tell a similar story of cautious continuity rather than bold correction. Samagra Shiksha, the backbone of school education and the Right to Education Act, sees only a 2.06 per cent increase, despite large unspent balances in previous years and persistent learning gaps highlighted by ASER surveys. PM POSHAN, critical in the fight against malnutrition, receives a mere 2 per cent increase—lower than allocations seen five years ago—at a time when India ranks 102 out of 123 countries in the Global Hunger Index and faces alarming levels of stunting, wasting and anaemia among children.

Child protection is perhaps the most telling indicator of government priorities. Mis-

sion Vatsalya, the flagship programme addressing children in need of care and protection, receives just ₹50 crore more than last year—a 3.33 per cent increase. Adjusted for inflation and rising caseloads of abuse, trafficking and exploitation, this is effectively a freeze. The discontinuation of the National Child Labour Project, without visible budgetary integration elsewhere, further deepens policy gaps for the most vulnerable children.

There are, undeniably, some bright spots. Eklavya Model Residential Schools see a robust 20 per cent increase, signalling a stronger focus on tribal education. A fresh allocation of ₹3,200 crore for Atal Tinkering Labs reflects renewed emphasis on STEM education and innovation. These are welcome moves—but they remain islands of progress in a sea of incrementalism.

Overall, Union Budget 2026–27 reflects a familiar pattern: ambitious rhetoric, steady infrastructure expansion, and cautious social spending. For children, the budget offers acknowledgement without centrality. The modest rise in allocations neither compensates for pandemic-era losses nor responds adequately to widening deficits in learning, nutrition, health and protection.

If Viksit Bharat is to be more than a slogan, children must move from the margins of fiscal planning to its core. Growth measured only in kilometres of roads and megawatts of power risks becoming hollow, unless matched by sustained investment in the country's youngest citizens. In Budget 2026–27, India has taken a small step forward—but for its children, the leap is still missing.



By. Rammohan Nimmaraju, HELP organisation

## Parliament Erupts as Rahul Gandhi Quotes Ex Army Chief’s Unpublished Memoir; Rajnath Singh Objects



A sharp political confrontation rocked the Lok Sabha after Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi attempted to cite excerpts from an unpublished memoir of former Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane during his speech, leading to strong objections from senior government leaders and repeated disruptions in Parliament.

Rahul Gandhi rose to speak on the Motion of Thanks on the President’s Address when he produced a printed magazine article that carried what he said were excerpts from Naravane’s memoir, Four Stars of Destiny, which deals with strategic issues like the 2020 eastern Ladakh border standoff with China. Gandhi cited a line alleging that Chinese tanks had come close to Indian positions during the crisis, aiming to highlight concerns about national security.

However, the choice to quote from an unpublished book immediately triggered objections. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh interrupted Gandhi, questioning the validity of using material that had not been officially published and therefore could not be verified in Parliament. He asked Gandhi to confirm whether the memoir had been released, stressing that quoting unpublished content was against established parliamentary norms.

Home Minister Amit Shah and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju joined in, arguing that since the book had not been published or authenticated, it could not be accepted as an official source and should not be read out. The government benches challenged Gandhi’s approach, saying that quoting unverifiable material set a bad precedent and could lead to misinformation being placed on the parliamentary record.

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Om Birla, sided with the ministers and ruled that quotations from unpublished material could not be accepted, urging Gandhi to proceed without referring to the book. The exchanges became heated at several points, with Gandhi insisting that the excerpts were “100 percent authentic” and urging that the matter of national security be discussed.

Support for Gandhi came from some opposition members who argued that issues relating to national security should be debated fully in the House, even if they involved sensitive sources. However, the government maintained that parliamentary procedure must be respected, especially when dealing with books or documents not yet in the public domain.

The episode sparked loud reactions from both sides and ultimately led to the adjournment of the Lok Sabha for the day, underscoring the deep political divide over how sensitive strategic issues should be raised and debated within Parliament.

## Mamata Banerjee Alleges ‘Torture of Bengalis’ by Delhi Police Ahead of Meeting with Election Chief

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has accused the Delhi Police of subjecting Bengalis to “torture” and “atrocities” in the national capital as she headed to meet the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) over disputes related to the revision of electoral rolls in her state.

Banerjee arrived in New Delhi as part of a Trinamool Congress (TMC) delegation preparing to discuss what her party calls unfair practices in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists ahead of elections in West Bengal. The SIR has been a major flashpoint between the state government and the Election Commission of India, with the TMC alleging that the process is discriminatory and harmful to genuine voters.

Hours before the meeting with the CEC, Banerjee visited Banga Bhawan, the West Bengal government guest house in Delhi, to meet families from her state who have come to the capital in connection with the SIR issue. Speaking to the media, she claimed that Bengalis had faced harassment and intimidation by Delhi Police personnel deployed around the guest house and elsewhere.

Banerjee said she was in the city to assess the situation of those affected and to bring their concerns directly to the Election Commission. She criticised the deployment of police forces, suggesting it was meant to intimidate and create fear among those seeking justice. She contrasted the treatment received in Delhi with the respect shown to visiting central leaders in West Bengal, saying that her delegation was not given the same courtesy.

Addressing officers near Banga Bhawan, she questioned why Bengali families should face restrictions when they had legitimate appointments and the right to speak out. Banerjee urged authorities to show sensitivity toward families who, according to her, have suffered losses and hardship related to the SIR process.

Her remarks were delivered against a backdrop of rising political tensions in West Bengal, where electoral roll revision has become a central campaign issue. Banerjee and her party have strongly objected to the methods and timing of the SIR exercise, arguing that it has led to unnecessary stress, exclusions from the voter list, and hardship for vulnerable communities.

The Chief Minister’s allegations add to an already contentious debate over electoral preparations in Bengal. Her delegation, which includes senior TMC leaders, planned to present a detailed list of grievances to the CEC and seek intervention on behalf of affected voters.

The mood remains tense as political leaders from different parties continue to clash over the SIR process and associated administrative actions, with Banerjee urging continued resistance to what she characterises as unfair treatment of her state’s people.



## Who Is Shubham Lonkar, Accused in Firing Outside Rohit Shetty’s Home and Baba Siddique Murder Case?

Shubham Lonkar, a name that has come under intense media and police scrutiny in recent days, is the main accused in a high profile case involving a shooting outside Bollywood director Rohit Shetty’s residence in Mumbai and a murder investigation connected to businessman Baba Siddique’s family.

Lonkar, in his early 20s and originally from Maharashtra, rose to public notice after he was arrested in connection with the firing incident that took place outside Shetty’s home in Juhu, a high end suburb of Mumbai. According to law enforcement sources, the incident occurred when shots were fired near the filmmaker’s bungalow late at night, sparking alarm among residents and prompting an immediate police response.

Investigators have described Lonkar as someone already known to authorities for his alleged involvement in criminal activities. He is believed to have links with local underworld figures and has been suspected in past violent incidents, though previous cases did not lead to high profile charges. Law enforcement agencies say Lonkar’s profile fits the pattern of young criminals who engage in extortion, intimidation and property disputes, often acting on behalf of more established criminal networks.

In the recent incident at Rohit Shetty’s residence, the motive is still under investigation, with police exploring whether the firing was intended as a message or retaliation over unrelated disputes. No casualties were reported from the shots near the actor director’s home, but the gravity of the act — involving gunfire near a prominent personality’s residence — has kept the case in the spotlight.

Separately, Lonkar’s name has emerged in the ongoing Baba Siddique murder case, one of Mumbai’s most talked about criminal cases in recent months. Baba Siddique, a well known businessman and social figure, was killed in what police initially described as a possible organised crime hit. Lonkar has been named in police records as an accused connected to the incident, though investigators are still determining the exact role he played and whether he was a direct participant or acted on someone else’s behalf.

Police have not yet publicly disclosed all the evidence against Lonkar, but his connection to multiple violent cases has prompted a broader investigation into his associates and possible criminal networks he may be linked with.

As the police continue to probe both the shooting outside Rohit Shetty’s residence and the Baba Siddique murder, Lonkar’s custody and questioning are central to advancing these investigations. Law enforcement officials have indicated that additional charges may be filed as more information comes to light.

The unfolding cases have stirred public interest, partly due to the involvement of high profile figures and the glimpse they offer into organised crime links operating in and around Mumbai.



## Punjab Dera Chief Gurinder Singh Dhillon Visits Jailed Akali Dal Leader Bikram Majithia, Calls Allegations ‘Baseless’



The head of Radha Soami Satsang Beas, Baba Gurinder Singh Dhillon, recently visited Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia at Nabha Jail in Punjab, drawing attention from political observers and media alike.

Majithia is currently lodged in prison in connection with a disproportionate assets case. After the visit, Dhillon described the charges against Majithia as “false and baseless,” asserting that the allegations lack merit. The meeting also highlighted the personal connection between the two, as Dhillon is related to Majithia’s wife, Ganieve Kaur.

The jail visit took place just hours before Majithia was granted bail by the Supreme Court. He had been arrested in June 2025 by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau for alleged accumulation of disproportionate assets linked to financial irregularities. The investigation has been high profile, with detailed charges presented in court.

During his briefing outside the jail, Dhillon emphasised that Majithia is in “high spirits” and reiterated his personal support, referring to him as a friend and family member. Dhillon stressed that meeting a relative under such circumstances was a personal matter and did not make any political statements or direct criticisms of authorities.

This was Dhillon’s second meeting with Majithia in jail within a few months. Their previous encounter also attracted attention from both religious and political circles. The Radha Soami sect, with a large following in Punjab, is often closely watched for its socio-political influence, even though the institution publicly maintains a stance of political neutrality.

News of the meeting quickly spread, prompting commentary from various quarters. Critics argued that a religious leader publicly supporting an accused political figure could blur the lines between spiritual authority and political influence. Supporters viewed the visit as a personal gesture of solidarity. The timing, shortly after the Supreme Court’s bail order, further intensified public interest.

The encounter underscores the complex interplay of religion, politics, and legal matters in Punjab, particularly with elections approaching. While Dhillon’s remarks focused on personal support rather than politics, the visit continues to generate discussion about the role of prominent religious figures in politically sensitive contexts.

## Actor Vijay Marks TVK’s Third Anniversary With Strong Election Push, Evokes Annadurai–MGR Legacy Ahead of Tamil Nadu Polls



Tamil film star turned politician Vijay struck a confident and combative tone as he marked the third anniversary of his political party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) — a milestone that comes just months before the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections in April 2026.

In his message to party workers and supporters, Vijay reiterated that TVK’s emergence has reshaped the state’s political landscape and insisted that his party is ready to compete fiercely against the established Dravidian parties. As TVK celebrates its founding, he described the 2026 election season as an “unprecedented scenario” that is shaped by his party’s entry into politics and its rapid rise in public support.

Vijay used historical references to underline his vision. He compared TVK’s launch to landmark moments in Tamil Nadu’s political history, such as the 1967 and 1977 elections, when new parties led by C N Annadurai and M G Ramachandran (MGR) respectively uprooted longstanding political powers. By evoking these parallels, Vijay sought to position his party as a genuine alternative to the current political order, suggesting that the people’s disappointment with existing governments had given rise to a new political force.

In remarks released in a letter ahead of his speech, Vijay called on TVK cadres to pursue “focus, unity and political action,” and expressed strong confidence that with widespread public support, TVK will achieve its democratic goals. He described the party as a “vast sea” that cannot be moved from its course, signalling his belief that TVK’s journey has only just begun.

Vijay also criticised the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) for what he called failures in governance, while taking a less aggressive stance toward the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) — a tactical approach observers see as an effort to not alienate voters who may swing between parties. He referenced legacy leaders, stating that TVK, like earlier movements, aims to “wipe away the tears” of people disappointed by past leadership.

The anniversary address comes amid broad political activity in the state. While TVK has made overtures to other parties, including calls for alliances, no formal coalition has been announced yet. TVK’s march into electoral politics has energised its base, helped by the Election Commission’s allotment of the party’s whistle symbol, which has been seen as a morale booster.

Vijay’s confident rhetoric signals that his party plans to play a central role in the upcoming polls, betting that his popularity and organisational build up could translate into tangible electoral success, harking back to Tamil Nadu’s tradition of actor politicians rising to power.

## Baloch Rebels Claim Deadly Attacks on Pakistani Forces, Highlight Use of Women ‘Fidayeens’



A separatist insurgent group in Pakistan’s south-western province of Balochistan has claimed responsibility for a wave of coordinated attacks against Pakistani security forces, asserting that more than 200 personnel from the army, police and paramilitary Frontier Corps were killed during the offensive. These figures have not been independently verified, and official casualty reports remain significantly lower.

The militant organisation, known as the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), said its operation — dubbed Operation Herof Phase II — spanned over 40 hours across multiple districts, including Khاران, Mastung, Tump and Pəsni. In statements issued during and after the clashes, the group also claimed to have temporarily pushed back government forces in parts of Quetta

and Noshki.

In an unusual development, the BLA acknowledged the involvement of female fighters, known as “fidayeens” (suicide operatives), in some of the assaults. Among those named by the group was Asifa Mengal, who reportedly carried out a vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attack targeting a major intelligence agency facility in Noshki. Another woman identified by the BLA was Hawa Baloch, who was featured in a message released by the group shortly before she was killed in combat.

Pakistan’s Defence Minister confirmed that at least two of the attacks involved female attackers, a step that analysts say signals a tactical shift in the long running insurgency. The participation of women fighters in frontline roles has been highlighted by the BLA

as evidence of deepening commitment to their cause and has added to the psychological impact of the offensive.

While the BLA claims high casualties among security forces, the chief minister of Balochistan reported lower figures, stating that at least 17 law enforcement officers and 31 civilians were killed in the clashes. Pakistani military sources have said several separatist fighters were also killed during counter operations, with differing numbers reported in various districts as security forces pushed back insurgents.

In addition to battlefield clashes, the BLA said it detained senior local administrative officials but released them later, describing the gesture as humanitarian and asserting that the group does not see civil administrators

as enemies unless they directly support military actions.

The violence underscores the ongoing instability in Balochistan, a region that has witnessed decades of separatist insurgency over political marginalisation, control of natural resources and demands for greater autonomy or independence. The BLA is among the most prominent militant groups operating in the province, and its attacks have repeatedly targeted security installations, infrastructure and government facilities.

The situation remains fluid, with contrasting narratives emerging from militant claims and official accounts. Independent verification of the full scale of the clashes is difficult due to restricted access and ongoing military operations in the area.

## India Rejects Pakistan’s ‘Baseless’ Claims Linking It to Balochistan Violence



India has firmly rejected accusations from Pakistan that it was involved in the recent wave of violence in the southwestern province of Balochistan, describing the allegations as “baseless” and a bid to divert attention from internal issues in Islamabad.

The response from New Delhi came after Pakistani military and government officials publicly claimed that the coordinated attacks across several districts in Balochistan were supported by India. Pakistan’s Interior Minister asserted that India was behind the violence, repeating long standing assertions of foreign involvement in internal security incidents.

An official spokesperson for India’s Ministry of External Affairs responded to these comments by stating that the accusations were unfounded and amounted to a familiar pattern of shifting blame. “We categorically reject the baseless allegations made by Pakistan,” the spokesperson said, emphasising that such claims were nothing but a tactic to deflect attention from Islam-

abad’s own internal failings.

India’s statement urged Pakistan to focus on addressing the long standing political and social grievances of the people of Balochistan rather than making unsubstantiated claims after every violent incident. The ministry highlighted that Pakistan’s track record of dealing with dissent and human rights issues in the region was well known, suggesting that Islamabad should prioritise constructive measures to improve conditions for its citizens instead of resorting to external blame.

The recent attacks in Balochistan, which included coordinated strikes on security installations and public places in cities such as Quetta, Gwadar, Mastung and Noshki, resulted in dozens of fatalities, including civilians and security personnel. While separatist groups have claimed responsibility for the violence, Pakistan’s military has reported heavy losses among militants during counter operations.

Pakistan’s allegations against India follow a pat-

tern of attribution often seen between the two neighbouring countries, particularly when incidents of insurgency or terrorism occur within Pakistan’s borders. New Delhi’s rejection of these claims underscores its consistent position that there is no credible evidence linking India to the violence.

By challenging the accusations, India reiterated its position that internal political issues and regional grievances, including calls for greater autonomy and rights in provinces like Balochistan, should be addressed through political dialogue and reforms rather than externalising blame.

The diplomatic exchange reflects the broader tensions between the two countries, where events such as insurgent attacks or security incidents are frequently accompanied by competing narratives and accusations. India’s rebuttal reaffirms its stance that it seeks peaceful engagement and stable relations while dismissing claims of involvement in Pakistan’s internal conflicts.

## Trump Shrugs Off Khamenei’s ‘Regional War’ Warning, Says He Still Hopes for a Deal

U.S. President Donald Trump responded calmly to a stark warning from Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei about the potential for a wider regional conflict if the United States were to launch military action against Tehran. Despite the heightened rhetoric, Trump struck a measured tone, saying he was “hopeful” that negotiations with Iran could still succeed and downplaying the more dramatic elements of Khamenei’s statements.

The exchange comes amid rising tensions between Washington and Tehran, which have escalated in recent weeks. Khamenei warned that any attack by the U.S. would not be limited to Iran but could escalate into a broader “regional war,” highlighting the risk of wider conflict in the Middle East. In his remarks, the Iranian leader also suggested that domestic protests in his country were being influenced by foreign powers, portraying unrest as a



threat akin to a coup.

When asked about the supreme leader’s warning, Trump appeared unperturbed. “Of course he is going to say that,” the president remarked, suggesting that such a response was expected. He reiterated his hope that a diplomatic agreement could be reached with Tehran to prevent further escalation. “Hopefully we’ll make a deal. If we don’t make a deal, then

we’ll find out whether or not he was right,” Trump added, indicating that both negotiation and the risk of conflict remain possibilities.

The comments came as the United States increased its military presence in the Persian Gulf. A U.S. carrier strike group and accompanying warships were deployed to the region, signaling readiness while also maintaining a preference for a negotiated settle-

ment. U.S. officials have emphasized that they would like to resolve tensions through diplomacy and avoid military confrontation, focusing on Iran’s nuclear program and regional activities.

The situation is compounded by significant unrest inside Iran, where protests over economic hardship and political grievances have drawn international attention. Iranian authorities have blamed foreign interference, while the U.S. has publicly supported the rights of protesters and condemned the government’s crackdown.

Despite Khamenei’s warnings, Trump’s remarks suggest that the U.S. intends to balance deterrence with diplomacy, keeping open the possibility of negotiation while preparing for contingencies. The international community continues to watch closely to see whether dialogue can prevent escalation or whether tensions in the region will intensify.

## Ex UK Ambassador Peter Mandelson Resigns After Epstein Files Link Him to \$75,000 Payments

Former British diplomat Lord Peter Mandelson has stepped down from the UK’s Labour Party after new details emerged from a massive release of documents connected to disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein. The files suggest that Mandelson may have received financial transfers totalling about \$75,000 (roughly ₹68 lakh) from accounts linked to Epstein more than two decades ago, triggering fresh controversy and public scrutiny.

The payments apparently occurred between 2003 and 2004, with records indicating three separate transfers of about \$25,000 each to accounts connected either to Mandelson or his long time partner. These revelations come as part of a large tranche of documents released by the US Department of Justice related to Epstein’s financial dealings and associations. The exact nature of the payments — whether they were ever actually received or how they were used — remains unclear.

In response to the new disclosures, Mandelson wrote a letter to the Labour Party’s



general secretary announcing his resignation from the party’s membership. He described himself as “regretful and sorry” about the uproar over his links to Epstein, even as he insisted he had no record or recollection of receiving the payments mentioned in the files. Mandelson has also raised questions about the authenticity of the documents and said he intends to investigate the matter further to clear up uncertainties.

Mandelson, 72, has a long history in British politics,

having served in senior roles including as a cabinet minister and twice resigning from government posts in the past over unrelated controversies. In recent years, he was appointed as Britain’s ambassador to the United States, but was dismissed from that role last year amid earlier revelations about his association with Epstein.

Among the newly uncovered material are undated photographs that appear to show Mandelson in informal attire alongside an unidenti-

fied woman, though the context and timing of those images are also not known. Mandelson has said he cannot identify the location or circumstances of the picture.

In addition to the financial records, other parts of the files show Epstein sending money to Mandelson’s husband in later years for personal expenses, further raising questions about the nature of their ongoing contact.

Political reaction in the UK has been intense. Critics from across the political spectrum have demanded transparency and called for investigations, including possible testimony before committees in the United States examining Epstein’s network. Supporters of Mandelson acknowledge his long public service but say the unfolding revelations warrant scrutiny and accountability.

As questions grow about Epstein’s global connections and the true extent of his ties to influential figures, Mandelson’s resignation reflects the mounting pressure on public figures implicated in the latest document release.

## Bangladesh Court Sentences Ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to 10 Years in Corruption Cases



Bangladesh’s former prime minister Sheikh Hasina has been sentenced to 10 years in prison by a Dhaka court in two separate corruption cases, delivering a major setback to the veteran political leader’s prospects ahead of national elections. The verdict was handed down by a special court in the capital, which found Hasina guilty of abusing her official position in connection with irregularities in the allocation of government land.

The cases relate to allegations that Hasina and others improperly benefited from the allocation of residential plots under the Purbachal New Town government project, a high profile housing scheme near Dhaka. The court sentenced Hasina to five years’ imprisonment in each case, to be served consecutively, resulting in a total 10 year term.

The rulings also included fines, with additional

jail time if they are not paid. Several of her family members and associates were also convicted. Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, a British Member of Parliament and niece of Hasina, received a four year prison term, while Radwan Mujib Siddiq and Azmina Siddiq, other close relatives, were each sentenced to seven years. Another former official of the housing authority involved in the project also received a prison sentence and a fine.

Hasina has been living in India since August 2024, after widespread student-led protests forced her resignation and departure from Bangladesh. Following her exit, an interim government assumed power and launched a broader anti corruption drive that saw multiple legal cases filed against Hasina and several senior members of her party and family.

This latest verdict adds to a series of legal setbacks

for Hasina, who has faced numerous charges ranging from corruption to alleged abuses of power. Combined with previous rulings, her accumulated sentences now total significantly more than this 10-year term.

The convictions come ahead of parliamentary elections, with Hasina’s party, the Awami League, sidelined in recent developments. Supporters of Hasina have criticised the proceedings as politically motivated, while the interim administration has maintained that the actions are part of efforts to hold leaders accountable for alleged misconduct.

The sentencing marks a critical moment in Bangladesh’s political narrative, with potential implications for political alliances, voter sentiment, and the future direction of the country’s governance as it heads toward national polls.

Markets Rebound After Budget-Day Sell-Off; Sensex Jumps Over 900 Points, Nifty Nears 25,100



Indian equity markets staged a strong recovery on Monday, bouncing back sharply after the heavy sell-off witnessed on Budget day. Investor sentiment improved as bargain hunting emerged at lower levels, helping benchmark indices erase a large part of their previous losses.

The BSE Sensex surged nearly 944 points during the session, while the NSE Nifty 50 reclaimed the 25,000 mark and closed close to 25,100. The rebound came after a steep decline in the previous session, when markets had reacted negatively to certain Budget proposals.

Market participants said the recovery was driven primarily by value buying, as investors viewed the sharp correction as an opportunity to enter fundamentally strong stocks. After the initial shock of the Budget announcements wore off, traders reassessed the broader economic outlook and found comfort in stable macro-economic indicators.

Heavyweight stocks played a key role in lifting the indices. Buying interest was seen across banking, IT, metals, and select auto stocks, helping markets recover from early-session lows. The broader market also showed improvement, with advances outnumbering declines on the exchanges.

Another factor supporting the rally was the easing of concerns around Budget-related measures that had triggered selling pressure earlier. Investors appeared to digest the impact of policy changes more calmly, shifting focus back to corporate earnings, domestic demand, and long-term growth prospects.

Currency and global cues also lent support. A relatively stable rupee and softer crude oil prices helped improve sentiment, particularly in sectors sensitive to in-

Data Centre and AI Stocks Rally After Budget; E2E Networks and Anant Raj Lead Gains



Shares of several data centre and artificial intelligence-linked companies saw a strong rise in the stock market after the announcement of the Union Budget 2026, with some stocks extending gains for a second trading session.

Among the most notable movers was E2E Networks, whose shares jumped by nearly 10% during trading, reflecting investor optimism. Anant Raj also posted significant gains, with its stock rising more than 7%. Other related companies, including Netweb Technologies, initially advanced in early trade before trimming their gains later in the session.

The positive momentum in these stocks came on the back of a major policy announcement in the budget aimed at positioning India as a significant player in global cloud infrastructure and digital services. The finance minister introduced a long-term tax incentive for foreign cloud service providers that operate using data centre infrastructure located in India. Under this proposal, companies that meet certain conditions will be eligible for a tax holiday extending until 2047, provided they serve Indian customers through domestic resellers.

This move is being seen as a strategic push to attract long-term investment from global cloud and hyperscale players. By offering extended tax benefits, the government hopes to encourage the setting up and expansion of data centres within the country, boosting investment in digital infrastructure and enhancing India's role in the global cloud ecosystem.

Analysts say the tax holiday could prove to be a significant positive for the sector, signalling confidence in India's potential as a digital hub and encouraging sustained capital commitment. The proposal is expected to accelerate

large-scale infrastructure build-out, which may benefit not only companies directly involved in data centre operations but also those in related technology and services segments.

Market participants noted that the rally in data centre and AI-linked stocks followed broader market volatility triggered by initial reactions to the budget's other measures, including changes to securities transaction taxes. While some sectors faced selling pressure due to these announcements, investors found renewed interest in stocks perceived as long-term beneficiaries of government policy.

The gains in data centre names reflect growing investor confidence in the long-term outlook for digital infrastructure in India, as well as expectations that supportive policies will drive future growth in cloud services, AI, and related technology investments.

Goyal Holds Budget Discussion With NSE CEO Ashish Chauhan Amid Market Focus on STT Changes

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met with Ashish Kumar Chauhan, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), in Mumbai to discuss the broader benefits and implications of the Union Budget 2026-27 for India's financial markets.

The meeting, described by Goyal as "excellent and engaging," was held as a breakfast discussion at the NSE headquarters. It brought together senior figures from the mutual fund and asset management industry, including investors and market participants, who shared their perspectives on the recently presented budget and its opportunities.

In a post on social media, Goyal said he was encouraged by the optimism among market stakeholders following the Budget announcement. He highlighted the enthusiasm for growth possibilities backed by the policy measures and welcomed new ideas and suggestions shared during the dialogue.

A key focus of the Budget has been the proposed increase in the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) on derivatives. Under the new proposals, STT on futures contracts is set to rise to 0.05% from 0.02%, and higher rates have been suggested for op-



tions premiums and the exercising of options. The government has said the move is aimed at discouraging excessive speculation and protecting smaller investors who may experience heavy losses in futures and options trading. The expected STT collection for the fiscal year 2026-27 is projected to be significantly higher under the revised structure.

The market reaction to the Budget's derivative tax proposals was initially negative, with benchmark indices falling sharply during a special trading session. However, markets later stabilised, and broader investor sentiment appeared to absorb the implications of the changes.

At the meeting, discussions centred on how the Budget's measures support India's long-term economic goals, including fiscal prudence, fostering growth, and strengthening the financial ecosystem. Goyal noted that var-

ious reforms, including those encouraging technology adoption, infrastructure development, and global competitiveness, are designed to boost investor confidence and position India for sustainable expansion.

Stakeholders attending the session shared feedback with both the minister and Chauhan, exploring how policy shifts might impact market dynamics and capital flows. The interaction underscored the importance of dialogue between policy-makers, market infrastructure institutions like the NSE, and private sector investors, especially in times of significant regulatory change.

Overall, the meeting served as a platform for assessing the holistic benefits of Budget 2026-27, aligning government objectives with market expectations, and reinforcing India's commitment to a resilient and forward-looking financial ecosystem.

FMCG Index Tumbles to 52 Week Low as Major Consumer Stocks Drop



The BSE FMCG index, which tracks the performance of fast moving consumer goods stocks, fell sharply on Monday to reach its lowest level in over a year. The slide reflects intense selling pressure across some of India's biggest consumer brands, with several major counters slipping between 2% and 3% during trading.

The downturn in the FMCG space was significant enough to drag the sector index to levels not seen since May 2023, underscoring a notable loss of momentum in what is traditionally considered a defensive segment of the market. This underperformance comes amid broader equity market fluctuations, but the FMCG index has fared

worse than the overall market so far this year.

Leading consumer stocks such as Hindustan Unilever, Godrej Consumer Products, ITC, Radico Khaitan, Varun Beverages, Dabur India and Marico all saw declines during the session, with losses in the range of 2% to 3%. Meanwhile, names including ITC, Emami, Patanjali, VST Industries, and Jyothy Labs hit their own 52 week lows as sentiment soured. Traders pointed to subdued demand and sector rotation away from consumer staples as contributing factors.

Among these, ITC, a diversified conglomerate with strong exposure to cigarettes, food products, agri business and paper-board segments, was a notable weak spot. Its stock slid to multi year lows, as rising taxes on cigarettes and expectations of higher prices weighed on investor confidence. This regulatory change has raised concerns over future volume growth in its tobacco business and is seen as a drag on valuations.

The FMCG sector's relative weakness was also visible in broader year to date performance. While the overall market has seen moderate declines, the FMCG index's drop has been steeper, indicating that investors may be reallocating capital to

other sectors perceived as offering better near term opportunities.

Despite the steep fall, some analysts believe the long term outlook for the FMCG space remains supported by India's large domestic consumption base. However, in the short term, rising input costs, slower demand growth, and regulatory headwinds in specific categories have contributed to volatility. Investors tracking the segment will be watching closely to see whether these trends persist or if fresh catalysts emerge to stabilise prices.

The sharp moves in the consumer goods stocks highlight how even traditionally defensive sectors can experience pressure when broader market conditions shift and sector specific challenges intensify. Many market participants are now reassessing sector allocations in light of recent performance and changing demand patterns.

NBFC Stocks Slip Up to 5% After Budget as Higher Gross Borrowing Raises Asset Quality Concerns

Shares of several non banking financial companies (NBFCs) fell sharply in trading following reactions to the Union Budget for 2026 27, with some stocks dropping as much as 5%. The decline came amid concerns that higher gross government borrowing could push up yields and pressure asset quality for lenders outside the banking system.

Among the most affected names were Shriram Finance, Poonawalla Fin-corp, IIFL Finance, Bajaj Finance, and Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Company, which all saw noticeable declines in their stock prices. The selling reflected investor unease over the prospect of tighter liquidity and rising interest rates in debt markets, which could make funding more expensive for NBFCs.

Market participants pointed to the Budget's

indication of increased government borrowing to meet fiscal needs as a key negative driver. When the government borrows more from the markets, it can lead to higher yields on government securities. In turn, this can push up borrowing costs for NBFCs, which depend heavily on the bond market and wholesale funds for their lending operations.

Higher yields also reduce the attractiveness of existing debt instruments, creating mark to market losses for firms holding government securities and other fixed income assets. For NBFCs, which often hold significant investment portfolios to manage liquidity, this can strain capital and earnings if the higher yield environment persists.

Additionally, analysts noted that rising interest rates generally increase

the cost of funds for all lenders. While banks have more diverse deposit bases to absorb rate increases, NBFCs often rely on bond issuances and commercial papers, which are more sensitive to changes in market yields. This puts pressure on net interest margins (NIMs) and profitability.

Some investors also pointed to concerns about loan quality in a higher rate regime. If borrowing costs rise significantly, borrowers may find it harder to service loans, potentially leading to elevated delinquencies in NBFC loan books. This is especially relevant for retail and small ticket portfolios, which form a significant part of many NBFCs' assets.

Despite the sell off, not all NBFC stocks fell uniformly. A few names managed to hold ground or trim losses as the session progressed, supported by



long term investor interest and strong underlying business fundamentals. However, the overall trend in the sector was negative on the day.

Analysts advising long term investors suggested focusing on companies with robust capitalization, strong risk management, and diversified funding sources. These firms are generally better positioned to navigate periods of higher yields and tighter liquidity.

The market reaction underscores how sensitive financial stocks — especially NBFCs — are to macroeconomic developments such as fiscal policy, borrowing patterns, and interest rate expectations. Going forward, continued monitoring of government borrowing plans and central bank policy will be crucial for understanding sector performance.

# Pilot’s Surprise In-Flight Tribute to His Father Leaves Passengers Moved



A routine flight turned into an unforgettable moment for passengers aboard an IndiGo aircraft when the captain made a heartfelt announcement that surprised and delighted everyone on board. What began as a normal journey became a touching tribute to family, service, and shared history — a moment that quickly went viral on social media.

The video circulating online shows Captain Ranveer taking the microphone to address his passengers with a warm smile. He began by introducing himself and acknowledging those aboard, but there was a deeper story he wanted to share. Ranveer revealed that the flight was departing from Dabolim Airport — a place of special significance for him personally. It was from this very airfield that he began his naval flying career nearly four decades ago.

As he spoke to the travelers, he explained that among the passengers were two very important people to him. One was his father, Admiral V.S. Shekhawat, a respected former Chief of Naval Staff. Also on board was Vice Admiral I.C. Rao, a longtime colleague and classmate of his father’s from more than 70 years earlier. The coincidence of their being on the same flight touched the captain deeply, and he felt compelled to share it with everyone present.

What made the announcement so re-

markable was not just the revelation of family ties but the story woven between generations of naval service. Ranveer recounted how, when he began flying in the Indian Navy 39 years ago, his father was already a squadron commander stationed at Dabolim. Over the years, his father’s career had taken him to the very top of the naval hierarchy, and now, decades later, father and son were sharing this moment in the skies together.

The heartfelt address was unplanned. Ranveer learned only the day before that his father and his father’s old friend would be on the same flight. In a simple gesture of love, he brought a small meal for his father and took a moment to honor him publicly during the flight. As he signed off from his announcement, he revealed to the passengers, “The gentleman you see here is Admiral Shekhawat — my father — and I am the captain of this aircraft.”

Passengers reacted with smiles, applause, and emotional appreciation. Clips of the announcement spread rapidly across social platforms, with viewers praising the captain’s sincerity and the beautiful convergence of personal history and professional life. Many called it a “fortunate and touching moment” that resonated far beyond just a regular flight, turning an ordinary journey into a memorable story of family pride and service.

# Volleyball Star Yuji Nishida’s Sincere Apology Leaves Fans Touched



Japanese volleyball star Yuji Nishida recently won hearts across the internet after a heartfelt on-court apology during an all-star match turned into a viral moment. What started as a minor accident during a light-hearted event quickly became a powerful display of humility, sportsmanship, and respect.

The incident took place at an SV League All-Star Game in Kobe, where Nishida, captain of the Osaka Bluteon and one of Japan’s most recognisable volleyball players, was participating in a half-time serving challenge. Known for his powerful left-handed serves, Nishida attempted a strong shot, but the ball went off target and accidentally struck a female courtside official on the back. Although the official was unharmed, the unexpected mishap immediately caught everyone’s attention.

Rather than brushing off the moment or offering a brief verbal apology, Nishida reacted in an extraordinary way. Visibly embarrassed, he dramatically slid across the court on his stomach toward the official, his head lowered in a clear sign of remorse. The crowd burst into laughter and applause, recognising both the sincerity and humour in his gesture.

Once he reached the official, Nishida went a step further. He dropped to his knees and bowed repeatedly, press-

ing his palms together as if pleading for forgiveness. His exaggerated yet genuine apology transformed an awkward moment into one filled with warmth and mutual respect. The official, clearly amused and touched, responded with a smile and a polite bow, signalling that the apology had been graciously accepted.

Videos of the incident quickly spread across social media platforms, attracting millions of views and reactions. Fans from around the world praised Nishida for his humility, calling the moment wholesome, refreshing, and deeply respectful. Many viewers noted that his actions reflected the cultural importance of sincere apologies in Japan, where gestures of respect often carry as much meaning as words.

Despite the brief interruption, Nishida’s performance on the court remained impressive. He went on to play a key role in his team’s dominant victory and was later named the Most Valuable Player of the event. The combination of athletic excellence and genuine character only added to the admiration he received online.

In a sport often defined by intensity and competition, Yuji Nishida’s heartfelt apology stood out as a reminder that grace, humility, and respect can leave an impact far greater than any winning point.

# US Woman’s Bond With 90-Year-Old Neighbour Goes Viral After She Helps Raise Her Baby



A heartwarming friendship between a woman in the United States and her elderly neighbour has captured the attention of millions online, reminding people of the powerful impact of community support.

When Colleen Bordeaux and her husband moved into a new home in Los Angeles, they did not have any close family nearby. The young couple soon met their senior neighbours, 90-year-old Shirley Dionzon and her husband

Ken, who had lived across the street for decades. What began as a friendly greeting gradually grew into a deep bond between Colleen and Shirley, a connection that would later prove invaluable.

As Colleen’s life changed with the birth of her first child, Ryder, the support from Shirley became a source of comfort and practical help. During her pregnancy and after the baby’s arrival, Shirley checked in on Colleen regularly, offering encourage-

ment, sharing parenting tips and simply being present. When Colleen experienced discomfort in the later months of her pregnancy, Shirley even offered her walking stick to help her get around.

After Ryder was born, Colleen’s own mother was able to stay and help for just two weeks. When she had to return home, the challenge of juggling newborn care and work responsibilities intensified for Colleen. That’s when Shirley stepped in even more. She frequently brought food to the new parents and lovingly took care of Ryder, allowing Colleen to attend work calls or run errands without worry.

A short video shared by Colleen on Instagram showing Shirley holding baby Ryder quickly struck a chord with viewers around the world. The post, which amassed well over a million views, carried a simple yet powerful message about the importance of community. In her caption, Colleen urged people to reconnect with those around them, saying that if someone needs the support of a “village,” it can begin with talking to and caring about neighbours.

For many viewers, the relationship between Colleen and Shirley exemplified a modern interpretation of age-old wisdom: that raising a child and navigating early parenthood doesn’t have to be done alone. Their story highlighted how intergenerational friendships can enrich lives on both sides — a younger parent receives support and wisdom, while an older neighbour gets a renewed sense of purpose and connection.

Colleen shared that Shirley helped her trust her own instincts as a new mother, and the two often joked about how children are easy to manage compared with husbands. Meanwhile, Shirley said re-learning how to care for a baby brought her joy and fulfillment.

The online reaction to their story has been overwhelmingly positive, with many praising the pair for reminding the world that deep, meaningful relationships can be found just next door.

# Viral ‘Four Moons’ Moon Video Sparks Debate — Rare Paraselene or Fake?

A strange video showing what looked like multiple moons in the night sky has taken social media by storm, leaving people around the world both amazed and confused.

The video, widely shared and viewed thousands of times, appears to show what looks like four moons hovering above the sky. Many who saw it were stunned by the sight and shared it across platforms, with some users celebrating it as a rare celestial spectacle and others questioning whether it was real or manipulated.

Some of the earliest posts about the footage came from users claiming the scene was filmed over St Petersburg, Russia. In these posts, people suggested that a rare natural occurrence — sometimes described as “four moons” — was visible that night. The striking visual, with bright orb-like shapes alongside the real Moon, certainly looked unusual and dreamlike to onlookers.

Experts and sky watchers explained that the surreal sight is likely the result of an atmospheric optical effect known as a paraselene, also called “moon dogs.” This phenomenon happens when moonlight passes through flat ice crystals high in the atmosphere. As the light bends or refracts through these tiny crystals, it creates bright spots beside the real Moon, giving the impression of extra lunar discs in the sky.

Paraselenes are similar to the more familiar “sun dogs” — bright spots that sometimes appear beside the sun — but are caused by moonlight instead. Such phenomena are rare and usually occur under very specific weather conditions, especially in cold regions where ice crystals are abundant high above the Earth.

Despite this scientific explanation, not everyone was convinced. Some viewers suggested that the video could be showing something else entire-



ly, such as a train of satellites passing in sequence, giving the illusion of multiple bright lights. Others dismissed the footage outright, calling it fake or digitally altered and pointing to the unusual alignment of the “moons” as suspicious.

The internet debate became even more confusing when different artificial intelligence tools offered conflicting interpretations — one stating that the video matched the expected characteristics of a paraselene, and another suggesting satellite lights might be a better fit.

Regardless of its cause, the video sparked widespread curiosity and discussion about celestial phenomena and how natural conditions can create astonishing visual effects in the sky. For many online viewers, it served as

a reminder of how much there still is to learn about the atmosphere and the ways light can interact with it.

In the end, while the beautiful display might look like something from another world, scientists say it is likely a natural optical illusion caused by ice crystals refracting moonlight — a rare but real atmospheric event.

# Wild Buffalo Crashes Through Bike Showroom in Kerala; CCTV Captures Dramatic Moment



A dramatic and unexpected incident unfolded in Kerala when a wild buffalo sprinted into a bike showroom, smashing its glass front and wreaking havoc inside, with the entire episode captured on CCTV.

The startling event took place on the morning of February 1 in Kuthupar-

amba, Kannur district. Footage from the surveillance cameras shows a large buffalo charging directly at the showroom’s glass façade. With considerable force, it broke through the glass panels and stumbled into the display area, sending shards of glass flying and damaging furniture and vehicles arranged inside.

As the animal forged ahead, it seemed unsteady. At one point, it slipped and collided with a concrete wall, yet regained its balance and continued moving before eventually finding its way out of the building. The sudden intrusion caused shock and panic among nearby staff and locals, who quickly fled the scene to ensure their safety.

When employees and passersby realised what was happening, there was no one inside the showroom at the moment of impact. This fortunate circumstance meant that nobody was physically hurt, despite the buffalo’s reckless entry and the broken glass and dented bikes left behind.

After causing the disruption, the buffalo exited the showroom, but the direction in which it fled was unclear. Concerned about the presence of the wild animal in a populated area, the Kerala Forest Department launched a search operation. Officials said they would attempt to tranquillise and capture the buffalo if necessary, to prevent potential danger to people and property.

According to wildlife experts and local authorities, the buffalo is believed to have strayed from the nearby Kannavam Forest

area, venturing into the commercial locality in search of food or while moving with its herd. Incidents of wild animals wandering into human settlements have been increasing in parts of Kerala, often attributed to shrinking habitats and expanding human activity along forest fringes.

Scenes like this emphasise the ongoing challenges faced in balancing wildlife conservation with growing urbanisation. While the buffalo’s unexpected detour caused property damage and a commotion, it also served as a reminder of the complex interactions between humans and wildlife in regions where natural and built environments intersect.

As the search continues, authorities are urging residents to stay alert and report sightings of the animal to ensure it can be safely guided back to its natural habitat without harm.

# Suryakumar Yadav Gives Positive Fitness Update on Tilak Varma and Washington Sundar Ahead of T20 World Cup

Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav has shared a positive update on the fitness of key players Tilak Varma and Washington Sundar as the T20 World Cup 2026 approaches, giving a much needed boost to India's preparations.

Speaking after India's victory over New Zealand in the final match of the T20I series, Suryakumar revealed that both Tilak and Sundar are progressing well in their recoveries and could soon rejoin the squad ahead of the tournament, which begins on February 7.

Tilak Varma, who has been out of action for several weeks following surgery earlier this season, has resumed training and is expected to join the team in Mumbai next week. The left handed batter, known for his aggressive stroke play and ability to stabilize the middle order, will also feature in warm up games before the World Cup, giving him valuable match practice before India's campaign begins.

Suryakumar said that Tilak has started batting, bowling, and fielding during his rehabilitation and is shaping up well. He confirmed that Tilak is scheduled to play practice matches on February



2 and 4 in Mumbai, which Suryakumar believes will be enough to assess his readiness for the main event. If fit, Tilak's return would strengthen India's batting options and create healthy selection dilemmas for the team management.

Regarding all rounder Washington Sundar, Suryakumar offered a similarly encouraging

update. Sundar, who had been recovering from a rib injury sustained while bowling earlier in the year, has also started both bowling and batting practice. The captain said Sundar "is looking good" and is expected to rejoin full training soon. This is positive news for India, as Sundar's off spin and middle order batting provide valuable balance to

the side.

Suryakumar emphasised that the fitness of both players is being closely monitored, and the team hopes to have them fully ready before the World Cup gets under way. India will play two warm up matches in Mumbai before their first group game, giving the management a chance to fine tune their combinations and see how

the returning players perform in match conditions.

The encouraging updates on Tilak and Sundar come at an important time, as India aims to defend its T20 World Cup title on home soil. Their potential availability adds depth to a strong squad and could be crucial in high pressure matchups as the tournament unfolds.

## ICC Mulls Sanctions on Pakistan Over Decision Not to Play India in T20 World Cup



The International Cricket Council (ICC) is considering imposing sanctions on Pakistan after the country's decision not to take the field against India in their scheduled T20 World Cup 2026 match. The move has triggered widespread discussion in the cricketing world and could lead to disciplinary action under ICC rules if Pakistan goes ahead with its boycott.

Pakistan had an-

nounced that its team will compete in the tournament but will refuse to play its group stage match against India, creating an unprecedented situation in international cricket. The ICC has since begun assessing what actions it can take under its constitution and code of conduct to address the matter, with sanctions being one of the options under review.

Officials within the ICC

see Pakistan's decision as a potential violation of the spirit of the game and its commitments as a full member of the global governing body. If a team fails to show up for a scheduled match without adequate justification, the ICC has the authority to impose penalties ranging from fines and point deductions to more serious measures such as suspensions or cancellation of future participation

rights. The specific sanctions being discussed have not been disclosed, but they could include financial penalties or other disciplinary measures.

Sources familiar with the discussions say that the ICC is also keen to protect the credibility and commercial integrity of the World Cup. The India Pakistan fixture is traditionally one of the most watched matches in world sports, attracting massive global viewership and significant revenue from broadcasting and sponsorship. Its absence from the tournament schedule would deal a blow not just to fans, but to the financial ecosystem underpinning the event.

In response to the ICC's deliberations, representatives from Pakistan cricket have defended their position, saying the decision not to play India was taken on grounds of national policy and sovereign choice. They argue that the sport's governing bodies must understand the larger context in which the decision was made. However, critics inside Pa-

kistan and abroad have questioned whether the national board should separate sporting commitments from political considerations.

Legal experts in sports governance say that the ICC's disciplinary framework gives it broad powers to act when member boards breach contractual obligations tied to tournaments. This includes ensuring that scheduled matches are played unless exceptional circumstances, such as force majeure, are proven.

The ICC could also face pressure from broadcasters, sponsors and other member boards to take a firm stance if the boycott proceeds, as stakeholders seek assurances that tournament commitments are honoured and future contracts remain secure.

As deliberations continue, the cricket world remains alert to how the ICC will balance regulatory authority with diplomatic sensitivity — and whether Pakistan will ultimately face formal sanctions for its controversial decision.

## Shahid Afridi Calls Pakistan's T20 World Cup Boycott 'Regrettable' but Urges Cricket to Build Bridges

Former Pakistan cricket star Shahid Afridi expressed disappointment over his country's decision to boycott its T20 World Cup 2026 match against India, calling the move "regrettable" while emphasising his belief that cricket should be a force for connection rather than division.

The high profile clash between India and Pakistan, scheduled for February 15 in Colombo, has become a contentious issue after the Pakistan government announced that its team would participate in the tournament but refuse to take the field against India. The decision has sparked debate among fans, officials, former players and cricket administrators, shaking one of the sport's most anticipated fixtures.

Afridi, who retired from international cricket years ago but remains one of Pakistan's most recognisable cricketing figures, voiced mixed



emotions about the boycott. While he acknowledged the authorities' right to make decisions he described as "regrettable," he also highlighted his long held belief that the sport has the power to bridge divides when other avenues fail.

In a public statement, Afridi underlined that he

has always seen cricket as a platform that can bring people together even amid political tensions. He suggested that sports — and especially iconic rivalries like India versus Pakistan — can open doors for dialogue and understanding when diplomatic channels stall. He lamented the fact that

fans on both sides of the border would miss out on a fixture that traditionally draws huge global audiences and intense passion.

Despite his regret over the boycott decision, Afridi also indicated that he respects the stance taken by Pakistan's leadership and urged cricket's gov-

erning bodies to respond in a way that preserves the integrity and spirit of the game. He called on the International Cricket Council (ICC) and member boards to work toward solutions that uphold fairness and give fans the chance to witness compelling contests without letting external disputes overshadow the sport.

Afridi's remarks came amid broader discussions around the impact of politics on international sport and questions about how cricket authorities can balance national interests with the expectations of fans worldwide.

His call for cricket to act as a unifying force — even as national decisions lead to missed matchups — reflects a hope shared by many former players and observers: that the sport's global appeal and emotional resonance can sometimes transcend geopolitical tensions and bring people together, rather than push them further apart.

## After Australian Open Final Loss, Novak Djokovic Drops Hint About Future: "God Knows What Happens Tomorrow"



Novak Djokovic left fans and the tennis world talking about his future after a heart felt and somewhat cryptic message following his defeat in the Australian Open 2026 final. The Serbian great, one of the sport's all time legends, was beaten in four sets by Spain's Carlos Alcaraz, ending his bid for a record breaking 25th Grand Slam title.

Djokovic's loss marked his first ever defeat in an Australian Open final, a remarkable milestone in itself given his long history of dominance at Melbourne Park. After the match, Djokovic stood before the crowd in Rod Laver Arena and delivered remarks that many interpreted as a possible hint about retirement, though he stopped short of making any concrete announcement.

Addressing the crowd, the 38 year old said the championship run had been "a great ride" and expressed gratitude to the fans for their unwavering support throughout his career. Djokovic acknowledged that he hadn't expected to find himself once again in a Grand Slam final at this stage of his career, noting how much the support from fans had meant to him.

Then came the line that has sparked speculation about his future: "God knows what happens tomorrow, let alone in six months or

12 months." With those words, Djokovic left the door open to uncertainty, suggesting that he hasn't ruled anything in or out but making it clear that he won't make decisions hastily. Many observers heard the remark as a sign that Djokovic may soon consider what comes next, even if retirement isn't imminent.

Throughout his post match comments, Djokovic spoke with an emotional tone — acknowledging the shifting dynamics of men's tennis as younger stars like Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner rise. His loss has underscored how competitive the landscape has become and how hard it is to maintain dominance amid fierce, emerging talent.

Despite the defeat, Djokovic also praised Alcaraz's performance and the young Spaniard's exceptional level of play. His gracious comments reflect Djokovic's deep respect for the sport and its next generation.

While fans and pundits will be watching closely for any official word on his career plans, Djokovic's hint has certainly fuelled debate about whether this could be one of his final chapters at the top level of tennis. For now, he remains grateful, reflective and respectfully non committal about what the future holds.

## What Pakistan Pulling Out of Its T20 World Cup Match vs India Could Really Cost



Pakistan's decision to potentially pull out of its T20 World Cup 2026 group match against India could have massive financial, sporting, and reputational consequences. The India Pakistan clash is considered the most commercially valuable single game in world cricket, generating revenue from broadcast rights, sponsorships, advertising, and ticket sales. The financial impact of canceling the match could reach around USD 500 million (₹4,500 crore) for the global cricket ecosystem.

Broadcasters would lose substantial advertising revenue, with premium ad slots during this marquee fixture commanding some of the highest rates in sports. The International Cricket Council (ICC) would also see reduced earnings, as broadcast deals are often priced with marquee matches in mind. Sponsors and activation partners would lose exposure, which could affect future deals and partnerships.

For the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the consequences go beyond finances. If Pakistan fails to appear, India would be awarded a walkover, gaining two points in the group stage and significantly reducing Pakistan's chances of advancing in the tournament. The ICC could also impose financial penalties, withhold Pakistan's revenue share, or seek compensation

from the board to cover losses incurred by broadcasters. Legal and contractual disputes could further expose Pakistan to financial liability.

The long-term commercial impact could be significant. Broadcasters and sponsors may view Pakistan matches as high-risk, potentially lowering the value of future media rights and corporate sponsorships. This uncertainty could also affect the Pakistan Super League (PSL) and other domestic cricket initiatives, as investors may reconsider commitments.

Fans worldwide would also be affected, with potential ticket and travel cancellations, reduced viewership, and disappointment among audiences who anticipate the historic rivalry. The absence of the India Pakistan match could diminish overall tournament momentum and global attention, reducing fan engagement and tournament visibility.

In short, pulling out of the match is more than a political or symbolic move. It carries huge economic losses, ICC sanctions, competitive disadvantages, and long-term reputational damage for Pakistan cricket. The ripple effects could impact broadcasters, sponsors, fans, and the future commercial value of Pakistan's participation in global cricket tournaments.