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Chandrababu Clears ₹29,021 Cr Investments at 15th SIPB Meet

Vijayawada | February 18 | TPN Bureau

N. Chandrababu Naidu has approved 27 major projects worth 29,021 crore at the 15th State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) meeting, paving the way for the creation of 22,407 jobs across Andhra Pradesh. Chairing the high-level review at his camp office on Wednesday, the Chief Minister reiterated that the government's priority is to ensure a "Speed of Doing Business" approach so that every approved project moves swiftly from clearance to execution.

The meeting was attended by ministers including Nara Lokesh along with other cabinet members and senior officials. The projects span key sectors such as IT, renewable energy, tourism, food processing, infrastructure, and manufacturing, reflecting a broad-based push to accelerate industrial growth in the state.

Monthly Reviews to Track Progress

Expressing concern that some projects fail to progress on the ground even after approvals, the Chief Minister announced that he will personally conduct monthly reviews to monitor implementation. Officials have been directed to stay in constant touch with companies that



signed agreements and provide all necessary support to ensure timely execution. He also warned that land allotted to firms that fail to begin work within stipulated timelines could be taken back after due review. The government is also preparing special incentives to attract more semiconductor investments and is considering additional benefits for industries set up on privately owned land. The Chief Minister further urged officials to reach out to non-resident Indians (NRIs) and encourage them to participate in the state's development journey.

Tourism and Infrastructure Push

To strengthen tourism, the state plans to develop dedicated clusters across Visakhapatnam, Amaravati, and Tirupati regions. Desti-

nations such as Suryalanka, Polavaram, Pulicat, Gandikota, Srisaillam, Madanapalle, and Horsley Hills will see new hospitality infrastructure, including hotels and shopping complexes. The proposed "Bharat Mandapam" in Visakhapatnam is envisioned as a world-class convention centre and an iconic landmark. The Chief Minister also set a target of creating 50,000 hotel rooms statewide and promoting health tourism, a sports city, and a creative city ecosystem. Tirupati is being positioned as a major wedding destination, while value addition in aquaculture is expected to boost exports, particularly to the United States.

Diverse Project Portfolio

Among the approved proposals are large re-

newable energy projects, a semiconductor facility in Visakhapatnam, lithium-ion battery manufacturing units, tourism ventures, dairy and food-processing plants, and logistics infrastructure. A major gigafactory for energy storage cells alone accounts for over 8,000 crore in investments, highlighting the state's ambition to become a hub for emerging technologies.

Officials noted that across the 15 SIPB meetings held so far, Andhra Pradesh has cleared five guiding principles: water security through micro-irrigation and scientific water budgeting; demand-driven crop planning linked to market intelligence; accelerated adoption of agri-tech; expansion of food processing and value addition; and timely government intervention to stabilise farmer incomes. Shri Rajsekhar also referenced the Bharat Vistar AI platform demonstration at a banana farm before Bill Gates, where farmers used AI for pest forecasting, image-based disease de-

AP Highlights AI Driven Agricultural Transformation at India AI Impact Summit 2026

New Delhi, Feb 18, 2026

Andhra Pradesh showcased its vision for an AI-enabled agricultural revolution at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, presenting an integrated strategy to enhance productivity, resilience, and farmer-centric governance in alignment with Swarna Andhra 2047 and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Delivering the keynote, Shri Budithi Rajsekhar, IAS (Retd.), Ex-Officio Special Chief Secretary (Agriculture and Co-operation), highlighted the critical role of agriculture, which contributes nearly 33% of the state's Gross State Domestic Product — significantly higher than the national average. "Not long ago, AI in agriculture seemed far-fetched. Today, it is one of the most sought-after tools shaping farmer livelihoods," he said, emphasising that sustained annual growth above 15% requires transforming the primary sector.

Anchored in Swarna Andhra 2047, Andhra Pradesh has adopted five guiding principles: water security through micro-irrigation and scientific water budgeting; demand-driven crop planning linked to market intelligence; accelerated adoption of agri-tech; expansion of food processing and value addition; and timely government intervention to stabilise farmer incomes.

Shri Rajsekhar also referenced the Bharat Vistar AI platform demonstration at a banana farm before Bill Gates, where farmers used AI for pest forecasting, image-based disease de-



tection, drone booking, and remedial advisory through a unified app, demonstrating practical, field-level impact.

M. S. Srivalli Krishnan, Deputy Director, Agriculture Development, Gates Foundation, praised Andhra Pradesh's data-driven governance culture. She noted that strong AI systems are built on robust foundational data, highlighting how AI can complement human extension services and deliver faster, real-time advisory to farmers.

Central to this transformation is AP-AIMS, an integrated agricultural intelligence platform leveraging AgriStack, remote sensing, GIS mapping, and plot-level analytics. It tracks sowing and crop health across 1.44 crore fields, enumerates over 2.4 crore coconut and 1.4 crore palm trees, and enables precision-based planning. Drone-enabled services cover 60,000 hectares annually, supported by nearly 9,700 service providers, while AI-based livestock identification, IoT-enabled aquacul-

ture solutions, and traceability systems are expanding the AI ecosystem across the state.

Collaborative partners such as Athena Infonomics, Vassar Labs, and Catalyst Management Services provide technical expertise and help scale innovations through public systems, ensuring solutions remain farmer-focused.

Concluding his address, Shri Rajsekhar stressed that AI's value lies in tangible benefits for farmers, supported by data integrity, hyperlocal advisory systems, Rythu Seva Kendras, and privacy-conscious digital governance. "The future of agriculture will belong to those who dare to adopt and adapt," he said.

The session reaffirmed Andhra Pradesh's leadership in scalable, evidence-based AI integration, setting a benchmark for transforming agriculture while strengthening farmer incomes, resilience, and long-term sustainability.

Anitha Ready for Assembly Debate on Tirumala Ghee Controversy



Vijayawada, Feb 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha has expressed her readiness to face a detailed discussion in the state Assembly regarding the controversy over allegedly adulterated ghee used in the Tirumala laddu prasadam. She openly challenged opposition members to present concrete evidence so that the issue can be addressed transparently, emphasizing the importance of fact-based debate and accountability.

The controversy began after allegations emerged that substandard or mixed ghee was supplied to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), raising concerns about the quality of the sacred laddu prasadam offered to millions of devotees. Opposition parties have demanded an urgent discussion in the legislature, stressing the need for proper monitoring and transparency in temple supply chains.

Speaking to the media, Minister Anitha underscored that the government welcomes a thorough examination of the matter. She insisted that the debate should focus on verified facts and documented findings rather than political theatrics. Anitha also clarified that the authorities had already initiated an internal review to ensure quality standards are maintained, and she urged the opposition to contribute constructive-

ly by presenting solid evidence.

The Assembly has witnessed heated exchanges in recent days, with opposition members submitting motions calling for strict scrutiny of ghee procurement practices. Anitha maintained that while legislative disruptions have occurred, serious issues affecting devotees and public interest should remain the priority. She cautioned against politicizing sensitive matters and reiterated that the government is committed to safeguarding both religious sentiments and public confidence.

In addition, Anitha highlighted the need for systemic improvements in monitoring temple supplies to prevent similar controversies in the future. She urged cooperation across party lines to ensure that decisions in the Assembly serve the public interest and maintain the sanctity of revered religious practices.

The minister's proactive stance has drawn attention across political and social circles. By openly inviting debate and focusing on evidence, Anitha has positioned herself as a leader willing to engage in transparent governance while addressing public concerns. The upcoming Assembly sessions are expected to feature detailed discussions on the matter, providing an opportunity for all parties to clarify their positions and work toward ensuring accountability, quality, and trust in the TTD's prasadam operations.



Spectacular International Fleet Review Held at Visakhapatnam Coast

Visakhapatnam, Feb 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Visakhapatnam witnessed a grand display of maritime power as the International Fleet Review (IFR) was held along its coastline, bringing together naval forces from India and several other nations. The event featured a majestic parade of 71 warships arranged in six rows, demonstrating precision, coordination, and operational readiness. The prestigious event was attended by top dignitaries, including President Droupadi Murmu, Andhra Pradesh Governor Justice Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. The dignitaries boarded INS Sumedha for the fleet review, where they received a ceremonial guard of honour from the Indian Navy personnel. Their presence underscored the strategic importance of the occasion and highlighted India's growing naval stature on the global stage. Among the participants were 19 foreign warships representing friendly nations, 45 ships



from the Indian Navy, and seven vessels from the Coast Guard, Merchant Navy, and research fleets. The diverse mix of ships reflected the collaborative spirit of the event and showcased India's commitment to international maritime cooperation. During the review, the naval ships performed coordinated manoeuvres, salutes, and precision formations. The parade in-

cluded a mix of advanced warships, frigates, destroyers, submarines, and support vessels, highlighting both the defensive and offensive capabilities of the Indian Navy and its international partners. Spectators along the Visakhapatnam coastline witnessed the impressive synchrony and professionalism of crews from multiple nations. The IFR also served as a platform to

strengthen diplomatic ties and foster mutual understanding among navies. Through joint drills and ceremonial displays, participating nations demonstrated their shared commitment to maintaining peace, security, and freedom of navigation in international waters. For Visakhapatnam, the event reinforced the city's significance as a major maritime hub. Hosting such a high-profile gathering not only highlighted India's naval power but also emphasized its strategic importance in the Indian Ocean region. The International Fleet Review has become a symbol of naval diplomacy, showcasing India's growing role in regional and global maritime security.

The event concluded with a display of naval traditions, including ceremonial gun salutes and the waving of flags, leaving both the dignitaries and spectators in awe. It was a proud moment for the Indian Navy and a testament to India's commitment to fostering strong international partnerships at sea.

Affordable Generic Veterinary Medicines for Livestock Farmers: 150 PAVKs to Be Set Up Across Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati, 18-02-2026 | TPN Bureau:

Amaravati, February 18: The Government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to strengthen the animal husbandry sector by providing quality generic veterinary medicines to livestock farmers at affordable prices. Minister for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, Kinjarapu Atchannaidu, announced that the government is fulfilling its 2024 election manifesto promise to supply subsidized medicines to livestock rearers.

As part of the first phase, the state will establish 150 Pashu Aushadhi Vikray Kendras (PAVKs) across various districts. These centers will ensure the availability of high-quality generic veterinary medicines at significantly reduced prices, thereby lowering treatment costs for farmers and improving access to essential animal healthcare services.

The Minister stated that these centers will be operated exclusively through village-level sheep rearing cooperative societies, with priority given to women members. This initiative is expected not only to enhance transparency and accountability but also to promote women's partici-



tion in rural economic activities.

In aspirational districts, each center will receive special financial assistance of ₹1.5 lakh. The project is being implemented at a unit cost of ₹3.61 lakh, with a total outlay of ₹5.41 crore for the initial phase. To ensure financial viability, operators will receive a 20 percent incentive on procurement and storage, along with a 20 percent sales margin.

Quality control and supply chain management will be carried out in coordination with the Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI), ensuring that medicines meet prescribed standards. The centers will function within the premises of government veterinary hospitals, and all transactions will be conducted through a Point of Sale (POS) system to maintain transpar-

ency and digital records.

Minister Atchannaidu emphasized that this scheme will significantly reduce the financial burden on livestock farmers while ensuring timely access to essential medicines. By lowering veterinary treatment expenses and improving service delivery, the initiative is expected to boost productivity in the animal husbandry sector.

Furthermore, the establishment of these centers will create employment opportunities in rural areas, strengthen co-operative institutions, and contribute to the economic empowerment of livestock farmers. The government believes that this initiative will play a crucial role in enhancing the overall growth and sustainability of the animal husbandry and dairy sectors in the state.

AP Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill – 2026 Passed Unanimously in Assembly



Amaravati, 18-02-2026 | TPN Bureau:

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly has unanimously passed the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill – 2026, marking a significant reform in the voter registration process for Panchayat Raj institutions. The Bill enables youth who attain 18 years of age to register as voters four times a year, aligning the state law with central legislation.

The Bill was introduced in the Assembly by Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh on behalf of Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, who also holds the Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, and Rural Water Supply portfolios. The session was presided over by Deputy Speaker Raghu Rama Krishna Raju, and members across party lines welcomed the amendment.

Under the previous system, only January 1 was considered the qualifying date for voter registration in Panchayat Raj institu-

tions. As a result, individuals who turned 18 on or after January 2 had to wait an entire year to exercise their voting rights. The new amendment introduces four qualifying dates each year—January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1—thereby expanding opportunities for eligible youth to enroll as voters without unnecessary delay.

This reform brings Panchayat Raj institutions in line with the provisions already applicable to Assembly and Parliamentary elections under central law, as well as municipal bodies. By synchronizing these frameworks, the state aims to implement a uniform voter list system across all levels of governance, enhancing administrative efficiency and electoral consistency.

The coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had earlier promulgated an ordinance on December 23, 2025, to give effect to this reform. With the Assembly's approval

during the ongoing session, the ordinance has now been accorded full legislative backing.

During the debate, MLAs Lokam Naga Madhavi (Nellimarla), N. Eswara Rao (Etcherla), and Gorantla Butchiah Chowdary (Rajamahendravaram Rural) participated actively. They emphasized the need to eliminate irregularities in voter lists and ensure transparency in the preparation and maintenance of electoral rolls. Responding to their suggestions, Minister Durgesh assured the House that the recommendations would be conveyed to Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for due consideration.

Deputy Speaker Raghu Rama Krishna Raju formally announced the unanimous passage of the Bill, describing it as a progressive and historic decision that strengthens democratic participation and promotes electoral transparency in rural governance.

APRSA Submits Comprehensive Suggestions on Draft AP Civil Services Pension Rules, 2026

Amaravati, 18-02-2026 | TPN Bureau:

The Andhra Pradesh Revenue Services Association (APRSA), Amaravati, has formally submitted comprehensive and constructive suggestions to the Government of Andhra Pradesh on the proposed Draft Andhra Pradesh Civil Services Pension Rules, 2026. In response to the government's invitation seeking feedback from recognized service associations, the APRSA undertook a detailed review of the draft rules and presented its recommendations with a focus on safeguarding the future security, family welfare, and service justice of government employees.

Under the leadership of State President Boparaju Venkateswarlu, representatives of APRSA, along with member associations of APJAC Amaravati, met the Finance Secretary, Vadarevu Vinay Chand, at the State Secretariat on February 18, 2026. During the meeting, several key issues concerning pension reforms and employee welfare were discussed in detail.



One of the primary concerns raised relates to disciplinary proceedings and post-retirement actions. The Association recommended that departmental inquiries—whether initiated during service or after retirement—must be completed within a maximum period of two years to prevent prolonged uncertainty for employees. Additionally, clarity was sought regarding the circumstances under which criminal cases may be

registered after retirement. On qualifying service and medical invalidation, the Association urged the government to exempt the minimum qualifying service requirement in cases of medical invalidation. It further recommended that employees retiring due to severe illness should be granted full pensionary benefits in recognition of their circumstances. The Association also

emphasized the need for clarity in the treatment of leave and service calculation. It proposed that Extraordinary Leave (EOL) taken on medical grounds, supported by valid medical certification, should be counted as qualifying service. Furthermore, provisions that existed clearly under previous pension rules should be retained in the new framework to avoid ambiguity. Addressing concerns of employees under the

Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS), the Association called for equitable treatment, particularly in cases of medical invalidation. It recommended extending family pension and gratuity benefits to CPS employees who are medically invalidated.

In terms of commutation benefits, APRSA suggested reducing the commutation restoration period from 15 years to 12 years to provide financial relief to pensioners. The Association also advocated strengthening family pension protections by extending the duration of family pension for families of employees who pass away after retirement and simplifying widow declaration requirements to once a year.

The APRSA concluded by requesting the government to convene a direct meeting with recognized service associations to provide clarity on the proposed rules. The Association reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the welfare and financial security of government employees and their families.

R&B Minister BC Janardhan Reddy Clarifies on Removal of Trees During Road Expansion

Amaravati, 18-02-2026 | TPN Bureau:

In the Assembly, Roads & Buildings (R&B) Minister B. C. Janardhan Reddy clarified the government's position regarding the removal of large trees as part of road widening works. Responding to a question raised by Yelamanchili MLA Sundarapu Vijay Kumar, the Minister stated that only those trees obstructing road expansion are being removed, both in national and state highway projects.

He explained that while undertaking widening works on National Highways, strict environmental guidelines are being followed. As per norms, 1 percent of the total civil works cost is earmarked specifically for greenery and plantation along highways. Under these guidelines, plantation activities are taken up in the central median as well as on both sides of the road, ensuring avenue planta-



tions and long-term maintenance.

With regard to State Highways, the Minister said that tree plantations are being carried out on both sides of the road wherever "Right of Way (RoW)" land is available. In cases where sufficient RoW land is not available, plantations are undertaken in lands identi-

fied for afforestation as per Forest Department guidelines.

He further informed the House that steps are also being taken to translocate long-standing and large trees to other suitable locations instead of removing them outright. As part of such initiatives, nearly 18 trees were planted in the Yela-

manchili constituency on the day of the announcement.

The Minister noted that in the past, trees along the road leading to the State Secretariat had dried up due to neglect, but after the coalition government assumed office, measures have been initiated to protect and maintain greenery in

those areas. Following the directions of the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, priority is being given to expanding green cover along roadways.

He also remarked that during the tenure of former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, several long-standing trees were reportedly cut down for a single-day meeting, calling it an unfortunate instance.

The Minister emphasized that the present coalition government is committed to environmental protection and sustainable development. Through afforestation programs and systematic plantation drives along highways, the government aims to balance infrastructure development with ecological preservation, ensuring that road expansion projects proceed without compromising environmental priorities.

Process to Remove Lands from 22A Prohibited List to Be Further Simplified: Anagani Satya Prasad

Amaravati, 18-02-2026 | TPN Bureau:

Amaravati: Revenue, Registration and Stamps Minister Anagani Satya Prasad informed the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly that the process of removing lands from the 22A prohibited list will be further simplified to benefit genuine landowners, particularly the poor and middle-class citizens.

Responding to questions raised by TDP MLA Kollikapudi Srinivasa Rao and BJP MLA Vishnu Kumar Raju regarding land encroachments and removal of lands from the 22A list, the Minister stated that the government has already issued a memo allowing the deletion of five categories of private lands from the prohibited list. He emphasized that the objective is to ensure that private landowners are not unnecessarily deprived of their property rights.



During the discussion, Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu intervened, noting that the issue of 22A prohibited lands exists across the state. He urged the Minister to ensure effective implementation of the guidelines issued by the government to resolve these long-pending concerns.

Minister Anagani Satya Prasad responded that a dedicated team comprising the Special Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department,

senior officials, and himself has been conducting regular reviews to address the 22A land issues in a coordinated manner. He added that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed the department to resolve the matter in a way that safeguards the interests of the poor and ensures that common citizens do not suffer losses.

To expedite the process at the district level, In-charge Ministers and

District Collectors will undertake a special drive to implement government guidelines for removing eligible lands from the 22A prohibited list.

Replying to a question regarding alleged encroachments on government land in Survey No. 22 of Ramannapalem village in Tiruvuru mandal, the Minister stated that court cases are currently pending concerning those lands and that

the government must await the judicial verdict before taking further action.

On another issue raised by BJP MLA Vishnu Kumar Raju regarding the sale of lands assigned to ex-servicemen in Visakhapatnam, the Minister clarified that such lands can be sold by the beneficiaries or their legal heirs after a period of ten years. However, if the assigned lands contain water bodies or water resources, they must be protected in accordance with Supreme Court and High Court judgments and government orders. Such lands have therefore been included in the prohibited list to ensure environmental and legal compliance.

The Minister reiterated the government's commitment to balancing property rights, environmental protection, and social justice while addressing the long-standing 22A land concerns across the state.

Ambati Rambabu Released from Jail, Says He “Enjoyed” the Experience Except for One Thing

Rajamahendravaram, Feb 18

Senior political leader Ambati Rambabu, a prominent figure in Andhra Pradesh politics, was released from Rajahmundry Central Jail on Wednesday after being granted bail. Rambabu, who had been in judicial custody for nearly three weeks in connection with the Sankranti Lucky Draw case, made candid remarks about his time in prison, describing the experience as mostly enjoyable — except for one minor difficulty.

Speaking to the media immediately after his release, Rambabu said he had not faced major hardships during his stay in custody. “The only inconvenience I faced was slipping in the bathroom,” he remarked, adding with a lighthearted tone that overall, the experience was manageable and had given him a chance to reflect. He noted that while he had to adjust to prison food and the strict daily routine, it was an experience he could now look back on without complaint.

Despite his casual remarks, Rambabu expressed deep concern over political targeting.



He alleged that his arrest was part of a broader strategy by the ruling coalition to suppress opposition voices. He criticized what he described as attacks on his home and family during his period in custody and claimed that law enforcement did not intervene when his residence was vandalized, highlighting

what he called a lapse in governance and law enforcement.

Rambabu’s supporters and party colleagues gathered at the jail to welcome him, demonstrating the leader’s enduring influence in the region. Upon his release, he reiterated his commitment to continuing his political work with

renewed energy, asserting that neither arrests nor legal cases would deter him from pursuing his goals or representing his constituency.

During his interaction with the media, Rambabu also acknowledged that while jail life was restrictive, it offered him time for introspection and planning.

He humorously admitted that, as someone accustomed to a different lifestyle, prison meals were the only part of the experience he did not enjoy, but he quickly added that such discomforts were minor compared to the larger purpose of serving the public and fighting for his political beliefs.

The release of Ambati Rambabu marks the latest chapter in his ongoing political career, which has been marked by active involvement in regional protests, legal challenges, and public advocacy. Following his release, Rambabu pledged to remain fully engaged in political activities, emphasizing that he would continue to challenge policies and decisions of the current administration while maintaining his commitment to his supporters and party agenda.

With his release, Rambabu returns to public life, ready to resume his active role in Andhra Pradesh politics, with a focus on both advocacy and constituency work, signaling that his political journey is far from over.

Legal Notice to Botsa Satyanarayana Triggers Political Stir



Vijayawada, Feb 18 | TPN Bureau

A fresh political controversy has emerged in Andhra Pradesh after senior YSR Congress Party leader Botsa Satyanarayana received a legal notice from Heritage Foods over remarks related to the Tirumala ghee supply issue.

The notice was issued following statements made by Botsa Satyanarayana alleging links between the company and the supply of ghee to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams through a third-party dairy firm. Heritage Foods has strongly objected to the comments, terming them defamatory and misleading. The company reportedly demanded that the remarks be withdrawn and a public clarification be issued, failing which it may pursue further legal action.

The controversy stems from the ongoing political debate surrounding the procurement of ghee for temple use, which has already led to

heated exchanges between the ruling coalition and the opposition. Botsa Satyanarayana had raised concerns, claiming there were irregularities and seeking greater transparency regarding the supply chain and contractual arrangements.

In response, representatives of Heritage Foods clarified that the company has no direct role in supplying ghee to TTD and denied any ownership or operational involvement with the firm mentioned in the allegations. They maintained that the statements made against the company were unfounded and have affected its reputation.

The issue quickly gained political traction, with leaders from the ruling side accusing the opposition of making unverified claims for political mileage, while opposition leaders argued that raising questions about procurement practices was part of their responsibility

to ensure accountability in public and religious institutions.

Political analysts say the legal notice has added a new dimension to the dispute, shifting it from a purely political confrontation to a potential legal battle. They note that such developments often intensify public attention and could prolong the controversy, especially if the matter escalates further.

So far, Botsa Satyanarayana has not issued a detailed public response to the notice. Party sources, however, indicated that he is likely to consult legal experts before deciding his next course of action.

The episode has once again brought the spotlight on governance, transparency, and political rhetoric in the state. With both sides standing firm on their positions, the issue is expected to remain a key talking point in Andhra Pradesh politics in the coming days.

Arun Kumar Praises Nara Lokesh for Supporting Muslim Vendor

Vijayawada, Feb 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Former Member of Parliament N. Undavalli Arun Kumar has lauded Andhra Pradesh minister Nara Lokesh for standing up in support of a Muslim vendor who recently faced harassment amid communal tensions. Arun Kumar highlighted Lokesh’s intervention as a positive example of leadership that promotes social harmony and safeguards livelihoods.

The controversy arose when Shaiksha Vali, a Muslim vendor from Kurnool, was allegedly harassed over his traditional food items during a festival. Lokesh publicly condemned the harassment, emphasizing that divisive behavior has no place in society and expressing solidarity with the vendor. Arun Kumar described Lokesh’s action as a significant gesture, reflecting leadership that values all communities irrespective of religion.



During a media interaction in Rajahmundry, Arun Kumar also criticized the slow pace of implementing development promises made to Andhra Pradesh. He urged state leadership to ensure the release of pending funds and called for legal action in cases concerning the state’s rights, including appointing a dedicated lawyer for representation in the Supreme Court.

He further suggested relocating major corpo-

rate headquarters from Hyderabad to Amaravati to boost the capital region’s growth. Arun Kumar also touched upon other sensitive issues, cautioning against politicizing matters like temple-related controversies and stressing that decisions should be based on facts rather than electoral calculations.

The praise for Lokesh has resonated across political circles, with many seeing it as an important step toward promoting

communal harmony and standing up for vulnerable communities. Arun Kumar’s comments underline the need for leaders to act decisively against discrimination while also focusing on development and governance.

By supporting the Muslim vendor and condemning harassment, Lokesh’s stance has been interpreted as a message that inclusivity and respect for all citizens remain a priority, even in the face of social and po-

litical challenges. Arun Kumar’s remarks highlight the importance of political accountability and proactive leadership in addressing community tensions, ensuring justice, and fostering a cohesive society.

This episode has drawn attention to the responsibilities of elected officials to protect citizens’ rights and uphold social cohesion, setting an example for how leadership can contribute positively in times of communal sensitivity.



AP Tourism Marks Golden Jubilee: Kandula Durgesh Highlights Five Decades of Progress



Vijayawada, 18-02-2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) celebrated its 50th anniversary with grandeur at Bhavani Island in Vijayawada, with Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh as the chief guest. The event highlighted five decades of significant contributions toward positioning Andhra Pradesh as a prominent tourism destination on the global map.

The celebrations began with a ceremonial lighting of the lamp followed by the unveiling of the APTDC Golden Jubilee logo by Minister Durgesh. Accompanied by APTDC Chairman Nookasani Balaji and MD Amrapali Kat, Minister Durgesh released balloons into the sky, symbolizing APTDC’s journey and future aspirations. The event also featured a showcase of APTDC’s five-decade-long legacy and achievements in tourism infrastructure and initiatives.

Minister Durgesh emphasized that since its inception on February 18, 1976, with a modest capital of Rs.

13 lakh, APTDC has grown steadily, attracting investments worth Rs. 20,088 crore and generating 1,22,637 employment opportunities over the past 50 years. He highlighted the government’s focus on diverse tourism segments including temple, eco, adventure, heritage, wellness, medical, cultural, film, and cruise tourism, alongside innovative programs such as homestays, tent cities, caravans, and floating houseboats.

The minister noted the robust backing of the state government under Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, including the release of the new Tourism Policy 2024-29 and attractive incentives for investors. He described APTDC as a market creator, bringing tourism infrastructure to remote regions like Srisailem, Araku, and Gandikota, which private investors had previously avoided.

Minister Durgesh also praised APTDC staff for their dedication during crises like COVID-19, ensuring

essential services to quarantine centers and hospitals. The contributions of employees who lost their lives in service were honored with a two-minute silence, and assurances were given to support their families.

Looking forward, the minister outlined plans under the “Swarna Andhra 2047” vision, targeting further investment projects, innovative tourism experiences such as sea cruises, helitours, adventure sports, and new employment opportunities. He reiterated that tourism remains the state’s top priority and urged employees to actively participate in APTDC’s continued growth.

The event concluded with cultural programs on Bhavani Island, recognizing talented children and celebrating APTDC’s journey. High-ranking tourism officials, MD Amrapali Kat, retired employees, and current staff participated in the jubilee festivities, reflecting on the past achievements and future aspirations of the organization.

Vasamsetti Foundation to Host Job Fair in Ramachandrapuram on February 22

Ramachandrapuram, Feb 18 | TPN Bureau

In a significant initiative to tackle unemployment among youth, the Vasamsetti Foundation, under the leadership of Vasamsetti Satyam, in collaboration with State Labour Minister Vasamsetti Subhash, will organize the 36th Job Fair at Ramachandrapuram Upadhibhavan on Sunday, February 22. The event is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m., providing a platform for eligible candidates to secure employment in reputed companies with attractive benefits.

The job fair targets young job seekers aged 18 to 27 with educational qualifications ranging from 10th grade, Intermediate, Degree, ITI, and Diploma. The fair will conduct interviews for positions in the production departments of leading companies, in-

cluding TNECO, Yanmar, Amber, and Mitos BC Electric, offering opportunities in Chennai and Bengaluru. Selected candidates will receive a monthly salary between ₹16,000 and ₹18,000, along with meals and transportation facilities during shift hours.

Speaking about the initiative, Vasamsetti Satyam, head of the Vasamsetti Foundation, emphasized that the foundation has consistently worked to empower youth through skill development and employment opportunities. “We are committed to creating platforms where young people can directly engage with companies offering genuine career prospects. This job fair is part of our ongoing mission to reduce unemployment and support local talent,” he said.

The Vasamsetti Foundation, renowned for its

social welfare programs, has been actively partnering with government agencies and private enterprises to bridge the gap between skilled youth and industry demands. This job fair is one of the many initiatives undertaken by the foundation to ensure that the next generation has access to meaningful employment and sustainable livelihoods.

Officials highlighted that the event will follow a well-organized schedule, ensuring smooth interviews and proper management of attendees. Candidates are encouraged to attend early and carry all necessary documents to maximize their chances of selection.

For more information, interested candidates can contact 9515481671. The Vasamsetti Foundation urged all eligible unemployed youth to make



full use of this opportunity, stressing that initiatives like this can provide a strong start to their professional careers.

This event marks a significant step in the founda-

tion’s efforts to promote employment and economic empowerment, demonstrating the impact of public-private collaboration in addressing regional unemployment challenges.

Job Mela for Unemployed Youth at Sri Krishnaveni Degree College, Penamaluru – February 21, 2026

Vijayawada, 18.02.2026 TPN bureau :
The District Collector of Krishna District, D.K. Balaji, has announced a significant employment initiative for unemployed youth in the Penamaluru constituency. A Job Mela is scheduled to be held on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at Sri Krishnaveni Degree College, located on Tadigadapa-Poranki 100 Feet Road. The event is organized under the aegis of the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) to bridge the gap between job seekers and potential employers by providing a platform where candidates can directly interact with companies offering suitable employment opportunities. This step is part of the state government's ongoing efforts to enhance youth employability and provide access to well-paying jobs, thereby promoting skill development and economic growth in the region.

Over 16 reputed companies from various sectors will participate in the Job Mela, ensuring a diverse range of employment opportunities. The participating companies include prominent names such as Kia India, Efftronics Systems Pvt. Ltd., Axis Bank, Muthoot Finance Ltd., Joyalukkas India Ltd., Hetero Labs, Tata Electronics Ltd., Dominer Interiors, Astrazen India Pvt. Ltd., Bharat Bank Housing Financial Services Pvt. Ltd., Big C Mobiles, Bajaj Capital, Santosh Automotors Pvt. Ltd., Just Dial Ltd., and ABC Panda Solutions Pvt. Ltd. These companies are expected to conduct interviews and select candidates for

Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation
Department of Skills Development & Training
Government of Andhra Pradesh

JOB MELA
DATE: 21-FEB-2026 & TIME: 9:00 AM
VENUE: SRI KRISHNAVENI DEGREE COLLEGE, 100 Feet Road, PORANKI - Penamaluru Constituency

Participating Companies

Company Name	Job Title	Age	Education	Experience	Gender
Axis Bank	Customer Service Executive	18-25	10th	0-1	Both
Efftronics Systems Pvt. Ltd.	Software Tester	18-25	10th	0-1	Both
Joyalukkas India Ltd.	Sales Executive	18-25	10th	0-1	Both
Muthoot Finance Ltd.	Branch Assistant	18-25	10th	0-1	Both
Tata Electronics Ltd.	Production Operator	18-25	10th	0-1	Both
ABC Panda Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Customer Support	18-25	10th	0-1	Both

Required Documents: Multiple Resumes, Xerox of Educational Certificates, Aadhar & PAN (must)
Contact: 79033 05429, 86695 59056, 96767 08041 | Register at: naipunyam.ap.gov.in
Command Control: 9988653335, 8712655068, 8790118319, 879011727

various positions in line with their recruitment needs. The presence of such well-established organizations provides a unique opportunity for youth to access high-quality employment with competitive salaries and benefits.

Eligible candidates for the Job Mela include individuals aged between 18 and 35 years who have completed education levels ranging from 10th grade, Intermediate, ITI, Diploma, Degree, B.Tech, or Post-Graduate qualifications. The District Skill Development Officer, Dr. P. Naresh Kumar, empha-

sized that candidates should take full advantage of this opportunity by arriving prepared with the necessary documents, which include a resume or biodata, Aadhaar card and linked mobile number, PAN card, and xerox copies of relevant certificates.

Candidates are also required to register online in advance at <https://naipunyam.ap.gov.in> to ensure their eligibility and streamline the interview process. The District Collector urged all unemployed youth to make full use of this event, highlighting the importance of early preparation and participation. He also encouraged media coverage to reach as many prospective candidates as possible. The Job Mela represents a focused effort to provide employment solutions, reduce unemployment, and empower youth with opportunities for career growth in both private and corporate sectors.

By attending this Job Mela, unemployed youth will not only have the chance to secure stable employment but also gain exposure to industry expectations, workplace culture, and potential career advancement. The initiative underscores the government's commitment to skill development, youth empowerment, and inclusive economic growth in the region. It is a crucial step toward connecting the state's talented workforce with high-demand sectors, providing meaningful employment opportunities, and contributing to overall socio-economic development.

Review Meeting on Tax Collections with Circle-1 Revenue Staff

Amarvathi 18.02.2026 TPN bureau :
Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Dhyana Chandra conducted a review meeting on tax collections with Circle-1 revenue officials on Wednesday evening at the Circle-1 office in Chittinagar. The meeting was held under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) G. Srujana and Zonal Commissioner Ramya Keerthana.

During the meeting, the Commissioner reviewed the progress of tax collections within Circle-1 limits and instructed Revenue Inspectors and Administrative Secretaries to intensify efforts to improve collection performance. He emphasized that special focus should be placed on the collection of vacant land tax, noting that tax revenue plays a crucial role in urban development and the delivery of civic services.

As part of an ongoing tax recovery drive across all three circles under the municipal corpo-



ration, authorities are actively collecting pending dues related to property tax, vacant land tax, water tax, and drainage tax. The Commissioner stated that legal action is being initiated against chronic defaulters in accordance with the provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act. Although statutory notices were issued in advance, strict measures are now being taken against those who failed to clear their

dues. As part of the enforcement drive, shops and a function hall in Circle-1 with pending arrears amounting to ₹7 lakh were sealed. In Circle-2, a drainage connection was disconnected in the Nandamuri Nagar area due to non-payment of dues. Officials clarified that in cases of continued default, water supply and drainage connections will be removed and properties may

be attached as per legal provisions.

With the financial year 2025-26 nearing completion, the state government has directed municipal bodies to achieve 100 percent revenue collection targets. In compliance with these instructions, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation is intensifying its tax recovery drive across Circles 1, 2, and 3. Authorities warned that strict action will continue against habitual defaulters, including disconnection of civic services and property attachment where necessary.

The Commissioner urged all taxpayers within Vijayawada city limits to clear their pending dues at VMC cash counters and cooperate with the municipal administration for the city's development.

Assistant Commissioner A.U.B. Sharma, Revenue Inspectors, and Administrative Secretaries also participated in the review meeting.

Fire Safety Measures Must Be Strictly Followed: District Fire Officer Maladri



Amarvathi 18.02.2026 TPN bureau :

The District Fire Officer of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, Maladri, emphasized that fire prevention measures must be strictly implemented to avoid accidents. Acting on the instructions of Commissioner Dhyana Chandra, a surprise inspection was conducted on Wednesday morning at Sudha Fertility Center located on M.G. Road in Vijayawada.

During the field-level inspection, officials examined whether adequate fire safety equipment and preventive systems were available at the facility. They verified the presence and operational condition of fire extinguishers and other safety mechanisms, and assessed whether the staff were aware of their proper usage.

The Fire Officer interacted with the management and staff of the fertility center to evaluate their preparedness in case of a fire emergency. In addition to reviewing safety arrangements, officials provided on-the-spot guidance about es-

sential preventive measures to minimize fire risks. They also conducted a brief demonstration and practical training session to ensure that staff members understood how to operate fire safety equipment effectively during emergencies.

Maladri stressed that hospitals, clinics, and other commercial establishments must strictly adhere to fire safety norms, as negligence can result in severe loss of life and property. He noted that regular inspections and awareness programs are being carried out across the city to ensure compliance with safety regulations.

Station Fire Officer Naresh and fire department personnel participated in the inspection and awareness program.

The Fire Department reiterated that such surprise inspections will continue in the interest of public safety and urged all establishments to maintain functional fire safety systems and conduct regular internal safety drills.

Manipal Hospitals Vijayawada Wins Customer Service Award



Vijayawada, February 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Manipal Hospitals in Vijayawada has been honored with the "Best Customer Service in Healthcare" award at the Business Leader of the Year 2026 (24th Edition), recognizing its outstanding commitment to patient-centric care and service excellence.

The award ceremony was held at Taj Lands End, where the recognition was presented with support from World Health and Wellness Congress. The accolade acknowledges the hospital's consistent focus on patient welfare and its efforts to enhance the overall healthcare experience.

Hospital Director J. Ramanjaneya Reddy accepted the award on behalf of the Vijayawada unit. The selection was based on several key performance indicators, including patient satisfaction scores, online reviews, innovative service initiatives, structured feedback mechanisms, and an effective grievance redressal system.

One of the major contributors to this recognition is the hospital's flagship initiative, Manipal Patient Pulse. The program is designed to identify patient concerns in real time and address them promptly, en-

suring that every patient leaves the hospital with a positive experience. The initiative has played a crucial role in improving service quality and strengthening patient trust.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramanjaneya Reddy said the award is a proud moment for the entire team and reaffirms the hospital's philosophy that patients are not just numbers but individuals who deserve compassion, respect, and timely care. He emphasized that the recognition belongs to every member of the hospital—from doctors and nurses to patient care coordinators and support staff—whose collective efforts drive service excellence.

The recognition further reinforces Manipal Hospitals Vijayawada's commitment to patient-centric healthcare and strengthens community confidence in its services. It also boosts team morale and positions the hospital as a preferred healthcare destination in an increasingly competitive medical landscape.

With continued focus on innovation, quality standards, and compassionate care, the hospital aims to build on this achievement and further enhance the patient experience in the years ahead.

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Through Common Facility Centers in Vijayawada



Vijayawada, 18.02.2026 TPN bureau :

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Srinivas has announced plans to set up Common Facility Centers (CFCs) to support women entrepreneurs trained under the National Institute for Rural Development (NIRD) in Hyderabad. These centers aim to provide women with the resources and infrastructure required to produce and market their products efficiently, fostering self-employment and economic independence. The initiative is being implemented through the Kesineni Foundation, in alignment with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision of nurturing homegrown women entrepreneurs. MP Kesineni emphasized that the centers will provide not only production facilities but also marketing and logistical support to ensure that women can scale their businesses effectively.

A meeting was held at the Vijayawada Parliamentary Office in Gurananak Colony, NTR Bhavan,

with seven groups of women trained in various skill areas, including millets, garments and leather products, natural farming, honey processing, jute and cotton bags, and herbal products. During the session, the women showcased the products they had prepared and discussed the quality and safety measures they had adopted. MP Kesineni inquired about raw material procurement, production capacity, and product standards to understand the challenges and support required.

The women requested assistance in sourcing raw materials, access to machinery for large-scale production, and help with marketing their finished products. MP Kesineni as-

sured them that the CFCs would address these needs, providing shared facilities for groups producing similar items. He highlighted that these centers would accelerate production, reduce individual costs, and increase efficiency, allowing women to emerge as successful industrial entrepreneurs.

Speaking at the event, NTR District PD RD&E official Nanchari Reddy guided the women on locating high-quality raw materials and navigating production and marketing challenges. He assured that ongoing support would be provided for both manufacturing and selling the products. MP Kesineni encouraged the women to take full advantage of the resources and grow their ventures sustainably, emphasizing that the initiative was designed to create economically empowered women who can compete successfully in the industrial sector.

The event was attended by other key coordinators and officials, including Songa Sanjay Verma (Rural Coordinator, NIRD NTR District), Vallabhenni Narasimachowdary (Urban Coordinator, NIRD NTR District), and joint chairpersons Kandula Kalpana and Suhasini L. The initiative marks a significant step toward enhancing women's participation in entrepreneurship, fostering self-reliance, and creating employment opportunities while promoting skill development across multiple sectors.

The CFCs will serve as a vital platform to enable women to produce, market, and sell high-quality products, bridging the gap between training and sustainable enterprise, and empowering them to achieve financial independence.

Teachers' Unions Demand Immediate Constitution of 12th PRC and 29% Interim Relief in Andhra Pradesh



Amarvathi 18.02.2026 TPN bureau :

Teachers' unions in Andhra Pradesh have intensified their agitation, demanding the immediate constitution of the 12th Pay Revision Commission (PRC) and the announcement of 29 percent Interim Relief (IR). They have also called for the immediate release of four pending Dearness Allowance (DA) installments. The unions warned that if the government fails to announce the PRC during the ongoing Assembly sessions, they will organize a "Chalo Assembly" protest.

Protests were staged at Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada, where a large number of teachers from across the state participated in the "Ranabheri 2.0" program organized by the United Teachers Federation (UTF). The union demanded the appointment of a Chairman for the long-pending 12th PRC and insisted that the IR be fixed at 29 percent. They also urged the government to clear four pending DA arrears without further delay.

Union leaders criticized the government for not mentioning PRC or IR provisions in the state budget. They expressed disappointment that while heated debates are taking place in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council on other issues, employees' and teachers' long-pending concerns are not receiving adequate attention.

PDF MLC Borra Gopimurthy de-

manded that the government resolve teachers' and employees' issues immediately after the Ranabheri program. He emphasized that ensuring employee welfare is the responsibility of the government. Former MLC K. S. Lakshmana Rao suggested that the government should take proactive steps to address these demands before the agitation escalates into another major movement similar to previous protests.

Leaders recalled that in earlier PRCs, employees and teachers secured improved benefits only through sustained struggles. Former MLC I. V. Rao criticized the 11th PRC, calling it unfavorable to employees, and urged unions to prepare for united action to achieve a fair 12th PRC.

UTF state president Venkateswarlu and general secretary Prasad pointed out that although the 12th PRC was due for implementation from July 2023, even a Chairman has not yet been appointed. They alleged that promises made before the elections regarding timely DA payments and improved PRC benefits have not been fulfilled even after 20 months in office.

The unions stated that if the government does not respond positively, they are prepared to announce a roadmap for intensified agitation to secure their legitimate demands.

APCRDA Allots 151 Returnable Plots to Eligible Amaravati Farmers via e-Lottery

Amaravati, 18-02-2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) successfully conducted an e-lottery at its Rayapudi Project Office to allocate returnable residential and commercial plots to eligible farmers from Amaravati. The initiative aims to provide farmers with equitable access to plots in the capital region while ensuring a transparent and fair allotment process.

During the e-lottery, a total of 151 returnable plots were allotted to 77 farmers, comprising 80 residential and 71 commercial plots. The allotments were distributed across the Dry and Jareebu categories. Under the Dry category, 53 plots were allotted to 35 farmers, including 31 residential and 22 commercial plots. The Jareebu category saw 98 plots allotted to 42 farmers, with 49 residential and 49 commercial plots. The designated villages for the allotments included Undavalli, Penumaka, Lingayapalem, Udandarayanipalem, Rayapudi, Venkata-palem, and Mandadam.



The e-lottery was conducted using an online randomized system to maintain transparency. A trial run was held before the live draw to ensure all participants understood the process. Beneficiary farmers were present during the lottery, and provisional allotment certificates were issued immediately after the draw.

Addressing the beneficiaries, Special Grade Deputy Collector (Cap-

ital City), APCRDA, Sri Vasantharayudu, emphasized the importance of completing the registration process promptly. He assured farmers that GIS personnel and village surveyors have been deployed to help them locate their plots accurately and understand the exact boundaries of their allotments.

The event was attended by Planning Director Sri B. Suresh Kumar, Special Deputy Collec-

tors Sri A.G. Chin-nikrishna, M. Seshired-dy, and K.S. Bhagyarekha, along with several APCRDA officials and staff. The allotment process underscores APCRDA's commitment to providing structured urban development opportunities while prioritizing the welfare of farmers in the capital region.

This initiative marks another step in empowering Amaravati farm-

ers by offering them well-planned plots in both residential and commercial categories, reinforcing the vision of an organized, sustainable, and farmer-inclusive capital city development model.

The APCRDA has reiterated its commitment to ensuring timely support and assistance to all beneficiaries to complete legal formalities and facilitate smooth registration of their allotted plots.

Srikakulam Youth Abhi Chandra Kartik Secures Spots at Oxford and LSE



Narasimhulu, Srikakulam | February 18 | TPN Bureau

Srikakulam district has once again made its mark on the global academic stage, as local youth Abhi Chandra Kartik earned simultaneous admission to two of the world's most prestigious universities — the University of Oxford and the London School of Economics (LSE). Kartik will pursue MPhil in Development Studies (Economics) at Oxford, making him the first individual from the district to secure placements in Oxford, LSE, and King's College London concurrently.

Abhi Chandra Kartik, son of Nurthi Kalyan Babu, Coordinator at the district hospital (DCHS), completed his schooling at Saint Joseph's School in Srikakulam. From an early age, he demonstrated exceptional academic aptitude, earning the title of National Tal-

ent Search Examination scholar and consistently ranking among the top students in his cohort. His dedication and intellect set the stage for his remarkable international achievements.

During his undergraduate studies at King's College London, he graduated with first-class honors in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE), showcasing both scholastic excellence and analytical rigor. Subsequently, Kartik was selected for the prestigious Angelsberg Applied History Fellowship, a program jointly conducted by Cambridge University and King's College London, further underscoring his scholarly distinction.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Kartik has contributed to social initiatives and policy engagement. He interned with the

Union Minister of Civil Aviation, K. Jagan Mohan Reddy, as part of the Politics for Impact program, applying his knowledge of governance and public policy to real-world challenges.

The news of his international admissions has sparked widespread pride across Srikakulam, with educators, community leaders, and local residents lauding his achievements. His success not only reflects his personal dedication but also serves as a beacon of inspiration for other students in the district, demonstrating that talent combined with perseverance can open doors to global opportunities.

Abhi Chandra Kartik's accomplishment emphasizes the growing presence of Indian students in world-class universities and highlights the academic potential that exists even in smaller towns. His journey from Srikakulam to globally recognized institutions like Oxford, LSE, and King's College London exemplifies the impact of sustained academic excellence and focused mentorship, providing a model for aspiring students across the region.

Kartik's family, educators, and the district administration have expressed immense pride in his achievements, marking this milestone as a historic moment for Srikakulam and the broader academic community.

Balaramakrishna Submits Key Development Proposals to Nara Lokesh

Rajahmundry, Feb 18 | TPN Bureau

Rajahmundry: Rajahmundry Rural MLA B. Balaramakrishna met Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh in Amaravati to present a detailed memorandum outlining key development priorities for his constituency. The proposals covered education, skill development, infrastructure, and information technology initiatives aimed at comprehensive regional growth.

During the meeting, MLA Balaramakrishna emphasized the need to expand educational facilities in the Rajahmundry-Korukonda region. He requested the establishment of degree colleges and highlighted the shortage of intermediate colleges in areas including Gadara, Srikrishnapatnam, Divancheru, and Rajahmundry. The memorandum suggested upgrading ex-



isting institutions, such as Punyakshetram, Gadala, and Tungapadu, to full-fledged intermediate colleges. He also reminded Minister Lokesh that these proposals had previously been submitted to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Focusing on youth employment, the MLA proposed setting up a polytechnic college, ITI (Industrial Training Institute), and an STPI (Software Technology

Parks of India) center within the constituency. He stressed the importance of establishing an IT hub, advanced training institutes, and skill development centers to provide strong technical and vocational foundations for young people.

MLA Balaramakrishna also raised concerns regarding rural infrastructure. He highlighted the need for cell tower installations in Rad-

heyapalem villages to prevent rural youth from being left behind in the digital age.

The implementation challenges of the state's flagship program, "Manabadi - Mana Bhavishyathu," were also discussed. The MLA requested improvements in school infrastructure and faster teacher recruitment to ensure the program's objectives are fully realized.

Addressing irregularities at Adikavi Nannaya University, which oversees over 400 affiliated colleges in East and West Godavari districts, Balaramakrishna called for a thorough investigation into reported corruption and financial discrepancies. He also requested the immediate completion of pending sports projects at the university. Minister Lokesh assured the MLA of a comprehensive probe and strict action against those found responsible.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with Minister Lokesh expressing commitment to supporting the holistic development of Rajahmundry Rural constituency. Constituents have welcomed the MLA's proactive approach and the minister's assurances, viewing this engagement as a significant step toward progress in education, technology, and infrastructure.

Grand Celebration of Sri Mukhalingeswara Swami's Chakratheertha Bathing Ceremony

Srikakulam, Feb 18 | TPN Bureau

The much-awaited Chakratheertha Snamam (holy bath) of Sri Mukhalingeswara Swami at the Sri Mukhalingeswara Temple in Jalumuru mandal, Srikakulam district, was celebrated with grandeur and devotion, drawing lakhs of devotees to the banks of the Vamsadhara River on Wednesday.

From early morning, devotees from Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvatipuram Manyam, Visakhapatnam, and even Odisha thronged the temple and riverbanks to participate in the sacred bathing rituals. The air resonated with chants of Shiva Namamsmarana (remembrance of Lord Shiva's name), and the flow of the Vamsadhara River seemed to echo the devotion of the assembled crowd.

During the event, Sri Mukhalingeswara Swami arrived at the river-



bank on a Nandi Vahanam (bull vehicle procession), accompanied by priests and temple staff. Devotee families offered ceremonial silk garments to the deity before the priests performed the Chakratheertha Snamam. Thousands of devotees witnessed the sacred bath and participated in worship along the riverbank, reflecting a remarkable blend of faith and tradition.

The temple organizes a four-day festival every year in honor of Maha Shivaratri, with the first three days dedicated to various festive rituals and darshan (viewing of the deity). The fourth day culmi-

nates with the Chakratheertha Snamam, which attracts tens of thousands of devotees from across the region. This year, the event was conducted under strict security arrangements, with authorities ensuring a smooth and peaceful celebration without any untoward incidents.

The Sri Mukhalingeswara temple's unique festival, spanning multiple days of devotion and culminating in the holy river bath, remains one of the most prominent spiritual gatherings in the region, reflecting centuries-old traditions and the unwavering faith of devotees.

20-Year Jail for Man Who Deceived Minor in Vijayanagaram District

Vijayanagaram, Feb 18 | TPN Bureau

Vijayanagaram district police have secured a 20-year rigorous imprisonment sentence for a man who lured a minor girl under the pretext of love and marriage. The accused was also fined ₹5,000, and the victim has been awarded ₹5 lakh in compensation. The verdict was pronounced by Special POC-SO Court Judge K. Nag-amani on February 18, SP A.R. Damodhar, IPS confirmed.

The case, registered in May 2024 at Bhogapuram Police Station, arose after a Munjeru village resident reported his minor daughter missing. An investigation led by SI P. Suryakumari traced the girl, who stated that Rayapureddy Suresh (26) had taken her to Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad, deceiving her with promises of marriage and subjecting her to exploitation.

Following her state-

ment, a POC-SO case was registered on July 25, 2024. DSP R. Govindarao led the investigation, resulting in the arrest of the accused and submission of a chargesheet. The court found sufficient evidence and convicted Suresh.

SP Damodhar praised the efforts of DSP Govindarao, CI Durga Prasad, SI P. Suryakumari, CMS HC Ramakrishna, and court personnel for ensuring justice. He reiterated that any crimes against minor girls and women will be met with strict action.

In the past six months, Vijayanagaram district has seen 17 POC-SO cases resulting in convictions, demonstrating the police's firm stance against sexual crimes. The judgment highlights the commitment of the district authorities to protecting children and women while ensuring swift legal action.

Grand Dwadashi Pradakshinas Conducted at Indrakeeladri Temple



Vijayawada, February 18 | TPN Bureau

The sacred Dwadashi Pradakshinas were celebrated with grandeur at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri today. The ritual commenced at 7 PM at the temple's inner sanctum, drawing devotees and temple authorities in large numbers.

The spiritual event witnessed the participation of the Devasthanam Dharmakarta Board President, Shri Borra Radhakrishna (Gandhi) and family, along with the Temple Executive Officer (E.O.) and Special Grade Deputy Collector, Shri Ramachandra Seena Nayak and family, who performed the

pradakshinas with deep devotion.

Several members of the temple managing committee, including Shri Avaru Srinivas Rao, Smt. Padmavathi, Smt. Sarojini Padmashekar, and Smt. Saritha, enthusiastically participated in the ceremonial circumambulation, offering prayers and paying homage to the deity.

Officials announced that following the Dwadashi Pradakshinas, a special three-day Pavali Seva would commence at the Addala Mandapam, conducted in strict adherence to the scriptures. The sacred service aims to provide an intimate spiritual experience for devotees and will be performed under the supervision

of temple priests and administration.

The event drew a large gathering of devotees, temple officials, and archakas, reflecting the strong faith and vibrant religious traditions associated with Indrakeeladri. The combination of meticulous rituals and enthusiastic participation underscored the importance of Dwadashi Pradakshinas in the spiritual calendar of the temple.

This annual celebration not only preserves the temple's rich heritage but also strengthens the bond between the deity and the devotees, allowing them to partake in the divine blessings through ritualistic devotion.

AI-Enabled Soldiers and the Future of South Asian Warfare

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, the message went far beyond technological celebration. It signaled India's intention to position itself at the forefront of artificial intelligence development — not only for economic transformation but also for national security. Among all sectors likely to be reshaped by AI, none will experience a more profound transformation than warfare. For India, China and Pakistan — three nuclear-armed neighbors with complex histories and unresolved disputes — AI is poised to redefine the character, speed and risks of military conflict.

This is not simply another technological upgrade. Artificial intelligence represents a structural shift in how wars are fought and decisions are made. Traditional battle cycles that once relied on human deliberation over hours or days can now be compressed into seconds. Data gathered from satellites, drones, radar systems, and cyber networks can be processed instantly, producing actionable insights in real time. In future crises, the side that can analyze and act faster may hold a decisive advantage.

Major global powers have already begun embedding AI into their defense ecosystems. The United States is integrating AI into joint command systems that connect land, sea, air, space and cyber domains into a unified operational network. Autonomous systems, drone swarms and machine-driven logistics platforms are becoming central to military planning. China, meanwhile, has declared intelligent warfare as a strategic objective. Its military modernization strategy emphasizes predictive logistics, AI-guided surveillance, autonomous platforms and decision-support tools designed to compress response times and overwhelm adversaries. Even mid-sized military powers are experimenting with AI-driven targeting systems and battlefield analytics.

Across these varied approaches lies a common theme: AI multiplies force without proportionately increasing manpower. It accelerates the decision cycle, enhances precision and improves coordination across domains. Rather than replacing soldiers entirely, AI aug-



ments them — turning data into a battlefield asset as valuable as firepower.

For India, AI offers both opportunity and urgency. The country's armed forces operate across diverse and challenging terrains — from the Himalayan border with China to the western frontier with Pakistan and the vast maritime space of the Indian Ocean. Managing such varied operational theaters requires rapid information synthesis and seamless coordination. AI has the potential to provide exactly that.

Historically, India's military modernization has faced obstacles: lengthy procurement cycles, dependence on imported platforms, and bureaucratic complexity. AI presents a rare chance to leapfrog some of these structural limitations. Instead of relying solely on large, expensive hardware acquisitions, India can embed intelligence into existing systems. Legacy aircraft, armored vehicles and naval platforms can be upgraded with AI-driven threat detection and predictive maintenance tools, extending their operational life while enhancing capability.

Drone swarms represent another transformative possibility. Low-cost autonomous drones, operating

in coordinated formations, can saturate enemy defenses, conduct surveillance and perform precision strikes with reduced risk to human personnel. In a high-altitude conflict scenario along the Line of Actual Control with China, AI-enabled surveillance systems could monitor troop movements and logistical buildup in near real time. On the western border, smart sensor networks combined with machine-learning algorithms could enhance infiltration detection and counter-terror operations.

Yet AI's transformative power extends beyond kinetic warfare. Logistics — often described as the backbone of military strength — stands to benefit enormously. Machine learning systems can analyze historical data to predict equipment failures, optimize inventory distribution and anticipate supply requirements. In remote high-altitude deployments, where resupply is difficult and costly, predictive logistics could prevent shortages before they occur. AI-enabled maintenance systems can identify faults in vehicles and aircraft before breakdowns happen, reducing downtime and improving readiness.

As India moves toward integrated theatre commands — designed

to improve coordination between the Army, Navy and Air Force — AI can act as the connective tissue binding them together. Unified data platforms supported by artificial intelligence can ensure that information flows seamlessly across services, enabling synchronized responses to fast-moving crises. In a simultaneous two-front contingency involving China and Pakistan, such integration could be critical.

At the tactical level, the concept of the "AI-enabled soldier" is already emerging. Soldiers equipped with smart sensors, augmented reality systems and AI-assisted communication tools could receive real-time updates about terrain, threats and friendly positions. Computer vision systems can assist in identifying hostile activity, reducing cognitive burden and minimizing errors. Decision-support algorithms can provide commanders with multiple scenario simulations, outlining likely outcomes before orders are issued.

However, the rise of AI in warfare also raises profound ethical and strategic questions. The deployment of autonomous weapons systems challenges traditional frameworks of accountability. If an AI-assisted targeting system makes

a flawed recommendation, who bears responsibility — the programmer, the commander, or the political leadership? Moreover, in a crisis between nuclear-armed states, the acceleration of decision cycles may increase the risk of miscalculation. When machines operate at speeds beyond human comprehension, escalation could occur before diplomatic channels have time to intervene.

Cyber warfare adds another layer of complexity. AI systems themselves can become targets. Adversaries may attempt to corrupt data inputs, manipulate algorithms or launch cyberattacks designed to disable intelligent systems. Ensuring resilience, transparency and human oversight will therefore be critical components of any military AI doctrine.

India's policy landscape reflects both ambition and caution. Efforts to foster defense innovation, promote indigenous technology development and collaborate with private industry are gaining momentum. The country possesses a vibrant civilian AI ecosystem, strong software capabilities and a growing startup culture. Aligning these strengths with defense requirements could accelerate capability development. Yet institution-

al inertia, inter-service competition and procurement delays remain significant hurdles.

Ultimately, the integration of AI into military structures is not a question of if, but when and how. For India, the stakes are particularly high. Its strategic environment is defined by contested borders, regional rivalries and rapid technological change. China's accelerated military modernization and Pakistan's evolving strategic posture create a dynamic security landscape. In such an environment, technological stagnation carries risks.

However, technological adoption must be balanced with doctrinal clarity and ethical safeguards. AI should enhance human judgment, not replace it. Maintaining meaningful human control over critical decisions — especially those involving the use of lethal force — will be essential to preserving accountability and preventing unintended escalation.

The future battlefield in South Asia may look very different from the conflicts of the past. Instead of mass troop mobilizations alone, crises could involve cyber disruptions, autonomous drone swarms, AI-driven misinformation campaigns and rapid precision strikes guided by algorithms. Decision windows may shrink dramatically. Information superiority may become as decisive as territorial control.

The algorithm of war is already being written. For India, the challenge lies in ensuring that it is not merely reacting to technological shifts driven by others but actively shaping them. Investments in research, talent, doctrine and institutional reform will determine whether AI becomes a force multiplier that strengthens deterrence — or a destabilizing accelerant in an already volatile region.

In the coming decade, artificial intelligence will not simply influence military power; it will redefine it. The countries that successfully integrate machine intelligence with human strategic wisdom will shape the balance of power in the twenty-first century. For South Asia, the age of AI-enabled soldiers has begun — and its consequences will reverberate far beyond the battlefield.

India's AI Moment: Moving Beyond the US-China Technology Rivalry

For much of the past decade, global conversations around artificial intelligence have been framed as a contest between two superpowers — the United States and China. This binary narrative suggests that the future of AI innovation, governance and strategic influence will be shaped almost exclusively by Washington and Beijing. Yet this framing overlooks an emerging and increasingly consequential player: India.

India's AI impact is not defined by rivalry but by scale, diversity and democratic complexity. As the world's most populous country, a major digital economy and a rising geopolitical power, India is uniquely positioned to influence how artificial intelligence evolves — not merely as a market or battleground for competing models, but as an architect of an alternative path.

Unlike the United States, where AI growth is largely driven by private technology giants, or China, where state-directed industrial policy plays a central role, India's approach blends state vision with a vibrant private sector and a massive grassroots digital ecosystem. This hybrid model may prove particularly relevant for the Global South, where countries seek AI systems that reflect local realities rather than imported templates.

India's digital public infrastructure offers a compelling example of this distinct approach. Over the past decade, platforms built around digital identity, payments and public service delivery have transformed governance and financial inclusion. These systems have demonstrated that technology can be deployed at scale

in a democratic setting while remaining relatively affordable and interoperable. As AI becomes layered onto these digital foundations, India has the opportunity to show how machine intelligence can enhance welfare delivery, agricultural productivity, healthcare access and education without reinforcing authoritarian surveillance models.

The timing is significant. Artificial intelligence is transitioning from experimental technology to core economic infrastructure. It is reshaping supply chains, financial services, manufacturing, defense and climate adaptation strategies. Countries that embed AI across sectors will gain productivity advantages and strategic leverage. Those that lag may face widening development gaps.

India enters this phase with several structural advantages. It has one of the world's largest pools of technology professionals, a dynamic startup ecosystem and a vast internal market generating enormous volumes of data. Data, often described as the fuel for AI systems, is abundant in India due to its scale and rapid digitization. At the same time, its democratic framework ensures that debates about privacy, regulation and accountability are robust and public.

This combination of scale and pluralism gives India the potential to influence global AI governance norms. While the US-China competition often focuses on technological supremacy, India can position itself as a champion of inclusive and ethical AI. It can advocate for standards that balance innovation with safeguards, ensuring that AI systems are transparent, accountable and



aligned with societal values.

Moreover, India's geopolitical position enhances its leverage. It maintains strategic partnerships with Western democracies while also engaging with emerging economies across Asia, Africa and Latin America. This diplomatic flexibility allows India to serve as a bridge between advanced industrial economies and developing nations. In international forums discussing AI regulation, data flows and digital sovereignty, India's voice carries weight precisely because it does not fit neatly into the US-China rivalry.

Economic considerations further reinforce India's importance. Artificial intelligence is expected to contribute trillions of dollars to global GDP in the coming decades. For India, AI could accelerate

its ambition to become a multi-trillion-dollar economy by enhancing productivity in agriculture, optimizing logistics, strengthening small and medium enterprises and enabling smarter urban planning. AI-driven analytics can improve crop yields, predict weather risks and reduce supply chain inefficiencies — critical factors for a country where agriculture still supports a large share of the population.

In healthcare, AI applications can assist in early disease detection, telemedicine diagnostics and resource allocation. For rural populations with limited access to specialists, AI-powered tools may narrow service gaps. Similarly, in education, adaptive learning platforms can tailor instruction to individual students, helping address disparities in

learning outcomes across regions.

Yet ambition must be accompanied by caution. The rapid integration of AI also raises significant concerns: algorithmic bias, data privacy risks, job displacement and the concentration of power in large technology platforms. India must craft regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation while safeguarding citizens' rights. Overregulation could stifle startups and deter investment; underregulation could erode trust and exacerbate inequality.

Workforce transformation presents another challenge. As automation reshapes industries, India will need to invest heavily in skilling and reskilling programs. The demographic dividend that currently supports economic

growth could turn into a liability if technological change outpaces employment generation. Preparing the workforce for AI-augmented jobs — rather than purely manual roles — will be essential.

India's AI strategy must also account for strategic security implications. Artificial intelligence is increasingly intertwined with cybersecurity, defense modernization and information warfare. Building indigenous capabilities reduces dependence on foreign suppliers and strengthens resilience against technological coercion. In an era where digital infrastructure can become a geopolitical pressure point, technological self-reliance carries strategic value.

However, India's strength lies not only in self-reliance but also in collaboration. Partnerships with global research institutions, technology firms and multilateral organizations can accelerate innovation. Joint research initiatives, open-source collaborations and shared ethical standards can prevent fragmentation of the global AI ecosystem. India's emphasis on openness and interoperability can help prevent the emergence of rigid technological blocs.

Crucially, India's narrative around AI extends beyond power politics. It centers on development, inclusion and empowerment. While the US-China rivalry often emphasizes dominance and strategic competition, India can redefine the conversation around societal benefit. By focusing on applications that directly improve livelihoods — from digital payments to climate resilience — India can demonstrate that AI is not merely a

tool of superpower rivalry but a catalyst for human development.

This reframing matters. Many developing countries view the US-China binary as distant from their own priorities. They seek practical solutions to local challenges, not alignment in a technological cold war. India's experience in deploying digital systems at scale within a democratic and diverse society may offer lessons that resonate more broadly.

The coming decade will likely see intensifying competition in AI research, semiconductor manufacturing, cloud infrastructure and data governance. But global influence will not be determined solely by who builds the most advanced models. It will also depend on who shapes the rules, builds trust and demonstrates inclusive applications.

India stands at a pivotal moment. It can remain a secondary arena where larger powers compete, or it can assert itself as an independent force shaping the trajectory of artificial intelligence. The foundations — demographic scale, digital infrastructure, technical talent and diplomatic reach — are already in place.

Moving beyond the US-China binary does not mean ignoring global rivalries. Rather, it means recognizing that technological futures are not predetermined by two capitals alone. India's AI impact lies in its ability to chart a distinct course — one that blends innovation with inclusion, strategic ambition with democratic accountability.

If it succeeds, India will not simply participate in the AI revolution. It will help define it.

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat Urges Hindu Families to Consider Having at Least Three Children

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Chief Mohan Bhagwat has publicly suggested that Hindu families should consider having at least three children to help maintain demographic balance and secure the future of the community. His remarks have reignited debate about population trends, cultural identity and government policies related to family planning.

Speaking at a major event attended by RSS workers and supporters, Bhagwat emphasised what he described as the importance of population growth among Hindus in India. He argued that as demographic patterns shift, communities should be mindful of long-term cultural and social dynamics. According to him, lower birth rates observed in some sections of Indian society could have implications for both community representation and the broader fabric of Indian society.

Bhagwat's call comes against the backdrop of declining fertility rates across India in recent years. As education levels rise and access to health care improves, couples are increasingly opting for smaller families. India's overall fertility rate has been gradually dropping toward replacement levels, a trend seen in many parts of the world. This shift has led to widespread discussions about the balance between family planning, economic development and population stability.

In his address, Bhagwat expressed concern that if Hindu families do not maintain ade-



quate birth rates, it could eventually affect demographic composition. He urged families to think about future generations and the need to ensure that the community continues to thrive. His message was framed around cultural resilience and what he characterised as preserving the vibrancy of Hindu society.

The RSS chief also linked population considerations with national strength and social cohesion. He suggested that a balanced demographic profile would contribute positively to the country's progress and unity. However, he stopped short of advocating any compulsory measures or government intervention, instead framing his appeal as advisory and rooted in individual choice.

Reactions to Bhagwat's comments have been mixed. Supporters welcomed his emphasis on family and cultural continuity, seeing it as a reaffirmation of traditional values and community identity. Critics, however, have raised concerns about encouraging larger families in the absence of robust discussions on women's health, economic pressures and environmental sustainability. Some analysts argue that population decisions should be left to individual families and shaped by broader socio-economic considerations rather than community appeals.

Demographers have also weighed in, noting that India's demographic trajectory is already shifting due to urbanisation, increased female work-

force participation and greater access to contraception and education. While some regions and communities may have higher fertility rates, the overall national trend shows a move toward smaller household sizes.

Public debate is likely to continue in the coming weeks as Bhagwat's remarks draw attention to questions about population policy, cultural priorities and the role of civil society voices in shaping national conversations. Whether his message will influence family planning choices on the ground remains to be seen. Nonetheless, the discussion underscores the complex intersections of identity, demographics and national discourse in contemporary India.

Supreme Court Adjourns Hearing on ED's Plea Over I-PAC Raids

The Supreme Court of India has adjourned the hearing on a petition filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) concerning alleged obstruction during raids conducted at the offices of political consultancy firm I-PAC and the residence of its director. The case has triggered a significant legal and political dispute between the central agency and the West Bengal government.

The matter stems from search operations carried out in Kolkata in January as part of a money-laundering investigation linked to an alleged coal pilferage scam. The ED has claimed that its officials faced interference and obstruction from state authorities during the raids, which, according to the agency, disrupted the investigation process. The ED has sought further legal remedies, including a probe into the alleged conduct of state officials.

During the hearing, lawyers representing the ED argued that officers were prevented from carrying out their duties effectively and that crucial ma-



terials may have been compromised during the incident. They maintained that the agency was acting within its legal mandate and that any interference undermines the rule of law.

On the other hand, counsel appearing for the state authorities disputed the ED's claims, asserting that the central agency's actions were excessive and that allegations of obstruction were exaggerated. They argued that state officials were

carrying out their responsibilities in accordance with the law and denied any deliberate attempt to hinder the investigation.

The bench, comprising Justices P.K. Mishra and K.V. Viswanathan, deferred the matter to allow both sides to file additional documents and responses. The court is expected to take up the case again in March after further submissions are placed on record.

Earlier, the Supreme Court

had taken note of the seriousness of the allegations and issued notices to concerned parties. It also directed that relevant electronic records and CCTV footage from the raid locations be preserved to ensure a fair review of events. In addition, certain proceedings initiated against ED officials were temporarily stayed pending further examination.

The case raises broader questions about the relationship between central investigative agencies and state governments, particularly in politically sensitive matters. It touches upon issues of federal balance, jurisdiction and the scope of authority granted to agencies such as the ED.

As the legal battle continues, the Supreme Court's eventual ruling is likely to clarify the boundaries between state authorities and central agencies during investigations. The outcome could have significant implications for how such operations are conducted in the future, especially in cases involving high political stakes.

Kiren Rijiju Calls Rahul Gandhi "Most Dangerous" for India's Security

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has launched a sharp political attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, calling him the "most dangerous person for India's security." The remarks mark a significant escalation in rhetoric between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition Congress.

Rijiju alleged that Gandhi's actions and statements, both within Parliament and during his interactions abroad, harm India's image and national interests. He accused the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha of associating with individuals and groups that he claimed are not aligned with the country's interests. According to Rijiju, such engagements send the wrong message internationally and undermine India's standing.

The minister also criticised Gandhi's conduct in Parliament, describing it as irresponsible for someone holding a senior constitutional position. Rijiju argued that protests, confrontational tac-



tics and dramatic gestures inside and outside the House diminish the dignity of parliamentary proceedings. He maintained that the Leader of the Opposition is expected to uphold decorum while raising issues.

A major point of contention has been Gandhi's recent attempts to raise sensitive allegations involving the Prime Minister in Parliament. Rijiju dismissed these claims as baseless and accused Gandhi

of making statements without sufficient evidence. He suggested that repeated allegations without substantiation could create confusion and erode public trust.

The remarks come amid heightened tensions between the government and the opposition over a range of issues, including foreign policy, economic management and national security. The political atmosphere has grown increasingly confrontational,

with leaders on both sides trading strong accusations in public forums.

In response to government criticism, Rahul Gandhi has continued to question the administration's handling of key national matters, asserting that raising concerns is part of the opposition's democratic responsibility. Congress leaders have defended his statements, arguing that scrutiny of the government strengthens democratic accountability.

The episode underscores how national security has become a central theme in political discourse. By framing disagreements in terms of patriotism and security, both sides are attempting to shape public perception ahead of future electoral contests.

As the debate unfolds, the sharp exchange highlights the deepening divide between the ruling party and the opposition. Whether the rhetoric cools or intensifies further will likely depend on developments inside Parliament and the broader political climate in the months ahead.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai Arrives in India for AI Summit, Says "Nice to Be Back"



Google's Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai has arrived in India to participate in the India AI Impact Summit, underscoring the country's growing importance in the global technology landscape. On landing, Pichai expressed enthusiasm about returning to India, saying it felt "nice to be back," and highlighted the opportunity to engage with innovators, policymakers and tech leaders during the summit.

Pichai's visit comes at a key moment in India's push to become a leading hub for artificial intelligence development. The India AI Impact Summit brings together global CEOs, government officials, researchers and startup founders to discuss AI innovation, regulation and applications that can benefit society. India's focus on harnessing AI for public good — including health, education, agriculture and governance — has drawn attention from major global tech companies, and Google has been an active partner in several such initiatives.

During his brief remarks after arrival, Pichai noted that technology and AI have the potential to address re-

al-world challenges at scale. He also spoke about the importance of responsible AI, emphasising that advancements in the field must be guided by safety, fairness and inclusivity. His comments resonated with the summit's broader themes, which include ethical AI frameworks and collaborative research.

Google has already been deepening its engagement in India across multiple fronts. The company has invested in local infrastructure, supported digital skills training and partnered with startups and academia. Its products and services are widely used across the country, and Pichai's visit is expected to strengthen those ties further.

In conversations with Indian leaders, Pichai is likely to discuss areas of mutual interest such as cloud computing, digital inclusion, developer support and investments in innovation. The summit provides a platform not only for showcasing technological breakthroughs but also for exploring how global and local AI ecosystems can work together to solve pressing

challenges. Pichai's presence at the event reflects broader trends in the technology industry, where global firms are increasingly recognising India as a key market for growth, talent and innovation. With its vast population of digital users, expanding startup ecosystem and policy focus on emerging technologies, India poses both opportunities and responsibilities for global tech leaders.

As the summit unfolds, Pichai is expected to meet with government officials, industry peers and members of India's tech community. His participation highlights the importance of dialogue between technology companies and policymakers in shaping the future of AI — not just in India, but around the world.

In saying it was "nice to be back," Pichai also signalled a personal connection to India, a market he has visited numerous times throughout his career. His comments and engagement at the summit underscore Google's ongoing commitment to India's digital transformation journey and its role in shaping AI for broad societal impact.

Rajya Sabha Polls on March 16 as 37 Seats Fall Vacant Across 10 States



The Election Commission of India has announced that biennial elections to fill 37 vacant seats in the Rajya Sabha will be held on March 16, 2026. These elections are being conducted as the terms of several sitting members are set to expire in April 2026, creating vacancies that must be filled to maintain the strength of the Upper House of Parliament.

The election process will begin with the issuance of notifications on February 26. The nomination period will follow, allowing candidates to file their papers in early March. After scrutiny and finalisation of nominations, polling will take place from 9 am to 4 pm on March 16. Counting of votes will be conducted later the same day, and the entire process is expected to conclude before the end of March.

The 37 seats are spread across 10 states. Maharashtra has the highest number of seats falling vacant, followed by Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Bihar. Other

states where members are retiring include Odisha, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Telangana and Himachal Pradesh. These vacancies arise as part of the Rajya Sabha's staggered retirement system, under which one-third of members retire every two years.

Unlike the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha is a permanent body and is not subject to dissolution. Members serve six-year terms, and regular biennial elections ensure continuity in the functioning of Parliament's Upper House. The system helps preserve institutional stability while allowing periodic renewal of representation.

Rajya Sabha members are elected by the elected members of State Legislative Assemblies through a system of proportional representation using the single transferable vote. As a result, the outcome in each state largely depends on the strength of political parties in the respective state assemblies. Parties with a majority or

strong presence in state legislatures typically have an advantage in securing seats.

The upcoming elections are expected to draw political attention, as changes in party representation could influence the legislative dynamics of the Upper House. The Rajya Sabha plays a critical role in reviewing and passing legislation, debating national issues and representing the interests of states in the federal structure.

With several prominent members set to retire, parties are likely to field key leaders and strategists to strengthen their parliamentary presence. Although these elections are indirect and not voted on by the general public, they remain significant in shaping the balance of power in Parliament.

The March 16 polls therefore mark an important democratic exercise, ensuring continuity in governance while reflecting evolving political equations across India's states.

US-Iran Tensions Intensify: How Close Are Trump and Khamenei to Open Conflict?

Tensions between the United States and Iran have escalated sharply, raising fresh concerns about the possibility of a direct military confrontation. At the center of this standoff are U.S. President Donald Trump and Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, whose hardened rhetoric and strategic moves have amplified fears of a wider regional crisis.

In recent weeks, Washington has significantly reinforced its military presence in the Middle East. Aircraft carrier strike groups, advanced fighter jets and additional defense assets have been deployed to the region. The move signals a posture of deterrence but also demonstrates that the United States is prepared for rapid escalation if necessary. American officials have maintained that the buildup is aimed at safeguarding regional stability and protecting U.S. interests amid concerns over Iran's nuclear ambitions and missile capabilities.

Tehran, meanwhile, has responded with its own show of resolve. Iran's military has conducted exercises near critical maritime chokepoints, showcasing its ability to disrupt shipping routes if tensions boil over. Iranian leadership has adopted defiant language, warning that any attack would trigger a strong and far-reaching response. The tone from Tehran reflects both



domestic political pressures and a broader strategy of deterrence aimed at dissuading Washington from military action.

The Strait of Hormuz remains a focal point in this standoff. As a vital artery for global oil shipments, any disruption in the area could have immediate economic consequences worldwide. The presence of naval forces from both sides in and around the Gulf adds to the fragility of the situation. Even a miscalculation or isolated incident could spiral into a broader confrontation.

Diplomatic channels have not entirely closed, but progress has been limited. Efforts

to revive talks over Iran's nuclear program have faced repeated setbacks. The United States continues to push for stricter limitations, while Iran insists on its sovereign right to pursue peaceful nuclear development. Mutual distrust, compounded by previous breakdowns in agreements, has made compromise difficult.

Domestic politics further complicate the picture. In the United States, a tough stance on Iran has been a recurring theme in political messaging. In Iran, resistance to perceived foreign pressure is deeply embedded in national identity and political discourse. Both leaderships must navigate in-

ternal expectations while managing international risks.

Despite the heightened rhetoric and military signaling, a full-scale war is not inevitable. The costs of open conflict would be immense for both sides and could destabilize the broader Middle East. Many analysts believe that both Washington and Tehran prefer strategic posturing over direct confrontation.

For now, the situation remains tense but contained. Whether it tips into open conflict will depend on diplomacy, restraint and the ability of both sides to avoid miscalculation in an already volatile region.

Canada Quietly Removes Over 2,500 Indians in 2025: What It Signals



Canada has significantly increased immigration enforcement in 2025, with more than 2,500 Indian nationals removed from the country so far this year. The figure places Indians among the largest groups affected by deportation and removal actions, reflecting a broader tightening of immigration rules and compliance measures.

The removals are part of a wider push by Canadian authorities to strengthen enforcement and maintain what officials describe as the integrity of the immigration system. The Canada Border Services Agency issues different types of removal orders, including departure orders, exclusion orders and deportation orders, depending on the circumstances of each case. Individuals may be removed for reasons ranging from visa overstays and non-compliance with immigration conditions to rejected refugee claims or criminal violations.

Indian nationals form a substantial share of Canada's international student and temporary worker population. In recent years, Canada has been a preferred destination for Indian students seeking higher education

and long-term settlement opportunities. However, increased scrutiny of visa applications, tighter documentation requirements and stricter enforcement of stay conditions have made compliance more critical than ever.

A significant driver behind the removals appears to be cases where refugee claims were rejected or applicants failed to follow required legal procedures. Once an application is denied and appeal options are exhausted, individuals may face mandatory removal if they do not leave voluntarily. Authorities have accelerated processing and enforcement in such cases.

The rise in removals also reflects a broader shift in Canada's immigration policy environment. Facing domestic pressures over housing shortages, job competition and strain on public services, policymakers have moved toward balancing high immigration targets with stronger enforcement mechanisms. While Canada continues to welcome skilled migrants and students, it has made clear that compliance with immigration rules will be strictly monitored.

For Indian nationals currently in Canada, the message is clear: maintaining valid visa status, adhering to study or work permit conditions and responding promptly to immigration notices are essential. Legal experts have advised individuals to remain aware of their documentation timelines and to seek professional guidance if facing potential status issues.

Despite the increase in removals, Canada remains committed to immigration as a pillar of its economic growth strategy. The country continues to rely on international talent to fill labor gaps and support long-term demographic stability. However, the current enforcement trend suggests that while opportunities remain, the margin for non-compliance has narrowed significantly.

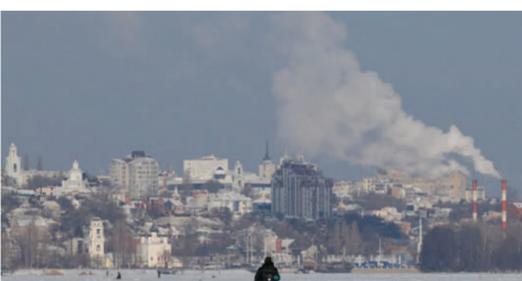
The development may also influence migration patterns and future applications from India, potentially leading to more cautious and carefully documented submissions. As bilateral ties between India and Canada evolve, immigration compliance is likely to remain an important and closely watched issue.

Four Years of War Reshape Life in the Russian City of Voronezh

Voronezh, a city of about one million people in western Russia, now feels closer to the realities of war than many other parts of the country. Although it lies roughly 500 kilometres south of Moscow, it is nearer to the front lines of the conflict in Ukraine than to the Russian capital. Over the four years since Russia launched its full-scale offensive, everyday life in this city has been transformed by the war in ways large and small.

One of the most visible changes in Voronezh is the presence of military equipment and weaponry. Anti-aircraft systems sit camouflaged along the roads leading out of the city, a constant reminder of the threat posed by aerial attacks. The sound of air raid sirens has become part of daily life, and many residents say the noise of explosions and drone activity leaves them on edge, interrupted in their routines, and acutely aware of the conflict that lies beyond their city limits.

Propaganda and military recruitment have also seeped into the urban landscape. Large posters urging young people to enlist with the army



are everywhere, often overshadowing cultural or commercial advertisements that once dominated public spaces. Recruiting centres now offer significant financial incentives, promising sums equivalent to years of average regional earnings in exchange for enlistment. This has helped Russia sustain troop numbers despite reports of heavy casualties, even as incentives draw criticism for commodifying military service.

Public art and memorials have shifted in tone, too. Murals honouring soldiers who have died in the fighting now adorn city walls. These tributes reflect an official narrative that elevates military ser-

vice and sacrifice. At the same time, such imagery also serves to normalise the idea of war among civilians, blending patriotism with everyday civic life.

Yet not everyone in Voronezh embraces this narrative. Amid the official posters and patriotic murals, there are subtle acts of resistance. One local artist has been placing small plaques with messages advocating peace on buildings and walls, drawing on historical motifs meant to remind people of past generations' yearning for harmony. While most of these peace symbols have been removed, one remains on a street aptly named "Peace Street," serving as a

quiet reminder of alternative perspectives within the city.

For many residents, the war is far more personal. Families are grappling with uncertainty about loved ones who have gone missing or been killed in action, a painful reality that underscores the human cost of the conflict. Some residents talk about the psychological toll of living under constant threat — from the sound of drones overhead to the knowledge that one person in the city was killed in an attack just last month.

Voronezh's transformation illustrates how a prolonged conflict can ripple outward from the battlefield, changing life in cities once removed from direct fighting. From the posters lining its streets to the weaponry lurking on its outskirts, the imprint of four years of war is evident in both the physical landscape and the minds of its people. Despite official efforts to promote enlistment and national unity, signs of dissent and longing for peace persist, reminding observers that even in wartime, public sentiment is not monolithic.

Sweden Praises India's AI Push, Calls PM Modi's Vision a Force for Global Good

Sweden's Deputy Prime Minister Ebba Busch has lauded India's ambitious push in artificial intelligence, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for AI is aimed at serving the "greater good" and positioning the technology as a tool for inclusive global development. Her remarks came during her visit to New Delhi, where global leaders, policymakers and technology experts gathered to discuss the future of artificial intelligence and international cooperation.

Busch highlighted India's growing influence in the global technology landscape and described the country's AI strategy as forward-looking and responsible. She emphasized that artificial intelligence must not only drive economic growth but also promote societal welfare, innovation and international collaboration. According to her, India's approach reflects a commitment to ensuring that AI benefits humanity broadly rather than being limited to commercial or geopolitical gains.

Sweden, known for its strong innovation ecosystem and advanced research capabilities, sees significant potential for



deeper collaboration with India in emerging technologies. Busch noted that the two countries already share strong ties in science, trade and industry, and artificial intelligence presents a natural extension of that partnership. She expressed confidence that closer cooperation between Swedish and Indian firms, researchers and policymakers could unlock new opportunities in sectors such as healthcare, green technology and digital infrastructure.

A key theme of her address was the importance of striking the right balance between reg-

ulation and innovation. While acknowledging that AI safety and ethical frameworks are crucial, she cautioned against overly restrictive rules that might hinder progress. In her view, regulatory systems must evolve alongside technological advancements to encourage innovation while protecting citizens and maintaining trust.

The Deputy Prime Minister also placed India's AI ambitions within a broader strategic and economic context. She pointed to expanding economic ties between India and Europe, suggesting that technology cooperation can serve as a

cornerstone of deeper engagement. With digital transformation reshaping industries worldwide, she stressed that partnerships grounded in shared democratic values can help shape responsible global standards for AI deployment.

Beyond economic cooperation, Busch underscored the need for international collaboration in addressing global challenges. She indicated that emerging technologies like artificial intelligence can play a vital role in tackling issues such as climate change, healthcare accessibility and sustainable development.

Her remarks reflect growing international recognition of India's role in shaping the global AI narrative. With its vast digital ecosystem, strong talent base and expanding innovation landscape, India is increasingly seen as a key player in defining how artificial intelligence is developed and governed.

As discussions on AI continue to evolve, Sweden's endorsement highlights the momentum behind India's efforts to position itself not just as a technology adopter, but as a global leader shaping a responsible and inclusive AI future.

Indian-Origin Sikh Nurse Allegedly Assaulted and Racially Abused at Australian Gym



A 22-year-old Indian-origin Sikh nurse has alleged that he was physically attacked and racially abused after finishing a workout at a gym in Corio, a suburb of Geelong in Victoria, Australia. The incident has left him injured and emotionally shaken, raising concerns about racially motivated violence.

According to the nurse, the confrontation began while he was exercising late in the evening. He claimed that three men started harassing him inside the gym. Although he initially tried to ignore the remarks and complete his workout, the situation escalated when he stepped outside the premises. The same group was allegedly waiting for him.

A video from the scene, which has circulated on social media, shows one of the men hurling racial slurs at the young nurse, including calling him an "Indian dog," along with other profanities. Moments later, he was allegedly struck in the face, causing his nose to bleed.

Emergency services were called to the scene, and the nurse was taken to a hospital for treatment. He report-

edly spent the night under medical observation. Doctors have advised him to consult a specialist, and there is a possibility that he may require surgery depending on further examination. He is expected to take time off work for about a week as he recovers from the physical injuries.

Beyond the physical harm, the emotional toll has been significant. The nurse said that while he had previously experienced occasional racial comments, this was the first time such abuse had turned violent. He described feeling traumatised and unsafe following the incident. The attack has also left him reconsidering whether he feels comfortable returning to the same gym or maintaining his usual routine.

The alleged attackers reportedly fled the area in a grey sedan shortly after the assault. Authorities are understood to be investigating the matter, although detailed updates regarding arrests or charges have not yet been made public.

The incident has drawn attention within the local community and among

members of the Indian diaspora in Australia. Australia is home to a large and growing Indian-origin population, many of whom work in sectors such as healthcare, education, and technology. While most communities coexist peacefully, episodes of racial abuse and violence periodically spark debate about discrimination and social cohesion.

Community advocates have emphasised the importance of reporting hate crimes and ensuring accountability for those responsible. They stress that racially motivated harassment and violence have no place in a multicultural society. The case has once again highlighted the need for vigilance, stronger preventive measures, and continued dialogue around inclusion and safety.

As investigations continue, the young nurse's experience has become a reminder of the personal and societal costs of intolerance. Supporters hope that swift action will not only bring justice in this case but also reinforce the message that discrimination and violence will not be tolerated.

Gold and Silver Rebound Ahead of Fed Minutes, Investors Turn Cautious



Gold and silver prices recovered in the commodity markets as investors positioned themselves ahead of the release of the U.S. Federal Reserve's meeting minutes. After recent weakness, both precious metals regained ground, supported by renewed safe-haven demand and expectations surrounding future interest rate moves.

Gold rebounded after slipping to a short-term low in previous sessions. Bargain buying emerged as traders viewed the decline as an opportunity to enter at lower levels. The yellow metal strengthened in global markets, reflecting cautious optimism and anticipation of potential signals from the Federal Reserve about the direction of monetary policy. Silver also climbed sharply, outperforming gold during the recovery phase and reflecting stronger volatility typical of the metal.

Market participants are closely watching the Fed minutes for clues about policymakers' outlook on inflation,

economic growth and the path of interest rates. Any indication of a softer or more dovish stance could provide further support to bullion prices. Precious metals typically benefit when interest rates are expected to decline, as lower yields reduce the opportunity cost of holding non-interest-bearing assets like gold and silver.

Recent economic data from the United States has painted a mixed picture, contributing to uncertainty in financial markets. Fluctuations in inflation figures, employment data and consumer spending have made it difficult for investors to confidently predict the Fed's next move. This uncertainty has translated into volatility in commodity prices, including precious metals.

The U.S. dollar's movement has also influenced gold and silver. A stronger dollar tends to weigh on bullion prices by making them more expensive for buyers using other currencies. Conversely, any signs of

dollar weakness often provide support to gold and silver, enhancing their appeal as alternative stores of value.

Analysts suggest that in the near term, precious metals could remain in a consolidation phase as markets digest the central bank's commentary. However, the broader trend continues to depend on interest rate expectations and global economic developments. Geopolitical tensions and macroeconomic risks may also keep safe-haven demand intact.

Overall, the rebound in gold and silver highlights investor caution and sensitivity to policy signals. With the Fed minutes expected to clarify the central bank's thinking, traders are likely to remain alert to any shifts in tone that could influence market direction. Whether the rally extends or faces resistance will largely depend on how the minutes shape expectations about the future course of U.S. monetary policy.

Strong Rally: Sensex Rises Over 280 Points, Nifty Above 25,800 as Markets End Higher

Indian stock markets extended their recent upward momentum, with key indices closing higher in volatile trading on Wednesday. The BSE Sensex jumped by more than 280 points, while the NSE Nifty50 crossed the 25,800 mark, marking a positive finish for the third session in a row.

The market opened with gains but trimmed them early on as some selling pressure emerged. However, renewed buying interest later in the day helped both benchmark indices recover and close near their session highs. Broader market sentiment turned upbeat as buying picked up across most sectors, except for information technology, which lagged behind and moderated overall gains.

At the session's close, the Sensex registered a notable rise, and the Nifty50 ended comfortably above 25,800. Midcap and small-cap indices also participated in the rally, recording healthy gains and outperforming the headline indices. This broad participation suggested that investor confidence is improving beyond just the large-cap stocks.



Sector-wise, most segments finished in positive territory. Metal, FMCG and PSU bank stocks were among the top performers, providing strong support to the market trend. Private banks, realty, auto and energy-related stocks also contributed to the rally with moderate gains. In contrast, IT stocks declined, reflecting ongoing concerns and profit booking in this segment.

On the individual stock front, several heavyweight

names delivered solid performances. Companies in steel, consumer goods and financial services saw strong buying interest. A few mid-cap and small-cap stocks reacted positively to corporate developments, including merger approvals and large contract wins, which lifted their share prices significantly.

Market participants also noted that domestic institutional investors continued to support the

equity market, helping stabilize volatility and sustain buying interest despite mixed global cues. This steady inflow has been a key factor underpinning the market's resilience in recent sessions.

However, analysts pointed out that without fresh triggers or strong global cues, markets may remain in a consolidation phase around current levels. The ongoing divergence between sectors — with cyclical stocks outperform-

ing and technology lagging — could influence near-term trends.

Overall, the extended rally and broad-based buying reflect continued investor optimism about the Indian growth story, even as certain pockets of the market experience profit booking. The market's ability to absorb sectoral pressure while maintaining higher levels suggests a cautiously constructive outlook among traders and investors.

Can Courts Fill the Gap If U.S. Regulators Fail to Hold Auditors Accountable?

In recent years, concerns have grown over whether auditors of major companies in the United States are being held to account effectively for mistakes, oversights or failures to spot fraud. Traditionally, regulatory bodies such as federal oversight boards and securities commissions have played the central role in policing auditors. But with regulatory scrutiny appearing to weaken in some quarters, attention is increasingly turning to the courts to see if judicial action can fill the void.

Auditors serve as a key safeguard in financial markets, tasked with independently examining companies' books and ensuring that financial statements accurately reflect the health of a business. Their role is crucial because investors, lenders and other stakeholders rely heavily on audit reports when making decisions. When auditors fail to detect fraud or significant errors, the consequences can be dramatic — eroding investor confidence and causing signif-



icant losses. However, accountability for auditors is complicated by legal protections and the way relationships are structured. Auditors are typically hired by the company being audited, not by shareholders or investors directly. This creates a legal hurdle when investors seek to sue auditors for negligence. Under U.S. law, plaintiffs often must prove a specific

kind of legal relationship or "privity" to hold auditors accountable. Courts have sometimes been reluctant to expand this concept, making it hard for investors to prevail.

Despite these challenges, recent courtroom decisions have shown mixed outcomes. In some cases, judges have broadened the definition of legal relationships, allowing investor suits to proceed

even without strict contractual ties. In others, courts have rejected claims against auditors on grounds that disputed accounting judgments do not constitute factual misstatements. These divergent outcomes suggest that the judiciary is becoming an increasingly important arena for disputes over auditor responsibility. The shifting balance

between regulatory enforcement and judicial action has broader implications for market trust. If regulatory bodies take a step back from rigorous enforcement, courts may be forced to play a larger role in policing auditors. But courts are not designed as regulatory agencies; their decisions hinge on legal standards and precedents rather than proactive oversight. This means that litigation may only address issues after harm has occurred, rather than preventing misconduct in the first place.

Ultimately, a robust accountability framework for auditors likely requires both strong regulatory enforcement and a legal system willing to hold professionals responsible when they fail in their duties. If regulators retreat from enforcement, the courts may become a key backstop — but relying on litigation alone may not provide sufficient deterrence to protect investors and maintain confidence in the financial reporting system.

Clean Max Says Falling Tariffs Won't Hurt Returns as IPO Nears



Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions, a renewable energy company preparing to launch its initial public offering, says that although power tariffs are trending downward in the industry, its business model still delivers solid returns for investors. The firm's leadership has emphasized that strong unit economics and careful financial planning remain at the core of its strategy, even as pricing pressure rises.

The IPO, which is scheduled to open soon, marks a milestone for the company as it transitions from private to public ownership. Management says the decision to go public reflects its growth to a scale where a broader base of shareholders is appropriate. Rather than timing the market, the company focused on reaching key performance milestones before offering shares to the public.

A significant part of the IPO proceeds will go toward reducing debt. Clean Max already has a lower net debt com-

pared with many peers in the renewable energy sector, and management believes that using fresh capital to cut borrowings will improve its financial strength and lower interest costs. This is expected to leave more internal cash available to fund future capacity expansion without relying excessively on external borrowings.

Clean Max has reported a return to profitability in its most recent financial year after two years of losses. Management says that while reported profit figures are important, cash profitability and return on equity are more telling indicators of business health. On a cash basis, the company has been generating strong returns and continues to deliver high gross margins due to the nature of renewable energy generation.

Tariff compression is a feature of the renewable power market as capital costs decline, meaning newer power purchase agreements

generally reflect lower unit prices than older ones. However, Clean Max argues that this does not weaken returns for existing assets because tariffs are locked in at the time of contract signing and are tied to the cost of building the asset. As a result, equity recovery times remain attractive, often within a few years for recent projects.

Diversification of customers is another strength highlighted by the company. With hundreds of clients across different sectors, no single customer accounts for a disproportionate share of revenue, reducing concentration risk.

Leadership also addressed concerns about pledged promoter shares, explaining that most pledged shares will be released post-IPO as part of ongoing debt reduction efforts. Overall, the company is positioning itself as a renewable energy provider with stable economics capable of delivering consistent returns even as the broader tariff environment evolves.

Wall Street Searches for a Bottom as S&P 500 Tests Key Support

Wall Street struggled for direction as major U.S. stock indexes hovered near critical technical levels, with the S&P 500 retesting long-term support that many traders view as a make-or-break point for the market's next move. After a period of choppy trading marked by economic uncertainty and mixed earnings results, investors are now trying to gauge whether recent weakness signals a deeper correction or simply a pause before renewed gains.

The S&P 500, viewed by many as the broadest barometer of U.S. equity health, has dipped toward a historically important support zone. This level has acted as a floor during previous pullbacks, encouraging buyers to step in and stabilize prices. But the repeated tests of this area have raised questions about the market's resilience. If the support holds, analysts believe it could pave the way for a recovery. If it breaks decisively, however, stocks could be vulnerable to further declines.

In recent sessions, trad-



ing activity has reflected the uncertainty gripping markets. Bullish and bearish forces have battled for control, leading to tight ranges and frequent reversals. While some sectors have shown strength, others have lagged, contributing to the uneven performance. Growth-oriented technology stocks, in particular, have faced pressure from rising yields and concerns about future

profitability, while more defensive areas such as consumer staples and utilities have shown relative stability.

Investor attention remains focused on a series of economic indicators due for release later this week. Data on inflation, consumer spending and labor markets could provide fresh insights into the strength of the U.S. economy and influence ex-

pectations for future monetary policy decisions. Traders are especially sensitive to signs that inflation pressures may be easing or intensifying, as this could alter the Federal Reserve's stance on interest rates — a key driver of equity market sentiment.

Earnings reports also continue to add complexity to the market picture. A mix of positive and disap-

pointing corporate results has made it difficult for investors to draw clear conclusions about broader corporate health. While some companies have exceeded expectations with strong revenue and profit growth, others have tempered outlooks or missed forecasts, reinforcing the sense of uneven economic momentum.

Despite the challenges, market participants are monitoring technical indicators for clues about the next directional move. A rally from this support area could signal renewed confidence and attract fresh capital into equities. Conversely, a breakdown below key levels may prompt increased selling as traders adjust risk positions.

Ultimately, the current market environment reflects a tug-of-war between optimism about long-term growth prospects and caution in the face of economic ambiguity. As Wall Street hunts for a bottom, investors will be watching closely for signs that the broader market has found footing or is poised to test lower ground.

Barack Obama's Viral NBA All-Star Moment Steals the Spotlight



Former U.S. President Barack Obama became an unexpected highlight of the 2026 NBA All-Star Game over the weekend, captivating fans around the world with a spontaneous and light-hearted moment that quickly went viral online.

The All-Star Game — held at the Intuit Dome in California — featured some of the world's top basketball talent in an exhibition matchup. Celebrity attendees and former players brought plenty of excitement, but it was Obama's unplanned courtside play that grabbed headlines. Sitting alongside his wife, Michelle Obama, the former president made a surprise splash when a loose basketball came flying toward the spectator area during the game. Without hesitation, Obama reached out from his courtside seat and caught the ball, preventing it from reaching the crowd. He then handed it back to player Devin Booker, drawing laughter and applause from fans nearby.

The moment was captured on camera and widely shared across social media, quickly gaining millions of views and sparking a wave of admiration from viewers who praised Obama's quick reflexes and casual charm. Many commentators joked that it was one of the most memorable parts of the night — even in a game filled with star athletes.

In addition to his spontaneous catch, Obama also took part in an on-court

interview with former NBA sharpshooter Reggie Miller, where the two discussed basketball memories and shared a light-hearted banter about the 1990s era of the sport. Their exchange offered fans a glimpse of Obama's deep roots in basketball culture and his easy rapport with the game's legends.

The Obamas' presence at the event was not just about the on-court action. They were seen enjoying the atmosphere, interacting with other celebrities, and soaking up the energy of one of basketball's brightest moments of the year. The former president, long known for his love of the sport and especially the Chicago Bulls, seemed right at home among the hoops culture and fans.

Footage of the catch quickly became a trending topic across video platforms, with netizens sharing clips, memes, and playful commentary about Obama showing he's "still got game" even off the court. For many, the clip served as a delightful reminder of the former president's affable personality and wide appeal, bridging the worlds of sports and pop culture.

What began as a simple night enjoying one of basketball's marquee events turned into a viral highlight reel moment — showing that even in a world of elite athleticism, sometimes all it takes is a former leader's quick reflexes and warm presence to steal the show.

Logan Paul's Rare Pikachu Card Sells for Record-Breaking \$16.5 Million



Internet personality and WWE star Logan Paul has once again made headlines — this time for selling one of the rarest Pokémon trading cards in existence for a staggering \$16.5 million. The sale has set a new world record for the most expensive trading card ever sold.

The prized collectible is the ultra-rare Pokémon Trading Card Game "Pikachu Illustrator" card, widely considered the holy grail among Pokémon collectors. Only a handful of these cards are known to exist, making them extraordinarily valuable. Paul's copy was graded a perfect PSA 10, indicating pristine condition — a key factor behind its enormous price tag.

Paul originally purchased the card in 2021 for approximately \$5.275 million, which at the time also set a record for the most expensive Pokémon card ever bought. He famously showcased the card in a custom case and even wore it around his neck during his appearance at WrestleMania 38, turning the collectible into a pop culture moment.

The recent sale followed intense bidding, with collectors from around the world competing for ownership. The final price of \$16.5 million represents a massive jump in value, highlighting the explosive growth of the rare collectibles market in recent years. After factoring in his original purchase price, Paul is believed to have made a

substantial profit from the deal.

The Pikachu Illustrator card holds special significance in the Pokémon universe. It was originally awarded to winners of an illustration contest in Japan in the late 1990s, making it far rarer than standard Pokémon cards that were widely distributed. Its limited availability and historical importance have cemented its status as one of the most coveted items in the trading card world.

The sale also reflects the broader boom in nostalgia-driven collectibles. Over the past few years, trading cards, comic books, and vintage memorabilia have increasingly been viewed as alternative investment assets. What once began as childhood hobbies have transformed into high-value markets attracting serious investors.

For Pokémon fans, the record-breaking sale underscores the record value of the franchise's legacy remains decades after its launch. For collectors, it signals that rare items in flawless condition can command extraordinary prices.

Logan Paul's headline-making transaction not only sets a financial milestone but also highlights how pop culture, nostalgia, and investment have merged in today's collectibles market — turning a small illustrated card into a multi-million-dollar treasure.

GPS Gone Wrong: Amazon Delivery Van Ends Up Stranded in Tidal Waters in Britain

In a bizarre incident highlighting the risks of overreliance on digital navigation systems, an Amazon delivery driver in Britain found themselves in trouble after their GPS directed them onto a dangerous tidal pathway, leaving their van stranded in rising waters.

The incident took place on February 15 as the driver attempted to complete a delivery to Foulness Island in Essex. While following satnav instructions, the vehicle was guided onto The Broomway — a historic six-mile track stretching across mudflats in the Thames Estuary. Unbeknownst to the driver, the route is notoriously hazardous and unsuitable for motor vehicles.

The Broomway, believed to be around 600 years old, was once the only access route to Foulness Island before a bridge was constructed. Over centuries, it has developed a grim reputation due to fast-moving tides, shifting sands, and poor visibility during bad weather. Historical accounts suggest that around 100 people have lost their lives along the path. Today, it is considered one of Britain's most dangerous routes and is typically navigated only on foot, and even then with extreme caution and local knowledge.

As the Amazon van proceeded along the mudflat track, the soft terrain and incoming tide quickly cre-



ated a perilous situation. The vehicle became stuck, and water levels began to rise. Fortunately, the driver managed to exit the van safely before conditions worsened.

Emergency services were alerted, and rescue teams arrived at the scene to assess the situation. By the time authorities reached the area, the driver had already abandoned the vehicle. Ensuring the driver's safety was the primary concern, and no in-

juries were reported.

Later, arrangements were made to recover the stranded van. A local farmer assisted in towing the vehicle out of the mud once conditions allowed. Officials also ensured that there was no environmental damage caused by the incident.

Authorities reiterated that The Broomway is not designed for vehicles and carries clear warnings about its dangers. Rapidly changing tides

can submerge large sections of the path within minutes, making it treacherous even for experienced walkers.

The unusual episode quickly gained attention online, sparking discussion about the limitations of GPS technology.

While navigation apps are widely used and generally reliable, this incident serves as a reminder that digital directions are not foolproof—especially in remote or his-

torically sensitive areas.

Amazon has confirmed it is reviewing the incident to understand how the navigation error occurred and to help prevent similar situations in the future.

The mishap underscores an important lesson: technology can guide us, but it cannot replace awareness, caution, and common sense—particularly when nature is involved.

SZA Stuns Fans With Surprise Appearance at Mahashivratri Celebration in Tamil Nadu



Grammy-winning American singer SZA left fans both surprised and delighted after she made an unexpected appearance at a grand Mahashivratri celebration in India. Videos of the singer participating in the spiritual event quickly went viral, with social media users joking that she seemed "more Indian than me" as they reacted to her enthu-

siastic involvement.

SZA was spotted at the Isha Yoga Centre in Coimbatore, where thousands had gathered for the annual Mahashivratri festivities. The night-long celebration, dedicated to Shiva, is marked by meditation, devotional music, chanting, and spiritual practices that continue until dawn.

Dressed in a traditional

saree, SZA blended seamlessly into the vibrant atmosphere. She attended the event with her mother and appeared fully immersed in the spiritual energy of the night. In a moment that caught fans off guard, the singer even took to the stage, greeting the crowd warmly and wishing everyone a happy Mahashivratri.

Clips circulating online

show her leading chants of "Shiv Shambhu" and encouraging the crowd to join in the devotional spirit. Her confident participation and respectful engagement with the traditions impressed many attendees. Far from being a passive observer, she appeared genuinely moved by the experience, interacting warmly with the audience.

During her time on stage, SZA expressed gratitude to Sadhguru, founder of the Isha Foundation, for inviting her to the celebration. She also introduced her mother to the audience, sharing a heartfelt moment that resonated with those present.

The unexpected crossover between global pop culture and ancient Indian spirituality sparked widespread reactions online. Fans praised her openness to embracing different cultures, while others playfully remarked that her enthusiasm made her seem more connected

to the traditions than some locals themselves.

Mahashivratri at the Isha Yoga Centre is known for drawing participants from around the world, including artists, spiritual seekers, and public figures. However, seeing an international music icon like SZA fully participate in the chanting and devotional activities added a fresh layer of global attention to the event.

The singer's appearance highlights how spiritual and cultural celebrations in India continue to attract interest beyond borders. For many fans, it was both an unexpected and inspiring sight — a reminder that music, spirituality, and shared human experiences often transcend geography and background.

What began as a quiet visit turned into a viral moment, with SZA's presence symbolising a beautiful cultural exchange that resonated far beyond the festival grounds.

Footpath Classroom in Delhi: Viral Video of Man Teaching Homeless Children Inspires Millions

A touching video from Delhi has captured widespread attention on social media, showing a man turning a simple footpath into a classroom for homeless children. The clip, filmed in Sheikh Sarai, has resonated with viewers for its powerful reminder that compassion and commitment to education can flourish even in the most modest surroundings.

In the video, the man is seen sitting on the pavement with a small group of children gathered around him. With no formal infrastructure—no desks, no blackboard, and no school building—he patiently explains lessons while the children follow along using notebooks placed on their laps. Despite the busy city environment surrounding them, the focus and seriousness with which the children listen stand out.

The video was shared with a caption highlight-

ing how, amid the rush of everyday life, some individuals choose to pause and make a difference. It quickly went viral, garnering over a million views and thousands of likes. Social media users flooded the comments section with praise, calling the act inspiring and heart-warming.

The teacher was later identified as Krishan Kumar, who responded to the viral attention with a simple yet powerful message: "Education is everyone's right." His statement reflected the motivation behind his efforts—to ensure that children who may not have access to formal schooling still get an opportunity to learn.

Several viewers claimed they recognised him as their former teacher, describing him as someone who had always been dedicated to his students. These testimonials added another layer of depth to the story, suggesting that



his commitment to education extends beyond this single viral moment.

The scene struck a chord because it highlighted a larger reality—many children living on the streets or in vulnerable conditions struggle to access consistent schooling. In this context, the teacher's initiative symbolised hope and the belief that change often begins with individual effort rather than institutional

support.

Comments online praised his humility and selflessness. Many users described the act as proof that kindness still exists in society. Others expressed that small gestures like this can create lasting impact, especially when directed toward children who need guidance and opportunity.

In a city as vast and fast-paced as Delhi, the sight of a footpath transform-

ing into a learning space offered a powerful contrast. It served as a reminder that meaningful change does not always require grand gestures—sometimes, it simply requires dedication, empathy, and a willingness to help.

What began as a short video has now become a symbol of quiet generosity, proving that even amid urban chaos, humanity continues to shine.

Pakistan Hockey Captain Ammad Shakeel Butt on Lessons from Australia Tour and World League

Pakistan men's hockey captain Ammad Shakeel Butt has reflected on his team's performance during a challenging stretch that included the Men's FIH Pro League and other international matches, offering insights into what went wrong and what must change going forward.

Butt, one of Pakistan's most promising young players, spoke candidly about the team's reckoning after a series of disappointing results. Pakistan — a nation with a deep and historic connection to field hockey — has long been seeking to regain its footing among the sport's elite. Recent years, however, have seen mixed performances in global tournaments, with the Pro League results underscoring some of the structural and tactical issues the team faces.

The Pro League campaign exposed several weaknesses in both defence and attack. Pakistan struggled with consistency, often conceding early goals and finding it difficult to mount sustained pressure against top-tier opposition. The team's finishing was occasionally sharp, but link play and transition moments frequently broke down under pressure. Butt acknowledged that the team needs to work harder on basic game management, espe-



cially in high-intensity phases where possession counts.

Looking back, the captain emphasised that the tour to Australia was a valuable learning experience despite the results not going Pakistan's way. Facing world-class teams in strong hockey nations forced Pakistan to confront tactical gaps and conditioning shortfalls that may have gone unnoticed against lesser opponents. Butt stressed that such exposure, while tough, is crucial if Pakistan hopes to climb the world rankings and compete at major events like the Olympics and World Cup.

Butt also pointed to the importance of team unity

and mental resilience. In games where Pakistan fell behind early, the side often looked disjointed and reactive rather than proactive. Coaches and senior players have since emphasised the need to build a psychological edge that allows the team to stay competitive even when matches swing against them. To this end, fitness, skill training and mental conditioning are being given greater emphasis in domestic and national camps.

The captain also shared his belief in the talent pool emerging within Pakistan hockey. Several young players have shown flashes of brilliance, contributing crucial goals or

defensive stands in recent matches. Butt noted that blending youth with experience will be key to Pakistan's evolution — and that patience, combined with strategic planning, is essential.

Off the field, preparations are underway to revisit coaching structures and support systems. Pakistan's hockey administration has been under pressure from fans and pundits to create a more sustainable development framework. This includes better exposure tours, improved training infrastructure and more competitive domestic leagues that can nurture talent consistently.

Butt has remained opti-

mistic about the road ahead. "We know where we need to improve," he said in a recent interview. "Every loss teaches us something. The goal now is to take those lessons and build a team that can make our nation proud."

While Pakistan's recent results may not satisfy traditional expectations, the captain's honest assessment reflects a broader understanding that rebuilding is a process. With renewed focus on fundamentals, mental strength and tactical clarity, Pakistan hockey aims to return to the world's top tiers — a journey that will require time, commitment and belief from players, coaches and fans alike.

Vinicius Jr. Racially Abused During Champions League Match Between Real Madrid and Benfica



Brazilian football star Vinicius Júnior was allegedly subjected to a racist slur by supporters during a high-profile Champions League match between Real Madrid and Benfica. The incident occurred in the stands when the game was taking place, drawing immediate attention from players, officials and fans alike.

The moment sparked outrage across social media and the global football community after audio and video clips began circulating showing a sup-

porter directing the slur at Vinicius. The Brazilian winger, known for his electrifying play and prominence on both club and international stages, did not react visibly on the pitch but was reportedly aware of the abuse. Teammates and opponents alike were said to be shocked by the behaviour of a section of the crowd.

Real Madrid issued a strong statement condemning the incident, reiterating the club's longstanding opposition to racism in all forms. The

club emphasised that football should be a sport that unites people of all backgrounds and that discriminatory conduct has no place in stadiums. Fans, pundits and former players also voiced support for Vinicius, calling for swift action from governing bodies.

The incident has reignited an ongoing discussion in European football about how effectively racism is being addressed. Despite repeated public campaigns by UEFA, FIFA and other organisations

to stamp out discrimination, racist incidents — particularly targeting players of African and Afro-Latin descent — have persisted in various leagues and international competitions.

Vinicius himself has been a high-profile target of racist abuse in the past, including during matches in Spain's domestic league. On each occasion, both domestic and international football authorities have pledged investigations and sanctions against offenders. However, critics argue that measures taken so far have been insufficient to deter repeat behaviour.

Several supporters' groups and anti-racism organisations condemned the abuse, urging that individuals identified as responsible be banned from stadiums and that clubs face significant consequences for failing to curb racist behaviour among their fans. There are also calls for enhanced education campaigns to promote inclusivity and respect within football culture.

UEFA and competition

organisers are expected to review the incident and determine whether disciplinary action is warranted against the club whose supporters were involved. Potential sanctions could include fines, partial stadium closures or point deductions depending on the severity and recurrence of offences.

The spotlight on this episode highlights the broader challenge facing global sport: balancing passionate fan culture with respect and dignity for all players. As elite competitions like the Champions League continue to showcase football's diversity and global appeal, incidents like this serve as painful reminders that more work remains to be done.

Supporters of Vinicius and proponents of anti-racism initiatives maintain that collective pressure on football authorities, clubs and fan communities is essential to ensure that discriminatory conduct is not tolerated and that stadiums remain welcoming and safe for everyone.

South Africa Cruise to Victory Over UAE in T20 World Cup Match

South Africa continued their excellent run in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, defeating the United Arab Emirates by six wickets in a Group D match played in New Delhi. The Proteas maintained their unbeaten record in the group stage and secured a place in the Super 8s with this comprehensive win.

The UAE batted first after winning the toss, posting a modest total of 122 for 6 in their allotted 20 overs. Young UAE batter Alishan Sharafu provided the backbone of the innings with a gritty 45, but early dismissals and disciplined bowling from the South African attack restricted the total. South African pacer Corbin Bosch stood out with excellent figures, picking up key wickets to break the UAE's momentum.

Chasing 123 to win, South Africa made light work of the target. A brisk start in the powerplay set

the tone, and despite losing skipper Aiden Markram early, the Proteas found momentum through strong contributions in the middle order. Ryan Rickelton and Dewald Brevis played crucial roles with quick scoring, both striking rapidly to keep the required run rate in check. Their partnership helped South Africa reach the target comfortably in just 13.2 overs, leaving 40 balls to spare.

The victory marked South Africa's fourth straight win in the tournament, underlining their credentials as one of the sides to watch. Their unbeaten run in Group D ensured a smooth progression into the Super 8s, where they will face tougher challenges from higher-ranked teams in the next stage of the competition. South Africa's bowlers and batsmen alike have shown good depth and balance, giving them confidence going forward.



For the UAE, the match ended their Super 8 hopes, but there were positives to take from the encounter. Sharafu's innings showed promise, and the team demonstrated fighting spirit against a strong South African side. Their bowlers had moments of control, although they were unable to contain the Proteas' aggressive bat-

ting at crucial stages.

With the group stage wrapped up, South Africa now prepare for their Super 8 opener against hosts India in Ahmedabad, a clash that will test their title aspirations. As for the UAE, the experience gained in the World Cup adds valuable exposure for a developing cricket nation.

Overall, it was a dominant performance from South Africa and another step in their journey toward the later stages of the T20 World Cup. Their combination of effective bowling and explosive batting continues to make them a formidable contender in the tournament.

Sunil Gavaskar's Unsolicited Advice to Abhishek Sharma After Two Ducks at T20 World Cup

Former India captain and batting legend Sunil Gavaskar has publicly offered advice to young Indian cricketer Abhishek Sharma following a rough start to his ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign. Abhishek, who was expected to bring explosive batting to India's top order, was dismissed for a duck in back-to-back matches — a rare and disappointing start in a high-profile tournament.

Gavaskar, known for his candid views and deep knowledge of the game, was quick to comment on the situation. In media interactions, he suggested that while Abhishek has immense talent, the youngster may benefit from a slight adjustment in approach and mindset. According to him, the early dismissals should be treated as learning experiences rather than sources of panic. He emphasised the importance of mental resilience, adaptability and game awareness — qualities that separate promising players from consistent match-winners.

Abhishek's first two outings in the tournament did not go as planned. Brought into the batting line-up to provide quick runs and momentum, he was dismissed without scoring on both occasions. The dismissals came at crucial phases, and while India still won both matches, Abhishek's personal contributions were minimal. In T20 cricket, where confidence and rhythm are key, such setbacks can affect a young player's mindset.

Gavaskar's advice, however, was not critical in tone but constructive. He reminded fans and pundits that early struggles are not unusual for emerging players, especially in pressure-packed events like the World Cup. "When you are talented, you will get opportunities," he said, "but how you respond to adversity defines your character." His message was clear: stay



positive, focus on basics and not be weighed down by statistics or expectations.

Former players and coaches have echoed similar sentiments privately, noting that Abhishek's natural game suits T20 cricket but that he needs to manage risk better early in his innings. T20 batting requires a balance between aggression and shot selection, and a few tweaks in approach could help him translate potential into performance.

The Indian team management, for its part, has expressed support for Abhishek and confidence in his ability to bounce back. They pointed out that selection in the World Cup squad reflects faith in his capabilities and that a couple of low scores do not diminish his value to the team.

Fans on social media have been divided — some urging patience and encouragement, others calling for tactical changes in the batting order. However, the overall sentiment remains hopeful, with many believing that Abhishek has the skillset to recover and make impactful contributions as the tournament progresses.

As India moves deeper into the World Cup, all eyes will be on Abhishek to see whether he can translate Gavaskar's advice into runs. The early setbacks have certainly tested him, but with experience, support and self-belief, he still has ample opportunity to turn his campaign around and prove his worth on cricket's biggest stage.

Glenn McGrath Says Australia's "Aura" Has Faded After T20 World Cup Exit



Former Australian fast bowling great Glenn McGrath has delivered a sharp critique of Australia's underwhelming campaign at the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup, stating that the once-intimidating aura surrounding the Australian cricket team is no longer present. His remarks follow Australia's early exit from the tournament — a result that has triggered widespread debate back home.

Australia entered the competition as one of the strong contenders, but their campaign quickly unravelled. Injuries to key fast bowlers such as Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood, along with the absence of experienced names in the T20 setup, left the side short on firepower. Inconsistent performances compounded the problem, with unexpected defeats proving costly in a tightly contested group.

McGrath suggested that in earlier years, Australia carried a psychological edge — opponents often felt beaten before stepping onto the field. According to him, that dominance and fear factor have diminished. He noted that rival teams now approach matches against Australia with greater belief and confidence, reflecting a shift in global T20 dynamics.

A significant part of McGrath's criticism centred on team selection and balance. He questioned some of the choices made by the selectors, particularly the preference for certain all-round options over experienced batters. The former pacer implied that recent form and clarity of role should have weighed more

heavily in selection decisions, especially in a high-stakes tournament like the World Cup.

Australia's bowling attack, traditionally their strength, lacked its usual bite. Without their frontline pace trio operating at full capacity, the team struggled to control matches during crucial phases. Meanwhile, the batting unit failed to deliver consistent performances, with collapses and misfiring middle-order displays hurting their chances of building momentum.

The early elimination was sealed after results elsewhere in the group went against them, confirming one of Australia's most disappointing T20 World Cup outings in recent memory. The exit has prompted broader reflection on Australia's white-ball strategy, squad depth and transition planning.

McGrath's comments reflect a wider sentiment within Australian cricket circles — that the team is at a crossroads. While the talent pool remains strong, the challenge lies in rebuilding confidence, refining tactics and rediscovering the competitive edge that once defined Australian sides across formats.

The debate now shifts to the future. With major ICC tournaments on the horizon, Australia will need to reassess combinations, manage player workloads and invest in emerging talent to restore their standing. Whether the "aura" can be rebuilt remains to be seen, but the message from one of Australia's greatest bowlers is clear: reputation alone is no longer enough in modern T20 cricket.

Mahesh Vitta's "Uthutha Heroes" Set for Theatrical Release on February 27

Hyderabad - Producer Dheeraj Mogilineni, known for his content-driven hits like Ambajipeta Marriage Band and The Girlfriend, is all set to bring another family entertainer with "Summer Holidays", scheduled for a grand release on May 1, 2026. Fresh off the success of his recent blockbuster Couple Friendly, Dheeraj Mogilineni is returning to cinemas with a film that promises to be a delightful treat for audiences of all ages.

"Summer Holidays" is a children-centric entertainer, weaving nostalgia, laughter, and heartfelt emotions into a story designed to resonate with both young viewers and adults. The film stars Master Rohan Roy, acclaimed for his roles in the 90's Middle Class Biopic series and Bhartha Mahasayulaku Wignayathi, alongside child artist Arun, who has impressed audiences with performances in films such as 35-Chinna Katha Kaadu. Both actors are expected to bring charm and authenticity to their roles, capturing the essence of childhood innocence and adventure.

The film is directed by debutant Srikar, who is making an impressive entry into cinema with a story that balances humor, nostalgia, and emotional moments. The technical team includes Sinjith Yerramilli as music composer, known for his work in Little Hearts, and DOP Sai



Prakash, who has lent his visual expertise to films like Tillu and Tillu Square. Their combined efforts are expected to create a vibrant and immersive cinematic experience, highlighting the joy, curiosity, and wonder of summer vacations.

Produced under the banner of Dheeraj Mogilineni Entertainments, the project has received full backing from the producer, who expressed confidence in the film's content and the potential to become a family favorite. The team also promises high production values, engaging storytelling, and a wholesome cinematic experience that connects with audiences

across age groups. With its grand release planned for the beginning of May, "Summer Holidays" is positioning itself as a must-watch film of the season, appealing to families, children, and nostalgic viewers alike. The film's combination of talented young actors, a passionate debut director, and an experienced technical crew aims to create a memorable movie experience that celebrates childhood, friendship, and the joy of summer adventures.

As anticipation builds, audiences are gearing up to welcome this heartwarming entertainer, and the countdown to May 1, 2026, has officially begun.

Director Sailesh Kolanu Pledges Organs, Advocates for Life-Saving Cause



Hyderabad - Renowned filmmaker Sailesh Kolanu, known for his impactful storytelling, has taken a powerful step in support of a noble cause by pledging his organs at a recent Organ Donation Drive. The director, widely recognized for his contributions to Indian cinema, has urged the public to consider organ donation as a meaningful way to save lives.

Speaking about his decision on social media, Kolanu described organ donation as "one of the most selfless things a human being can do." By pledging his organs, he hopes to inspire more individuals to consider this life-saving act and contribute to the welfare of those in need.

In his message, he emphasized the importance of having open conversations with family members about one's intentions. "It is essential to discuss your decision with your loved

ones," Kolanu stated, highlighting that clear communication ensures that the donor's wishes are respected and honored when the time comes.

Organ donation continues to be a vital issue in India, with thousands of patients awaiting life-saving transplants every year. Public figures like Kolanu play a significant role in raising awareness and breaking misconceptions surrounding the process. By leading by example, he is setting a precedent for social responsibility in the entertainment industry and beyond.

The drive, which took place recently, brought together several participants committed to contributing to society by pledging their organs. Organ donation not only saves lives but also provides hope to families grappling with critical illnesses, making such

campaigns instrumental in fostering a culture of empathy and altruism.

Kolanu's decision resonates deeply with the public, encouraging fans and followers to reflect on the impact of organ donation. With his influential platform and thoughtful advocacy, the director is helping to bring much-needed attention to a cause that has the potential to transform lives.

As awareness grows, more individuals are likely to follow in Kolanu's footsteps, embracing organ donation as a meaningful and selfless act. His message underscores the belief that small acts of generosity can leave lasting legacies and truly make a difference in the world.

Director Sailesh Kolanu's pledge serves as a reminder that cinema's influence extends beyond the screen, inspiring people to take real-life actions that save lives and uplift communities.

Dheeraj Mogilineni's "Summer Holidays" Set for Grand Release on May 1, 2026

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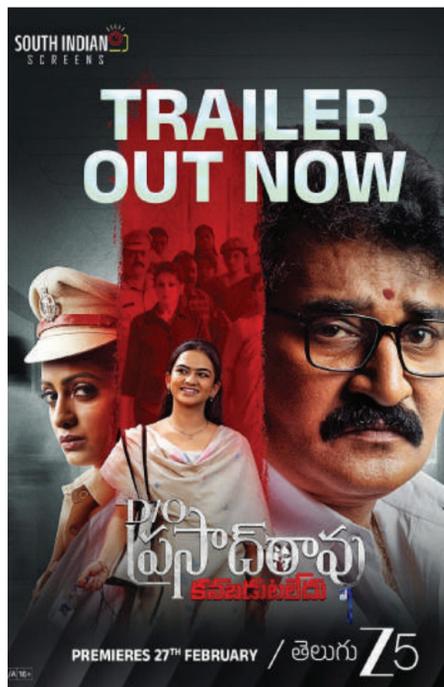
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Emotional Crime Thriller D/O Prasad Rao Kanabadaledhu Trailer Out



The makers of D/O Prasad Rao Kanabadaledhu have released an intense and emotionally charged trailer, offering a gripping preview of the crime thriller ahead of its premiere on ZEE5 on February 27. Directed by Krishna Poluru and produced by K. V. Sri Ram under the banner South India Screens, the series blends emotional depth with investigative suspense.

The trailer begins on a warm and intimate note, highlighting the affectionate bond between a father and daughter. Rajiv Kanakala plays Prasad Rao, a loving father whose life is thrown into turmoil when his daughter Swathi suddenly disappears. This emotional foundation quickly transitions into a tense search, setting the tone for a mystery driven as much by feelings as by facts.

Swathi, portrayed by Vasanthika, remains a strong emotional presence despite her absence, with glimpses of her dreams and relationships deepening the sense of loss. As the investigation unfolds, Uday Bhanu appears as Investigation Officer Rebecca Joseph, bringing intensity and authority to the narrative. The trailer hints at hidden truths and overlooked clues, raising questions about whether Swathi's disappearance is tied to her hostel life, workplace, or someone close to her.

Supporting performances from Gayatri Bhargavi, Hima Bindu, and Sri Ram Venkat add layers to the story's emotional and investigative arcs, suggesting a complex web of relationships.

The screenplay by Krishna Poluru is designed to build suspense gradually while staying

rooted in emotional realism, with dialogues by Maidala Shruti enhancing authenticity. The background score composed by Sri Ram Madhury underscores both tension and sentiment, while editing by Chandrashekar G. V keeps the narrative tight and engaging. Cinematographer Ram K Mahesh visually reinforces the series' mood of unease and emotional fragility.

More than a conventional crime story, the series explores parental love, uncertainty, and resilience in the face of loss. With its blend of psychological depth and suspense, D/O Prasad Rao Kanabadaledhu aims to deliver an emotionally compelling viewing experience while continuing ZEE5's push toward ambitious regional originals.

The series will stream exclusively on ZEE5 starting February 27.

"Couple Friendly" Crosses ₹5.42 Crore Worldwide in Just 3 Days

Hyderabad - The romantic entertainer "Couple Friendly", starring Santosh Shobhan and Manasa Varanasi, is creating waves at the box office with a remarkable performance in its opening weekend. Released in Telugu and Tamil, the film has grossed an impressive 5.42 crore worldwide within the first three days, establishing itself as a commercial success and a crowd favourite.

Directed by Ashwin Chandrasekhar, "Couple Friendly" is a heartwarming love story that has resonated with audiences of all ages. The film's charming narrative, coupled with strong performances by the lead actors, has contributed significantly to its early box office triumph. Fans and critics alike have praised the film for its engaging storyline, relatable characters, and light-hearted romantic elements.

The film has also received appreciation from prominent stars such as Rebel Star Prabhas and Siddhu Jonnalagadda, adding to its visibility and credibility in the industry. The promotional tour undertaken by the cast and crew has further boosted the film's reach, creating buzz among audiences in multiple regions.

"Couple Friendly" is presented by UV Creations and produced under the banner of UV Concepts, with Ajay Kumar Raju P. serving as co-producer. Passionate producer and distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni has overseen the film's release in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, ensuring strong regional presence. The collaborative efforts of the production and distribution teams have played a key role in the film's smooth rollout and early success.

The technical team be-

hind the film has also been widely appreciated. Dinesh Purushothaman handled cinematography, capturing the vibrant visuals of the story, while Ganesh Shiva provided crisp editing. The film's music, composed by Aditya Ravindran, adds depth to the narrative, enhancing the emotional and romantic beats of the story. Michael BFA handled the art direction, creating authentic and visually appealing sets, and S.S. Varma served as executive producer, ensuring a cohesive production process.

With its promising start, "Couple Friendly" is poised to continue its box office run and strengthen its position as one of the notable romantic entertainers of the year. Audiences are responding enthusiastically to the film, making it a must-watch for lovers of heartfelt, feel-good cinema.

