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Amaravati: Political circles in Andhra Pradesh are witnessing fresh speculation over the evolving strategy of YSR Congress Party (YSRC) chief Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Despite maintaining a public posture of strong opposition, sources suggest that Jagan may be exploring a tactical understanding with the Indian National Congress.

possibility of the Bharatiya Janata Party continuing its alignment with regional partners such as the Telugu Desam Party and Jana Sena Party, YSRC's room for maneuver may be narrowing.

INDIA bloc could alter political equations in the state. Party strategists reportedly feel that if traditional Congress leaders and cadre extend their support to Jagan, it may consolidate anti-incumbency sentiment and reshape electoral arithmetic.

sions and build common ground. Despite these developments, YSRC publicly continues to criticize the ruling alliance.

Heritage Promise: Nara Bhuvaneshwari Assures Quality



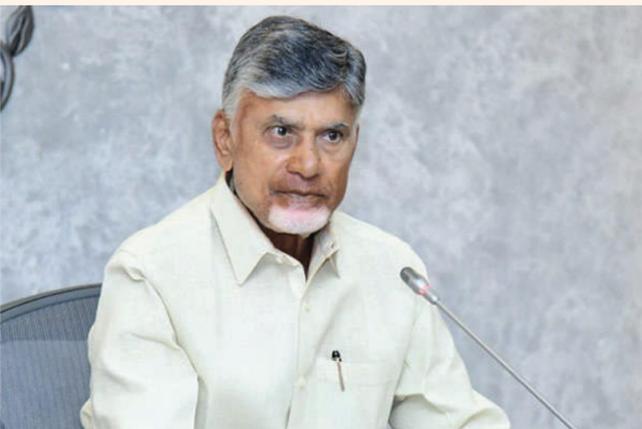
Hyderabad, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Nara Bhuvaneshwari, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of Heritage Foods, has released a special video titled "Heritage Promise".

According to her, every product reaching consumers undergoes a rigorous process of 25 mandatory quality tests before distribution.

Reiterating the company's consumer-first approach, Bhuvaneshwari invited people to watch the video in full to understand the processes behind the products they use every day.

Chandrababu Naidu to Sign Key AI Agreements at India AI Impact Summit



Amaravati, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is set to embark on a significant visit to Delhi tomorrow (February 20) to participate in the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

Pradesh, further cementing the state's position as a technological leader. The summit's plenary session, beginning at 9:30 AM, will feature speeches from Chandrababu Naidu alongside Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

That's Nara Lokesh - Another DSC Notification for Ugadi!



AMARAVATHI 19.02.2026 TPN BUREAU :

Fulfilling the dreams of unemployed youth in Andhra Pradesh, Education Minister Nara Lokesh has taken yet another significant decision.

portunities to thousands of aspiring teachers. Rather than limiting recruitment efforts to announcements alone, Lokesh has been conducting continuous reviews within the Education Department.

Anitha Criticizes Jagan for Spreading False Claims on Heritage

Mangalagiri, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Anitha on Thursday accused Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of misleading the public with false claims regarding Heritage Foods.



did not address serious issues like the Babai murder. Instead, he diverts attention to irrelevant topics such as Heritage Foods.



Kinjaraapu Atchannaidu Criticizes YSRCP Over False Claims on Heritage and Indapur Dairy

A M A R A V A T H I
19.02.2026 TPN BUREAU
: Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister Kinjaraapu Atchannaidu expressed strong anger in the Legislative Assembly over the conduct of YSRCP members, accusing them of spreading false propaganda to tarnish the reputation of the Heritage organization. The minister stated that despite repeated clarifications over the past two days that there is no connection between Indapur Dairy and Heritage, YSRCP leaders continue to raise the same issue,

wasting assembly time and creating unnecessary controversy. Challenging the YSRCP leaders to provide evidence, Atchannaidu said, "If there is proof, present it; if not, issue a public apology." He specifically criticized YSRCP MLC Botsa Satyanarayana for misleading the public by showing cheese packets and claiming they were butter, highlighting the lack of understanding between cheese and butter. The minister emphasized that such irresponsible statements only

serve to confuse the public and damage reputations without any factual basis. Heritage has already issued legal notices to Botsa regarding these false claims, and it is his responsibility to respond, the minister added. Atchannaidu also highlighted that Heritage has a historical policy of not engaging in business transactions under the name of the government. He pointed out that exploiting government funds under the guise of institutions is not part of Heritage's



culture and criticized YSRCP for having a history of such practices.

He stated that the actions of certain YSRCP leaders reflect a factional mindset aimed at undermining financial institutions and that past attempts to control such factions in Rayalaseema serve as a precedent for not allowing public assets to be targeted again. The minister further noted that old practices like destroying property and cutting plantations have now become tools for slander against organizations. The minister strongly warned that repeatedly raising the same issue in

the Assembly and delaying proceedings undermines democracy. He urged the YSRCP members to present evidence on the table if available or immediately stop the false propaganda and apologize to the public. Through these remarks, Minister Atchannaidu made it clear that the government will not tolerate attempts to damage credible institutions with baseless allegations. Heritage's reputation must be protected, and misleading claims, whether about Indapur Dairy or butter versus

Job Vacancies in Power Department to Be Filled Soon: Gottipati Ravi Kumar

A M A R A V A T H I
19.02.2026 TPN BUREAU :

Amaravati: State Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has announced that vacant positions across various categories under the Andhra Pradesh Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited (APEPDCL) will be filled shortly. The announcement was made on Thursday in the Legislative Assembly while responding to a question raised by MLA B a n d a r u Satyanandarao.

According to the Minister, a total of 2,947 posts are currently vacant within the jurisdiction of APEPDCL. Breaking down the vacancies by category, he mentioned that the openings include 581 Energy Assistants, 1,260 Junior Linemen, 1,084 Assistant Linemen, and 22 Linemen posts. These positions are expected to be filled at the earliest to strengthen the workforce and improve service delivery.

Minister Ravi Kumar also assured the Assembly that, to maintain uninterrupted services and avoid inconven-



ience to electricity consumers, 8,770 outsourcing personnel are presently engaged in field operations. He emphasized that the government is taking all necessary measures to ensure there is no shortage of Assistant Engineers and Linemen in the power sector, highlighting the administration's commitment to efficient electricity management.

The Minister stressed that the primary objective of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is to ensure uninterrupted and quality power supply to all sections of society, eliminating issues such as low voltage and frequent disruptions. To achieve

this goal, the Energy Department is implementing a structured and comprehensive action plan aimed at enhancing both operational and administrative efficiency.

As part of the strategy, new substations are being sanctioned based on electricity load requirements to meet growing demand. Furthermore, Electrical DE offices are being established across the state to strengthen administrative oversight and operational efficiency, Minister Ravi Kumar informed the Assembly.

The announcement is expected to provide a major boost to employment opportunities in the power sector while

also addressing workforce shortages that have impacted service delivery in recent years. Filling these vacancies will enable APEPDCL to enhance maintenance work, respond more quickly to outages, and ensure reliable power supply to residential and industrial consumers alike.

By combining workforce expansion with infrastructure development, the Energy Department is moving forward with a comprehensive plan to meet the increasing electricity demands of Andhra Pradesh, reflecting the government's focus on both service efficiency and public welfare.

Bill Gates' Appreciation Serves as Responsible Inspiration – Dr. Manazir Jeelani Samoon, IAS

A M A R A V A T H I
19.02.2026 TPN BUREAU :

Dr. Manazir Jeelani Samoon, IAS, Director of Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh, stated that the appreciation expressed by Bill Gates during his recent State visit has become a strong source of responsible inspiration for the Agriculture Department to further strengthen and expand its digital, technology-driven services for farmers.

During his visit on the 16th of this month, Gates, Chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, closely reviewed the field-level implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based agricultural services being delivered in the State. He examined the performance of the AI-enabled APAIMS (Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Information Management System) application and appreciated the proactive initiatives taken by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu in promoting AI-driven agricultural technologies.

According to Dr.



Manazir, this recognition has reinforced the Department's commitment to delivering advanced, farmer-centric digital solutions with greater responsibility and accountability. The APAIMS Farmer App has already been downloaded by 4.45 lakh farmers across Andhra Pradesh, reflecting the growing acceptance of digital advisory services at the grassroots level.

During a field interaction facilitated by the Chief Minister, women farmers interacted directly with Bill Gates and shared their experiences using the APAIMS app. They explained how the application provides

easy access to crop selection guidance, irrigation and water management advice, soil data, market prices and intelligence, and pest and disease management solutions.

A key highlight of the app is its AI-powered chatbot, described as a "Virtual Agricultural Scientist." This feature allows even farmers with limited literacy to seek advisory services through voice-based queries, typed inputs, or by uploading photographs of pest or disease incidence. The system delivers recommendations in both concise text and voice-over formats. The availability of drone services for

pesticide spraying through the app particularly impressed Gates.

To further strengthen these initiatives, the Department plans to conduct district-level workshops next week under the State ATMA Project. Five digitally proficient farmers from each district will be identified to participate, helping expand awareness and adoption. Field-level Agriculture Officers have been instructed to prepare an action plan to ensure wider usage of the APAIMS application, enhancing inclusive and technology-driven agricultural growth across the State.

State-Level Project Directors' Conference Strengthens Institutional Building and Urban Livelihood Strategies in AP

A State-Level Project Directors' Conference was convened on 19 February 2026 at the MEPMA Head Office in Tadepalli under the chairmanship of Mission Director Smt. Vakati Karuna, I.A.S., who also serves as Ex-Officio Secretary to the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The meeting brought together Project Directors from across the State to review progress on institutional building, financial management, and livelihood initiatives being implemented under the Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA). Addressing the gathering, the Mission Director reaffirmed that Institutional Building and Livelihoods will continue to be the core focus areas of MEPMA in the coming financial year. She underscored the importance of strengthening Self-Help Groups (SHGs) through disciplined financial practices and transparent systems. Highlighting the rollout of M Bookkeeping and the upcoming "Mana Dabbulu - Mana Lekkalu" initiative, she stated that these measures will ensure accurate, real-time financial tracking and improved transparency for all



SHG members. She further announced that from the next financial year, all lending operations will be routed exclusively through the MCP online platform, coupled with the introduction of digital repayments to promote accountability and efficiency.

The Mission Director stressed the need for regular SHG meetings supported by facial attendance and geo-fencing of fixed meeting locations to ensure authenticity and participation. She directed Project Directors to personally monitor meetings and ensure active involvement of Resource Persons (RPs). Emphasizing data integrity, she instructed all districts to complete the member addition exer-

cise by 31 March 2026 without duplication and to maintain a unified SHG database with timely updates on audits, savings, and loans. Appreciating the expanding livelihood opportunities for SHG women, she noted the immense potential for strengthening urban entrepreneurship initiatives across Andhra Pradesh.

During the conference, the Additional Mission Director, along with Administrative Officers and State Mission Managers, presented district-wise progress reports on Institutional Building, Bank Linkages, and key livelihood programs, including Street Vendors initiatives, PM SVANidhi, Prerana Sakhi, and Rapido partnerships.

Updates were also shared on Mahila Akasam data entry, M Bookkeeping progress, audit status, SUH surveys, MIS reports, Micro Credit Plans, SEP-I and Bank Linkage targets, vending surveys, certificate issuance, and new market proposals. The Additional Mission Director emphasized expediting TIDCO lien applications, increasing PM SVANidhi sanctions, and promoting digital transactions. Concluding the session, officials directed all Project Directors to conduct regular district-level reviews and address identified gaps promptly to ensure sustained progress and impactful implementation of urban livelihood programs statewide.

Amaravati Inner Ring Road to Be Built in Two Phases

Amaravati, February 19, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government will construct the Amaravati Inner Ring Road (IRR) under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in two phases, Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana informed the Assembly on Thursday.

Replying to a question raised during the session, the minister outlined the government's roadmap for strengthening core infrastructure in the capital city Amaravati, including progress on trunk roads and funding mobilisation.

According to Narayana, land for the Inner Ring Road is being secured through a combination of land pooling and acquisition. Once the land acquisition process is completed, the development and construction works are expected to take approximately 24 to 30 months. The proposed IRR will stretch 96.2 kilometres with a width of 75 metres and is designed as an eight-lane corridor to support future traffic growth and urban expansion.

He explained that the



project will be executed in two phases. The first phase will cover about 67.6 kilometres, while the second phase will complete the remaining stretch, ensuring connectivity across key growth zones around the capital region. The alignment will pass through 26 villages spread across Guntur, Palnadu, Krishna and NTR districts. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the first phase has already been prepared, and officials have been directed to complete land acquisition within six months.

The minister also highlighted the government's efforts to strengthen the capital's

broader infrastructure network. He said a total of 40,847 crore has been mobilised through institutions such as multilateral agencies and financial organisations to support trunk roads and other essential infrastructure works.

As part of this initiative, the government plans to construct 55 trunk roads across the capital region. Tenders have already been floated and works commenced for 45 roads at an estimated cost of 18,779 crore. So far, 6,229 crore has been released to construction agencies for trunk roads, layout roads and buildings.

Narayana stated that the target is to complete the trunk road network by March-April 2027, aligning with the broader development vision for the capital city. He emphasised that the road infrastructure will play a crucial role in improving connectivity, enabling planned urban growth and attracting investments to Amaravati.

Officials said the phased execution strategy and diversified funding approach are expected to accelerate infrastructure delivery while ensuring long-term sustainability for the capital region's expansion plans.

YS Sharmila Targets Centre, State Leaders During MGNREGA Yatra

Palnadu, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) chief Y. S. Sharmila on Thursday continued her MGNREGA Protection Yatra in Palnadu district, interacting with residents during a Rachabanda programme in Velpur village of Vinukonda constituency. She alleged that recent policy changes were weakening the rural employment guarantee scheme and criticised both state and national leaders for remaining silent on the issue.

Addressing villagers, Sharmila said the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was born out of the ideals of former chief minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy and had historically helped reduce migration, drought distress and



hunger in rural areas. She claimed the programme provided a sense of security to poor households by guaranteeing 100 days of work and equal wages for men and women. The Congress leader alleged that the Centre was attempting to dilute the scheme through new legislative changes, which she termed the "VB G-RAM G" law,

claiming it undermines the role of gram sabhas and reintroduces contractors into the system. According to her, decisions on local works were earlier taken at the village level, but the proposed framework would centralise decision-making and reduce employment opportunities. Sharmila also criticised the increased fi-

nancial burden on states, claiming that the new structure would significantly raise the state's share of expenditure. She argued that Andhra Pradesh, already facing a heavy debt burden, would struggle to allocate additional funds, thereby affecting rural livelihoods. Taking aim at political rivals, she accused

the Telugu Desam Party, YSR Congress Party and Jana Sena Party of failing to oppose policies that she said harm the state. She alleged that the leadership of these parties had not raised their voice against decisions of the Union government.

Sharmila further said that issues such as the lack of a permanent capital and delays in major projects reflected a broader neglect of Andhra Pradesh's interests. She asserted that only a Congress government could ensure development aligned with the welfare-oriented governance model associated with YSR.

The yatra is expected to continue across several districts, with the Congress aiming to mobilise support around rural employment and welfare issues ahead of upcoming political developments in the state.

Over 22.3 Lakh Free Farm Power Connections Across Andhra Pradesh



Amaravati, Feb 19, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

State Energy Minister Ravi Kumar informed the Legislative Assembly that Andhra Pradesh currently has 22,30,703 free agricultural connections, underscoring the government's continued focus on strengthening farm power supply across the state. The Minister made the statement while responding to a query raised by MLA Konathala Ramakrishna during the Assembly session.

Providing further details, the Minister said that since the coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu assumed office, 1,02,538 new free electricity connections have been sanctioned for farmers through the three DISCOMs. He noted that around 46,000 applications are still pending, but assured members that all pending connections would be sanctioned before the next agricultural season to avoid inconvenience

to farmers. The Minister also highlighted the financial commitment made by the government to support the scheme. During the 2025-26 financial year, the three DISCOMs together spent 839.44 crore towards providing free electricity to the agricultural sector. He said the initiative has significantly helped farmers reduce input costs and maintain irrigation schedules without disruption.

Under the PM-KUSUM scheme, the state has so far sanctioned 2,61,481 agricultural connections, aimed at promoting solar-powered irrigation and reducing reliance on conventional electricity. Ravi Kumar stated that feeder-level solarisation projects will play a crucial role in ensuring sustainable and cost-effective power supply to agriculture.

According to the Minister, feeder-level solar projects are expected to generate substantial savings of about 1,059 crore in power purchase

costs for the state. Solar plants are being established near 11 kV feeders, which will help supply electricity at stable tariffs for up to 25 years. Tenders have already been invited for 1,035 MW capacity, and construction of these solar plants is scheduled to commence in May.

Looking ahead, the government has set a target of achieving 4,000 MW of solar power capacity by 2028-30. Once the feeder-level solar plants become fully operational, farmers will be provided nine hours of quality daytime power supply, which is expected to enhance agricultural productivity and reliability of power services.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, the Minister said the Energy Department is taking all necessary steps to ensure uninterrupted and quality power supply not only to farmers but also to domestic, industrial, and commercial consumers across Andhra Pradesh.

Heritage Row Meant to Divert Attention, Kollu Ravindra

Amaravati, Feb 19, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Mines, Geology and Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra on Thursday alleged that the recent accusations against Heritage Foods are a deliberate attempt to divert public attention from the alleged adulteration controversy surrounding Tirumala laddus during the previous regime. Addressing the media at the Assembly premises, the Minister said the claims were politically motivated and aimed at creating confusion among devotees and the public.

Ravindra asserted that Heritage has never had any direct dealings with the government or temple authorities for the supply of ghee or other materials. He said attempts were being made to malign the company's reputation despite the absence of evidence linking it to the alleged irregularities. According to him, facts that have emerged in recent discussions clearly indicate that the company had no role in supplying materials to

Tirumala.

The Minister also targeted former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, stating that leaders of the previous government should answer questions regarding the alleged adulteration during 2019-24. He said the Assembly's time should be used to discuss public welfare issues rather than what he termed "baseless political allegations."

Explaining the supply chain, Ravindra noted that Heritage procures certain products from private firms for its commercial operations but does not supply them to temples or government institutions. He emphasized that the company has maintained a policy of avoiding business transactions with government bodies, and any attempt to portray otherwise is misleading.

The Minister further stated that Heritage has issued legal notices to individuals who made defamatory statements, indicating its confidence that the allegations will not stand scrutiny. He warned that



spreading misinformation for political gain could have legal consequences and urged leaders to act responsibly.

Ravindra also expressed concern over the tone of political discourse, saying personal remarks and unverified claims were lowering

the dignity of public debate. He called for maintaining decorum and focusing on governance and development rather than engaging in mudslinging.

Reiterating his stand, the Minister said the truth would ultimately prevail and that at-

tempts to politicize sensitive religious matters would not succeed. He maintained that the government remains committed to transparency and protecting the interests of devotees while ensuring that unfounded allegations do not mislead the public.

Handloom Stalls Inaugurated at Assembly Premises



Amaravati, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Special handloom stalls set up at the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly premises to promote the sale of traditional textiles were inaugurated on Thursday by Speaker Chintakayala Ayyannapratru and Deputy Speaker Raghurama Krishna Raju. The initiative aims to encourage the use of handloom products and provide direct support to weavers across the state.

After inaugurating the stalls, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, along with ministers and public representatives, visited each counter and examined the range of handloom products on display. The exhibition features a variety of traditional fabrics, including sarees and other garments produced by local weavers.

Speaking on the occasion, Ayyannapa-

trudu said handloom textiles reflect Telugu culture and heritage, and emphasised the need to support weavers by actively using their products. He noted that the stalls would remain open at the Assembly premises for five days and urged ministers, legislators and employees to purchase handloom items in large numbers to encourage artisans. In a gesture of support, the Speaker personally bought two handloom sarees.

Deputy Speaker Raghurama Krishna Raju also appreciated the quality of the products and lauded the craftsmanship of the weavers.

Handlooms and Textiles Minister S. Savitha said the state has a significant presence in the sector, with nearly 35 of the country's 120 handloom cooperative societies located in Andhra Pradesh. She reiterated the gov-

ernment's commitment to strengthening the handloom industry and said the primary objective of the initiative was to promote local products and improve the livelihoods of weavers.

The minister added that all products at the stalls are being sold at a 40 percent subsidy, and encouraged ministers, MLAs, MLCs and staff to take advantage of the opportunity.

Several ministers and legislators, including Gummidi Sandhya Rani and G. V. Anjaneyulu, visited the stalls and purchased handloom items.

The programme was organised with the support of the state's Information and Public Relations Department as part of efforts to boost the handloom sector and create wider awareness about traditional textiles.

Payyavula Keshav Warns Against TDP Policies, Highlights Pending Projects in Pulivendula

Amaravati, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav on Thursday criticized the previous government, stating that it left numerous pending issues across departments, burdening the state with high-interest loans. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly during budget discussions, he said the current administration is negotiating reduced interest rates on these loans, aiming to save approximately 2,000 crore. "These funds can now be efficiently used to implement multiple welfare and development schemes," he noted.

The Minister also compared departmental revenues under the coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to those under the previous regime. He revealed

that revenue in the Mining Department has risen by 33%, and in the Excise Department by 24%, whereas earlier, these earnings largely benefited a select few. Keshav warned that the Telugu Desam Party's policies were detrimental to the state, adding, "We must continue to highlight that TDP is harmful to Andhra Pradesh. TDP never again... once again coalition."

Focusing on his Pulivendula constituency, Keshav criticized past governments for neglecting local issues. He pointed out that several development projects were left incomplete, including the construction of the Mahatma Jyotibapu APB-CWR Girls' Residential School in Mallela village, with 19.62 crore pending. Additionally, the banana processing and packaging unit had been abandoned, and



the government is now taking necessary steps to initiate work.

The Finance Minister also highlighted incomplete infrastructure works in Pulivendula, including the comprehensive water supply scheme, road widening from Vempalli to Gandhi, and construction of the Kaleti Vagu reservoir. "The coalition government is addressing these pending issues and en-

suring that developmental priorities are met for the people of Pulivendula," Keshav said.

Emphasizing the administration's proactive approach, he stressed that regular district-level reviews by the Chief Minister are helping identify and expedite resolution of long-standing problems. Keshav reiterated that continuous vigilance is required to pre-

vent policies detrimental to the state, signaling that the TDP's governance model should not be repeated.

This statement underscores the government's commitment to fiscal prudence, infrastructural development, and attention to previously neglected local projects, while cautioning against the repetition of past governance failures.

Modernised Prasadam Facilities Coming Up at Indrakeeladri

Vijayawada, February 19 | TPN Bureau

In a move aimed at improving services for devotees, authorities at the hill shrine of Indrakeeladri have initiated major upgrades to prasadam preparation facilities, including annadanam and laddu production units. The modernisation works are being carried out under the supervision of temple Executive Officer V. K. Seena Nayak, with a focus on adopting advanced technology to ensure faster and hygienic distribution of offerings to devotees of Kanaka Durga Temple.

As part of the initiative, a team from Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) visited the temple premises on Thursday to review the ongoing works. The delegation inspected the newly constructed annadanam building and the upcoming laddu production unit, closely examining the proposed kitchen layout and installation of high-capacity boiler systems. Officials said the TTD team would submit a detailed report and recommendations within three days.

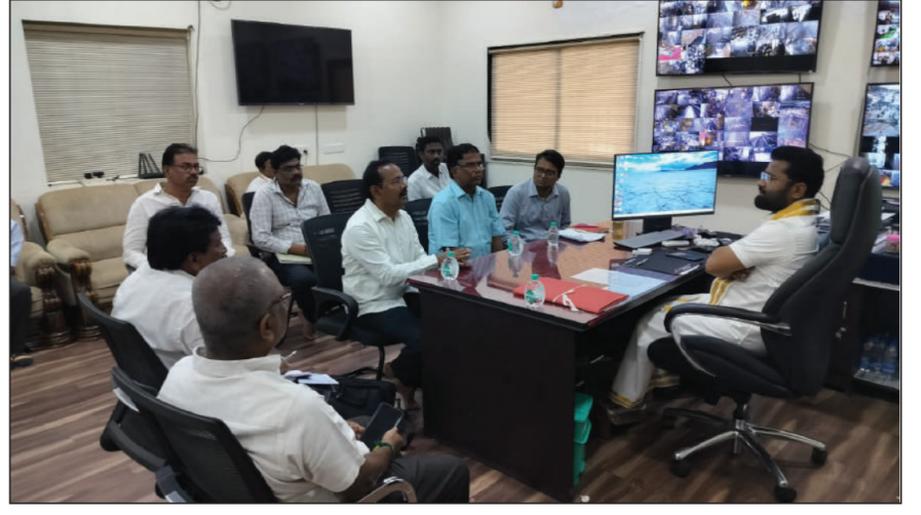
Representatives from Technologic Engineers Private Limited, which

has supplied equipment for TTD's boondi production and annadanam boiler systems, also participated in the visit. Company director G. Raghunathan, design manager C. H. Parthasaradhi, sales manager M. Koteswara Rao and managing partner Hari Prasad held discussions with temple officials on future implementation plans.

Engineering staff, including EE-1 Koteswara Rao, EE-2 (in-charge) Ravindra, and DEE Ashok Kumar, were present during the inspection. Officials stated that the upgrades are being planned keep-

ing in mind the growing number of devotees visiting the shrine, with the goal of enhancing efficiency in preparing annaprasadam and laddu prasadam using modern equipment.

Temple authorities said the initiative is part of a broader plan to strengthen infrastructure and provide improved facilities on the hill shrine. Once completed, the upgraded kitchens and production units are expected to significantly streamline prasadam distribution and improve the overall experience for pilgrims visiting Indrakeeladri.



BC Welfare Leaders Felicitate Sujana Chowdary

Vijayawada, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Leaders of the National BC Welfare Association felicitated senior political leader Sujana Chowdary, praising his role in driving development and welfare initiatives in the Vijayawada West constituency. The felicitation programme was led by Andhra Pradesh in-charge Yalagada Nookanamma Yadav, along with team leaders and women representatives of the association.

Speaking on the occasion, Nookanamma Yadav said Vijayawada West has emerged as the top constituency in the state in terms of development and welfare indicators, attributing the progress to the leadership and initiatives taken by Chowdary. She noted that the constituency has witnessed improvements across sectors, including infrastructure, educa-



tion, and healthcare, making it a model for other regions.

Association leaders highlighted Chowdary's "No Chanda - No Dhandu" approach, stating that he has focused on transparent governance and equitable implementation of government schemes without discrimination based on caste or religion. They said his efforts have ensured that welfare programmes reach beneficiaries fairly, while also strengthening basic civic amenities for residents.

A key initiative mentioned during the event

was the introduction of mobile health services aimed at providing doorstep medical care, particularly for economically weaker sections. Leaders said the programme has helped improve access to healthcare and reflects a people-centric approach to governance. They added that Chowdary has consistently worked to raise living standards in the constituency, even during periods when he did not hold public office.

Describing him as a leader who views politics as public service rather than power,

speakers lauded his commitment to social welfare and inclusive development. They said his work has inspired confidence among residents and community groups alike. During the programme, the association also submitted a request urging Chowdary to support efforts to secure 34 percent reservations for Backward Classes in the upcoming local body elections. Leaders expressed hope that he would take up the matter with the government and extend his cooperation in advancing the demand. Several office bearers and BC leaders from across the state attended the event, including representatives from the association's legal cell, district units, employee unions, and women's groups. The gathering concluded with participants reiterating their commitment to social justice and inclusive growth.

AGICL MD Reviews Amaravati Government Complex Works

Amaravati, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Managing Director of Amaravati Growth and Infrastructure Corporation Limited (AGICL) S.V.R. Srinivas conducted a comprehensive inspection of the ongoing construction works at the Amaravati Government Complex, reviewing progress across key infrastructure projects in the capital city.

During the visit, Srinivas examined the status of major components of the complex, including the GAD Tower and various HOD Towers. The inspection focused on evaluating the pace of execution, adherence to approved timelines, and the overall quality of construction. Officials said the review is part of periodic monitoring to ensure that critical administrative infrastructure is completed in alignment with the capital city development roadmap.

Srinivas undertook a detailed walkthrough of the project sites and interacted with engineering teams and project personnel. He later chaired a review meeting with officials, where he assessed progress milestones and



identified areas requiring acceleration. Emphasising the importance of maintaining high construction standards, he instructed engineers to strictly follow technical specifications and ensure robust safety measures at all work sites.

Officials present at the meeting briefed the Managing Director on ongoing activities, resource deployment, and coordination mechanisms between contractors and engineering wings. Srinivas stressed the need for seamless coordination among all stakeholders to avoid delays and maintain momentum across different project segments. He also called for continuous monitoring to ensure that timelines are

met without compromising quality.

The review further examined strategies to fast-track pending works and optimise resource utilisation. Srinivas directed teams to strengthen on-site supervision and adopt efficient project management practices to keep the works on schedule. He reiterated that the Government Complex is a critical component of Amaravati's administrative infrastructure and should reflect the state's long-term vision for a modern, functional capital.

Officials from the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) Commissioner's Office said such inspections are

aimed at ensuring accountability, transparency, and timely completion of priority projects. They noted that regular field reviews help address operational challenges quickly and improve coordination among executing agencies.

The Amaravati Government Complex is being developed to house key administrative departments and provide integrated facilities for governance. Authorities expressed confidence that with close monitoring and sustained execution efforts, the project will progress steadily in line with planned targets, contributing to the broader development of the capital region.

EO Conducts Surprise Inspections at Indrakeeladri Temple



Vijayawada, February 19, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Executive Officer and Special Grade Deputy Collector of the Sri Durga Malleeswara Swamy Temple, V.K. Seena Nayak, carried out surprise inspections across multiple sections of the temple premises atop Indrakeeladri on Wednesday to review services being provided to devotees.

During the visit, the EO personally monitored operations and issued several key instructions to ensure better facilities and transparency in service delivery. Officials said the inspections were aimed at improving pilgrim experience, particularly during periods of high footfall.

At the coconut sales counter, Seena Nayak carefully examined the

size and quality of coconuts supplied by the contractor. He directed staff to immediately return any spoiled stock and ensure that only quality items are sold to devotees. He also inspected the temple saree sales counter, reviewing stock availability and sales procedures while interacting with staff about inventory management.

The EO visited the cloakroom and footwear stand, cautioning employees against collecting charges beyond the prescribed rates. He enquired directly with devotees to confirm whether the approved fee structure was being followed and stressed strict adherence to rules.

At the mobile phone deposit counter, Seena Nayak noticed damaged

flooring and instructed the engineering department to take up immediate repair works. He emphasised that infrastructure maintenance should be prompt to avoid inconvenience to pilgrims.

Considering the rising temperatures, the EO directed officials to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply across queue lines so that devotees waiting for darshan remain comfortable. He also inspected kiosk machines and tested their functioning by purchasing a ticket himself, verifying the system's efficiency and user experience.

Further, Seena Nayak reviewed ticket scanning procedures at entry points inside the temple complex and instructed

staff to streamline the process to avoid delays or confusion for visitors. Officials were told to remain vigilant and ensure smooth movement of pilgrims at all times.

Speaking on the occasion, the EO warned that any negligence in providing services to devotees would invite strict action. He reiterated that maintaining high standards of cleanliness, transparency, and convenience is a top priority for the temple administration.

Temple authorities said such surprise inspections will continue periodically to strengthen monitoring and ensure that facilities at the hill shrine meet the expectations of the large number of devotees visiting every day.

BR Naidu Slams YSRCP Over Heritage Cheese Allegations

Tirumala, February 19 | TPN Bureau

Heritage Foods chairman BR Naidu on Thursday strongly criticized YSRCP leaders for making unfounded allegations regarding the company's supply of ghee, terming the claims "malicious and misleading." Speaking to the media, Naidu clarified that Heritage Foods has never supplied ghee to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), either directly or indirectly, calling the rumors "completely false."

Addressing the controversy triggered by the so-called ghee scandal, Naidu expressed his disappointment at opposition leaders, particularly highlighting the role of former minister Botsa Satyanarayana. "If you keep repeating lies, don't expect them to become truths. Leaders in responsible positions should verify facts before speaking. Showing a Heritage cheese packet and claiming it is ghee misleads the public and undermines credibility," he said.

Naidu also condemned the YSRCP for politicizing ghee prices and accused them of spreading misinformation about open tenders. "All tenders have been conducted transparently. From



the very beginning, we resolved that the quality of prasadam for Swamiji should never be compromised. Buying low-cost ingredients and serving substandard offerings to devotees is unacceptable. We will not compromise on quality under any circumstances," he emphasized.

He further elaborated that Heritage Foods has consistently raised quality standards across all its products, including dairy and other food items. The chairman stressed that the company invests in ensuring

high-quality offerings for religious institutions, pointing out that the cost involved is entirely borne by Heritage Foods. "When it comes to offering items to the deity or prasadam for devotees, no compromise is acceptable. This is not a matter of profit but of devotion and integrity," Naidu added.

The remarks come in the backdrop of rising political tensions surrounding Heritage Foods and its alleged involvement in supplying ghee to TTD, which the company has repeatedly de-

nied. BR Naidu's statement underscores the company's commitment to transparency, quality control, and adherence to ethical practices while cautioning political figures against making baseless allegations.

By addressing the controversy head-on, Naidu aims to clarify public perception and protect Heritage Foods' reputation, emphasizing that the company will continue to maintain strict quality standards in all products distributed to consumers and institutions.

International Recognition for Educational Excellence: Angara Ramesh Conferred Honorary Doctorate

EAST GODAVARI, 19.02.2026 TPN BUREAU: Sri Angara Ramesh, Chairman of Dreams Educational Institutions located at Dowleswaram and Vamagiri, has been conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by The American University USA in recognition of his remarkable contributions to the field of education. The prestigious honor was presented at a grand ceremony held in Chennai by the

University Chancellor, Dr. Mohan Krishnan, amidst distinguished academicians and guests. With over 16 years of dedicated service in the education sector, Sri Angara Ramesh has consistently strived to elevate academic standards by introducing corporate-level learning methodologies and ensuring quality education for students. Under his dynamic leadership, Dreams Educational In-



stitutions have witnessed significant academic growth while maintaining a strong emphasis on value-based education and holistic student development. His progressive approach has helped create a learning environment that nurtures both academic excellence and personal growth.

Sri Ramesh has played a pivotal role in expanding educational opportunities in the region by implementing modern teaching practices and innovative academic frameworks. His focus has always been on equipping students with the skills, confidence, and knowledge required to excel in competitive environments. Through structured mentoring and academic guidance, many students under

his leadership have achieved outstanding results at state and national levels, bringing recognition to the institution and East Godavari district. Beyond academics, Dreams Institutions are actively involved in social service initiatives. Under his guidance, the institutions have extended scholarships and financial assistance to underprivileged students, ensuring that quality education is accessible

to all sections of society. Various outreach programs and community service activities undertaken by the institution reflect his commitment to inclusive growth and social responsibility. Sri Angara Ramesh firmly believes that education is not merely a pathway to employment but a foundation for character building, leadership, and lifelong success. His vision centers on shaping responsible citizens who contrib-

ute meaningfully to society. The conferment of the honorary doctorate stands as a testament to his unwavering dedication, visionary leadership, and enduring impact on the educational landscape. Parents, students, faculty members, and well-wishers have expressed their heartfelt congratulations on this significant milestone, celebrating his achievement as a proud moment for the entire region.

Heritage Foods Scores Legal Victory Against Sakshi Media in Delhi HC

Delhi, February 19 | TPN Bureau: Heritage Foods secured a major legal victory against Sakshi Media on Thursday when the Delhi High Court directed the media outlet to immediately remove all controversial reports and links related to the company. The interim order came in response to a 100 crore defamation petition filed by Heritage Foods, which challenged false claims linking the company to Bholebaba Dairy. The court gave Sakshi Media 24 hours to comply and also instructed global platforms including Google, YouTube, and Meta to intervene if the links were not removed. The dispute arose after Sakshi Media published reports alleging a business connection between Heritage Foods and Bholebaba Dairy, suggesting irregularities in ghee supply. Heritage Foods strongly refuted the claims, emphasizing that the allegations were completely baseless and damaging to its reputation. The company clarified that it has no com-



mercial relationship with Bholebaba Dairy and does not supply ghee to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). The petition also noted that legal notices had been issued to other parties propagating similar falsehoods. According to Heritage Foods, the media reports were intended to mislead the public and undermine the company's credibility. The Delhi High Court acknowledged the seriousness of these claims and instructed Sakshi Media to remove all links and content immediately. Additionally, the court

instructed internet platforms to take action in case of non-compliance, signaling that digital platforms bear responsibility for ensuring that defamatory content is taken down. The company highlighted that it has consistently maintained transparency and ethical standards in its operations. By filing the defamation petition, Heritage Foods aims to protect its brand image and reassure stakeholders, including consumers and partner farmers, about its integrity. The court's intervention reinforces the principle

that unverified or false reporting can have serious legal consequences. This legal development is also significant in the broader context of media accountability. It demonstrates that established companies can take decisive action against misinformation and that courts are willing to act swiftly to prevent reputational harm. The case underscores the importance of responsible journalism, particularly when reporting on corporate entities with a long-standing public presence. The interim order ensures that Sakshi Media

must comply immediately, or authorities will enforce the removal of content through internet platforms. Heritage Foods' management stated that this step is part of their continued effort to uphold the truth and safeguard their operations from false accusations. The ruling marks a crucial precedent in addressing corporate defamation cases in India, highlighting the legal remedies available against the spread of false information in both traditional and digital media.

AISF Demands Arrest of Attackers After Clash at Andhra University

Visakhapatnam, February 19 | TPN Bureau

The All India Students Federation (AISF) has demanded the immediate arrest of those responsible for the alleged attack on students at Andhra University, condemning the incident and accusing right-wing groups of provoking communal tensions on campus.



Addressing a press conference held at Dasari Bhavan under the leadership of the AISF Vijayawada city committee, state vice-president M. Saikumar strongly criticised what he described as an assault by "communal forces" on students who had protested against religious activities inside the university premises. According to AISF leaders, certain groups allegedly conducted religious outreach programmes on campus, prompting student organisations including AISF and the Students' Federation of India (SFI) to stage protests, asserting that universities should remain spaces dedicated solely to education. They said the protests were meant to convey their objections to higher

education authorities and organisers of the programmes. AISF alleged that tensions escalated the following day when students who participated in the protest were targeted and attacked. They claimed that even during a peace meeting convened by university authorities, some individuals reportedly disrupted the discussions and threw water bottles and footwear at students, including women. Student leaders said the campus comprises students from diverse religious backgrounds who study together in harmony, and alleged that attempts were being made to create divisions along communal lines. They urged authorities to ensure that educational institutions are not turned into platforms for religious or political mobilisation. The organisation also criticised what it termed as the silence of the state's higher education authorities, demanding swift action to prevent recurrence of such incidents. AISF called for a thorough inquiry and strict measures to maintain campus peace and safeguard students' rights. Leaders further linked the issue to broader concerns about student welfare, alleging that organisations supporting religious programmes have not taken strong positions on issues such as the corporatisation of education under public-private partnership models. AISF reiterated its demand that the government respond immediately, initiate action against those involved in the alleged attack, and ensure that universities remain inclusive academic spaces free from communal tensions.

Officials Inspect Rajahmundry Central Prison, Women's Jail



East Godavari, 19 FEBRUARY 2026 | TPN Bureau: A district-level "Board of Visitors" team conducted a comprehensive inspection of Rajahmundry Central Prison and the Women's Special Prison on Thursday evening, reviewing facilities, inmate welfare and administrative practices. The inspection was led by District Principal Judge Gandham Sunitha and attended by District Collector Keerthi Chekuri, Superintendent of Police D. Narasimha Kishore, District Legal Services Authority Secretary N. Srilakshmi and other senior officials. During the visit, the team interacted directly

with inmates to understand their concerns, welfare conditions and access to basic amenities. Officials reviewed food quality, barrack conditions, sanitation, medical services at the prison hospital, skill-development programmes and livelihood activities. They also inspected the bakery unit, prison kitchen, library and the inmates' education facilities. Collector Keerthi Chekuri personally tasted the food served to inmates and expressed satisfaction over its quality. The team commended the overall cleanliness of the kitchen, maintenance of barracks and the healthcare services available within the

prison. The District Principal Judge reviewed the implementation of free legal aid for prisoners and provided guidance on bail procedures, including options for filing petitions for personal bonds in cases where inmates lack sureties. Officials also enquired whether any caste-based discrimination existed in work allocation inside the prison. Inmates informed the visiting team that no such practices were taking place. The Board members expressed satisfaction over the greenery, discipline and hygiene within the prison premises and offered suggestions to address a few pending issues.

The functioning of the Women's Special Prison was also reviewed, with appreciation expressed for the coordination and management by supervising officer Vasantha Kumari and staff. The team suggested that the facility participate in national-level cleanliness competitions. Among those present were Chief Medical Officer Dr P. Bhavana, District Educational Officer B. Dileep Kumar, District Social Welfare Officer M.D. Ghajuddin, District Agricultural Officer K. Robert Paul, Medical Officer Dr Indira Bharati Ray, and Deputy Jailors K. Subhashini and B. Nagamani, along with other departmental officials.

Anti-Drug Message Resonates in Short Film Operation 1972



East Godavari | TPN Bureau: A powerful social message against drug abuse is striking a chord with audiences through the short film Operation 1972, which highlights how ganja addiction can derail young lives. The film, directed by journalist Pothuraju Satya, has been widely appreciated for its impactful storytelling and realistic portrayal of the dangers of substance abuse. Produced under Gautam Achyut Productions, the short film also had journalist D. Srinivas as co-director. It received notable praise in the anti-drug category

at a short film competition organised by East Godavari police, earning recognition for its strong social message. The story revolves around Charan, a bright student from a middle-class family who grows up under the disciplined guidance of his father after losing his mother at a young age. His academic success makes his father proud, but jealousy from a group of friends leads him down a dangerous path. What begins as a casual experiment with ganja soon turns into addiction, gradually affecting his studies, behaviour and relationships.

As the addiction deepens, Charan slips further into trouble and eventually becomes involved in selling drugs, trapping himself in a cycle of crime. In a dramatic and emotional turn, his father—heartbroken yet determined to save his son and protect society—alerts the police. Acting on the information, authorities arrest Charan, and the story concludes with a poignant message that drugs destroy not just individuals but entire families. Despite its brief runtime of around ten minutes, the film delivers a hard-hitting warning

that drug use is not a harmless habit but a destructive force. Notably, nearly 90 percent of the cast comprises journalists, reflecting the team's commitment to social responsibility. The technical crew includes cinematographer Srikanth Raja, editor P. Vijay, and writers Ramesh and Murali, whose combined efforts helped shape the film's gripping narrative. With its realistic approach and emotional depth, Operation 1972 is emerging as a compelling awareness tool, urging youth to stay away from drugs and choose a healthier path.

Tim Cook's Leadership Is Testing Apple's Shine

The global success story of Apple has long been tied to its image as one of the world's most admired and valuable brands. For over a decade, it has retained a dominant position in brand rankings, symbolizing innovation, premium quality, and customer loyalty. Yet, under the leadership of Tim Cook, questions are increasingly being raised about whether some strategic decisions are quietly chipping away at that polished reputation.

This critique does not come from a place of failure—far from it. Apple remains enormously profitable and influential. However, the concern is that its leadership may be making choices that, while beneficial in the short term, could have long-term consequences for its brand identity and values.

A Strong Brand Facing Subtle Erosion

Apple's brand has always stood for more than just products. It has represented a philosophy—privacy, sustainability, and a certain ethical positioning in the tech industry. These ideals helped distinguish it from competitors and built deep trust among consumers.

However, critics argue that recent decisions suggest a shift away from those principles. One notable issue is the company's approach to environmental responsibility. Reports indicate that Apple has scaled back incentives that previously encouraged executives to prioritize environmental impact in their decision-making.

This change may seem technical or internal, but it signals something deeper. When environmental goals are no longer tied to leadership accountability, it raises doubts about how seriously those commitments are taken. For a company that has marketed itself as environmentally conscious, such moves risk undermining credibility.

Profit Versus Principles

Under Tim Cook, Apple has excelled operationally. The company has expanded its supply chains, strengthened its services business, and maintained high margins. Cook's strengths lie in efficiency, logistics, and global strategy—areas where he has arguably surpassed even his predecessor, Steve Jobs.

But this operational excellence has come with trade-offs. Critics suggest that Apple is increasingly behaving like a conventional cor-



porate giant rather than a values-driven innovator. Decisions appear more focused on maximizing revenue and maintaining dominance than on preserving the distinct ethos that once defined the company.

This tension between profit and principle is not unique to Apple, but it is more noticeable because of the company's carefully cultivated image. When a brand promises to "think different," any move that appears ordinary—or worse, contradictory—stands out sharply.

The Risk of Brand Damage

Brand value is not just about financial performance; it is also about perception. Apple's strength lies in the emotional connection it has built with its users. If that connection weakens, even slightly, the long-term impact could be significant.

For instance, if consumers begin to see Apple as less committed

to privacy or sustainability, it may lose one of its key differentiators. In a competitive tech landscape, where rivals are constantly improving their products, brand trust becomes even more crucial.

The concern is not that Apple is failing today, but that it may be slowly eroding the very qualities that made it exceptional. These changes are subtle, which makes them more dangerous—they can accumulate over time without triggering immediate alarm.

Leadership Style: Stability Over Vision?

Tim Cook's leadership style is markedly different from that of Steve Jobs. Where Jobs was known for bold vision and product intuition, Cook is recognized for discipline and execution. This shift has brought stability and consistent growth, but it has also changed how Apple is perceived.

Cook's approach has turned Apple into a highly efficient machine, capable of delivering predictable results. However, some argue that this comes at the cost of daring innovation and strong moral positioning. The company still produces high-quality products, but it no longer feels as disruptive or revolutionary as it once did.

This raises a broader question: can a company maintain its original identity as it grows larger and more complex? Apple's current trajectory suggests that scale and efficiency may be taking precedence over the ideals that once defined it.

In today's world, consumers are increasingly attentive to corporate behavior. They expect companies to act responsibly, not just profitably. For Apple, this expectation is even higher because of its brand positioning.

A Turning Point for Apple

Apple stands at a critical juncture. It is still one of the most powerful and respected companies in the world, but its future reputation will depend on the choices it makes now.

If it continues to prioritize efficiency and profit at the expense of its core principles, it risks becoming

just another large corporation—successful, but no longer special. On the other hand, if it reaffirms its commitment to values like sustainability and user trust, it can strengthen its position as a leader not just in technology, but in corporate responsibility.

Tim Cook's leadership has undeniably taken Apple to new financial heights. The challenge now is to ensure that this success does not come at the cost of the company's soul.

Conclusion

The criticism of Tim Cook is not about incompetence—it is about direction. Apple is still thriving, but the concern is that it may be drifting away from what made it iconic.

In the end, the question is simple yet profound: can Apple remain Apple under its current path? The answer will determine not just its market position, but its legacy in the tech world.

Trump's Iran Strategy: Power Without a Clear Endgame

The evolving tensions between the United States and Iran have once again drawn global attention to Washington's approach under Donald Trump. While the administration has projected strength through military build-up and aggressive rhetoric, a closer look suggests a troubling possibility: there may be no coherent long-term plan guiding these actions.

This critique is not about America's capability—it is about clarity of purpose. The United States has the means to act decisively, but the central question remains: what exactly is it trying to achieve in Iran?

A Strategy Built on Pressure, Not Direction

At first glance, the current approach appears familiar. Trump has revived elements of a "maximum pressure" doctrine—tightening sanctions, issuing threats, and keeping military options on the table. This strategy is designed to force Iran into submission, particularly over its nuclear ambitions.

However, pressure alone does not constitute a strategy. It is a tool, not an objective. The concern is that Washington seems focused on coercion without clearly defining the desired political outcome.

Is the goal regime change? A revised nuclear deal? Regional containment? Or simply deterrence?

The ambiguity is striking—and potentially dangerous.

Military Power Without Political Clarity

The United States has demonstrated its readiness for escalation, reinforcing its presence in the Middle East and signaling that it is prepared for confrontation if necessary.

At the same time, Trump has issued stark warnings about possible strikes if Iran does not comply with U.S. demands.

Yet, despite this show of force, there is no clearly articulated roadmap for what comes next. Even if military action were to succeed tactically—through targeted strikes or limited operations—the strategic outcome remains uncertain.

History has repeatedly shown that military victories do not automatically translate into stable political solutions. Without a defined endgame, such actions risk creating more instability rather than resolving it.

Diplomacy and Threats: A Contradictory Mix

Complicating matters further is the administration's simultaneous reliance on diplomacy. While threatening military action, the U.S. has also engaged in indirect talks with Iran, seeking a new nuclear agreement.

This dual-track approach—talking while threatening—can be effective if carefully managed. However, in this case, it appears inconsistent. The lack of a unified strategy raises doubts about whether



diplomacy is being pursued as a genuine solution or merely as a complement to pressure tactics.

Such contradictions can weaken credibility, making it harder for adversaries and allies alike to understand U.S. intentions.

The Regime Change Question

One of the most critical uncertainties is whether the United States is implicitly aiming for regime change in Iran.

There are signals pointing in that direction. Trump has previously suggested that a change in Iran's leadership

could be beneficial, and some voices have openly supported such an outcome.

But regime change is not a simple objective—it is a complex and risky undertaking. It raises immediate questions:

- What would replace the current system?
- Who would govern Iran afterward?
- How would stability be ensured in a volatile region?

These questions remain largely unanswered, reinforcing the perception that there is no fully developed plan.

Iran's Response: Defiance and Leverage

Iran, for its part, has shown a mix of resistance and strategic signaling. It has continued its nuclear activities while engaging in negotiations, and it has demonstrated its ability to influence regional dynamics.

A key example is its position around the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route for global oil shipments. Control and influence over this passage give Iran significant geopolitical leverage.

Iran's approach appears more consistent: resist pressure, maintain leverage, and negotiate from a position of strength. In contrast, the U.S. approach seems reactive, shift-

ing between escalation and engagement without a clearly defined trajectory.

The Risks of an Undefined Endgame

The absence of a clear plan carries serious risks.

First, it increases the likelihood of miscalculation. Military build-ups and aggressive rhetoric can escalate tensions rapidly, especially in a region already fraught with conflict.

Second, it undermines alliances. Partners in the region may support strong action against Iran, but they also need clarity about U.S. intentions. Without it, coordination becomes more difficult.

Third, it weakens deterrence. A strategy that appears inconsistent or undefined may embolden adversaries rather than restrain them.

A Pattern of Tactical Wins, Strategic Uncertainty

Trump's approach to foreign policy has often emphasized bold, immediate actions—sanctions, threats, and high-stakes negotiations. This style can produce short-term gains, such as bringing adversaries to the negotiating table.

However, the Iran situation highlights a recurring issue: tactical moves are not always supported by long-term strategic planning.

Previous actions have reshaped the geopolitical landscape but have also contributed to cycles of escalation without resolving the underlying conflict.

What a Real Plan Would Require

A coherent Iran strategy would need several key elements:

- **Clear Objectives:** Defining whether the goal is containment, negotiation, or transformation
- **Consistent Policy:** Aligning military, diplomatic, and economic tools toward a single outcome
- **Regional Coordination:** Working closely with allies to ensure stability and shared goals
- **Post-Conflict Planning:** Preparing for the consequences of any major action

Without these components, policy risks becoming reactive rather than strategic.

Conclusion

The core argument is not that the United States lacks power—it is that it may lack direction.

Under Donald Trump, the approach toward Iran combines pressure, threats, and negotiation. But without a clearly defined endgame, these elements do not add up to a comprehensive strategy.

In geopolitics, intent matters as much as capability. And in the case of Iran, the absence of a real plan could prove more consequential than any single decision.

The stakes are high—not just for the United States and Iran, but for the stability of the entire Middle East.

India Pushes for 'Democratised AI' Doctrine After Global Summit

India is preparing to advocate a new global framework for artificial intelligence that focuses on accessibility, inclusion, and shared technological benefits. Following discussions at the AI Impact Summit 2026, the country is promoting a "democratised AI" doctrine aimed at ensuring that advanced technologies are not controlled by a select few but are available to a wider global population.

This initiative stems from growing concerns that AI capabilities are increasingly concentrated among a handful of developed nations and large technology corporations. Indian policymakers believe such concentration risks deepening global inequality and limiting innovation. By pushing for democratisation, India aims to shift the global narrative toward equitable access and collaborative progress.

The proposed doctrine emphasises the need to expand AI access across developing countries, startups, and public institutions. The idea is to ensure that AI is used to address real-world challenges in sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, and governance. By making these technologies more accessible, India hopes to unlock their potential to improve everyday life on a global scale.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has strongly supported a human-centric approach to AI. He has stressed that technolo-



gy should empower people rather than replace them and must be developed with safeguards around safety, trust, and inclusivity. This philosophy aligns with the broader goal of ensuring AI serves the public good instead of being driven solely by commercial interests.

India is also positioning itself as a key player in shaping global AI governance. Acting as a bridge between advanced economies and developing nations, it is advocating for frameworks that promote fairness and shared growth. The country's leadership role in hosting international discussions highlights its ambi-

tion to influence the future direction of AI policy worldwide.

A major component of the democratised AI vision is the creation of shared resources, including open datasets, collaborative platforms, and interoperable systems. Such measures could reduce entry barriers for smaller players and encourage innovation beyond traditional tech hubs.

Infrastructure development is another priority. India plans to significantly expand its computing capacity, recognising that access to high-performance computing is critical for AI advancement. At the same time, efforts are being

made to build a skilled workforce through education and training, ensuring broader participation in the AI economy.

Despite its promise, the approach faces challenges, including concerns around data privacy, security, and global regulatory alignment. However, India remains committed to advancing this inclusive vision.

The democratised AI doctrine signals a broader effort to shape the future of technology in a way that is both innovative and equitable, ensuring that the benefits of AI are shared across societies rather than concentrated in a few hands.

Supriya Sule Seeks Security for Rohit Pawar After Ajit Pawar's Death in Plane Crash

In the aftermath of a tragic plane crash that claimed the life of senior Maharashtra leader Ajit Pawar, concerns over the safety of his family have intensified. His sister and prominent Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Supriya Sule has formally requested enhanced security for her nephew Rohit Pawar, citing potential risks following the shocking incident.

Ajit Pawar, a key political figure in Maharashtra, died in a sudden and devastating plane crash that sent shockwaves through the state's political landscape. His unexpected demise has not only created a leadership vacuum but also raised concerns about the safety of those close to him, especially family members actively involved in politics.

Supriya Sule, who has been vocal about the emotional and political impact of the tragedy, has now taken a proactive step by appealing to authorities for additional protection for Rohit Pawar. Rohit, a rising



leader in Maharashtra politics and an MLA, has been increasingly visible in public life, making him potentially vulnerable in the current tense environment.

In her request, Sule highlighted that the tragic circumstances surrounding Ajit Pawar's death have created unease and uncertainty. While there is no official confirmation of any direct threat,

she stressed that precautionary measures are necessary to ensure Rohit Pawar's safety. The appeal reflects broader concerns within political circles about security risks faced by public figures and their families during sensitive times.

Rohit Pawar, known for his active engagement with youth and grassroots initiatives, has been gaining prominence

within the party. His growing influence and public outreach make him a significant political figure, further underlining the need for adequate security arrangements.

Authorities are expected to review the request and assess the threat perception before making a decision. Security provisions for politicians in India are typically determined based on intelligence inputs and perceived risks, and such appeals are not uncommon following major incidents.

The tragic loss of Ajit Pawar has deeply affected not just his family but also the political ecosystem in Maharashtra. As the state continues to process the impact of this incident, the focus remains on ensuring stability and safeguarding those who may be at risk.

Supriya Sule's appeal underscores the importance of vigilance and preventive measures in uncertain times, especially when public figures and their families may face unforeseen dangers.

Mamata Banerjee Slams PM Modi Over 'Swami' Reference to Ramakrishna

Mamata Banerjee has sharply criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his tribute to 19th-century mystic Ramakrishna Paramahansa, triggering a fresh political row.

The controversy began after the Prime Minister shared a message marking the saint's birth anniversary. In his post, he referred to Ramakrishna using the prefix "Swami," praising his teachings and spiritual legacy.

Mamata Banerjee objected strongly to this usage, calling it culturally inappropriate and historically inaccurate. She argued that Ramakrishna is traditionally revered as "Thakur," a term that reflects deep spiritual reverence in Bengal. According to her, the title "Swami" is typically used for his monastic disciples, not for the saint himself.

Expressing her disapproval publicly, Banerjee said the use of such a prefix showed a lack of understanding of Bengal's cultural and spiritual traditions. She urged the Prime Minister to avoid altering established forms of respect associated with revered figures.

She further explained the traditional structure within the Ramakrishna movement, noting that Ramakrishna is regarded as "Thakur," while his disciples, including Swami Vivekananda, are ad-



dressed with the title "Swami." Changing this convention, she suggested, distorts long-standing cultural practices.

The issue quickly gained political traction, with leaders and commentators weighing in on the debate. Supporters of Banerjee echoed concerns about preserving cultural authenticity, while others viewed the controversy as part of ongoing political tensions between the central government and opposition leaders.

The episode highlights how even symbolic gestures, such as tribute messages, can spark significant debate in India's politically and culturally sensitive landscape. It also underscores the importance attached to religious titles and traditions, particularly when associated with widely revered figures.

As discussions continue, the incident reflects the broader intersection of politics, culture, and identity, where even small linguistic choices can lead to larger national conversations.

DMDK Signals Openness to DMK Alliance Ahead of Tamil Nadu Elections

The Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), founded by late actor-turned-politician Vijayakanth, has hinted at a possible alliance with the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) for the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, marking a potential shift in the state's political landscape.

Senior leaders of DMDK have indicated that the party remains open to discussions with various political players, including the DMK, as it explores strategies to strengthen its position in the state. While no formal agreement has been finalized, the signals suggest a pragmatic approach by DMDK as it seeks to regain political relevance after a period of electoral setbacks.

The DMK, led by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, has been consolidating its alliances in preparation for the elections. An alliance with DMDK could potentially expand its voter base, particularly among supporters who continue to revere Vijayakanth's legacy.

DMDK, once a significant force in Tamil Nadu politics, has struggled to maintain its earlier momentum in recent years. The party's leadership appears keen to rebuild its influence by aligning with a stronger political partner. Political observers believe that joining hands with the DMK could provide DMDK with a



renewed platform and better electoral prospects.

However, the possibility of such an alliance also raises questions about ideological compatibility and seat-sharing arrangements. Negotiations, if they proceed, are expected to focus on these critical aspects. Both parties will need to strike a balance between political strategy and grassroots expectations.

The development has sparked discussions among political analysts, with some viewing it as a strategic move that could reshape alliances in Tamil Nadu. Others remain cautious, noting that alliance talks in the state often involve complex negotiations and last-minute changes.

As the election approaches, the focus will remain on whether these initial signals translate into a formal partnership. For now, DMDK's openness to aligning with the DMK underscores the dynamic nature of Tamil Nadu politics, where alliances continue to evolve in response to changing political realities.

Fake Video Row: PIB Debunks Claim About Mohan Bhagwat's 'Army Saffronisation' Remark



A viral video alleging that Mohan Bhagwat urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "saffronise" the Indian Army has been officially dismissed as fake, with authorities confirming that the clip was digitally manipulated.

The controversy began after a short video circulated widely on social media platforms. The clip appeared to show the RSS chief making controversial remarks about restructuring the Indian Army along ideological lines. The video quickly triggered political reactions and public debate, raising concerns about the integrity of institutions and the spread of misinformation.

However, India's official fact-checking agency stepped in to examine the authenticity of the claim. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) clarified that the video was not genuine and had been altered using advanced digital techniques. According to the findings, the visuals were taken from

a real public speech delivered by Bhagwat, but the audio had been tampered with and replaced.

Investigations revealed that the voice in the viral clip was likely generated using artificial intelligence. Fact-checkers noted that the speech in the original footage did not contain any references to the Indian Army or any call for "saffronisation." Instead, the doctored version inserted fabricated statements to create a misleading narrative.

Further analysis confirmed that the manipulated video reused footage from an event held in late 2025, where Bhagwat had addressed issues unrelated to the claims being circulated. The altered audio track was superimposed onto the original visuals, making the clip appear authentic at first glance.

Officials described the incident as part of a broader trend of misinformation driven by deepfake technology. The use of AI-generated audio and video has made it

increasingly difficult for viewers to distinguish between real and fabricated content. Authorities warned that such content can inflame tensions and mislead the public if not verified.

The PIB urged citizens to exercise caution while sharing unverified videos online and emphasized the importance of relying on credible sources. It also highlighted the growing need for digital literacy as deepfake technology becomes more sophisticated and accessible.

The episode underscores the risks posed by manipulated media in an era where information spreads rapidly across platforms. While the viral clip created temporary outrage, fact-checking efforts helped clarify the truth and prevent further escalation.

As technology evolves, experts believe that combating misinformation will require a combination of public awareness, stronger verification systems, and responsible social media usage.

Priyanka Gandhi's Assam Visit Sparks Buzz After 'PM Blessing' Video Goes Viral



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra began her two-day visit to Assam with a temple stop that unexpectedly grabbed national attention after a video of an ascetic blessing her went viral on social media.

Arriving in Guwahati, the Congress leader headed straight to the revered Kamakhya Temple to offer prayers. The visit is part of the party's preparations for the upcoming 2026 Assam Assembly elections, where she plays a key organisational role in candidate selection and campaign strategy.

However, what drew widespread attention was a brief interaction during her temple visit. A Naga sadhu approached her and placed his hand on her head as a gesture of blessing. In a moment captured on video, he remarked that she would one day become Prime Minister.

The unexpected comment appeared to catch Priyanka Gandhi off guard. She responded with a smile and moved on, but the clip

quickly spread across social media platforms, triggering discussions and reactions from users across the country.

Despite the viral moment, the visit carries significant political importance. As the Screening Committee Chairperson, Gandhi is responsible for evaluating potential candidates and strengthening the party's grassroots presence in the state. After offering prayers, she proceeded to party meetings in Guwahati, where she is scheduled to interact with senior leaders and workers.

Her itinerary includes discussions with members of district and block-level committees, as well as interactions with representatives from affiliated wings such as youth and women's groups. These engagements are aimed at energising the party base and improving coordination ahead of the elections.

The Congress party has been working to regain political ground in Assam, and Gandhi's visit is seen as

a crucial step in that effort. Building a strong organisational network and identifying competitive candidates are key priorities as the party looks to challenge its rivals in the state.

Meanwhile, the viral video has added an unexpected layer of public attention to the trip. While the blessing itself was informal and not part of any official messaging, its symbolic tone has sparked conversations online.

The incident also reflects how quickly moments from political visits—especially those involving religious or cultural settings—can gain traction in the digital age. Even brief interactions can become widely discussed, sometimes overshadowing the primary purpose of a visit.

As Priyanka Gandhi continues her engagements in Assam, the focus remains on political strategy and election readiness. Yet, the viral blessing has ensured that her visit is being talked about far beyond the immediate political context.

Prince Andrew Arrested Over Epstein Links, Sends Shockwaves Through British Royal Family

In a stunning development, Prince Andrew, the younger brother of King Charles III, has reportedly been arrested as part of an investigation linked to disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein. The incident has reignited global attention on a long-running controversy that has shadowed the royal family for years.

Arrest and Ongoing Probe

Authorities detained Andrew at his residence in Norfolk, where he had been living following his withdrawal from royal duties. Law enforcement officials have indicated that the arrest is tied to allegations of misconduct in public office, a serious charge under UK law.

Investigators are examining whether Andrew may have improperly shared confidential or sensitive information during his tenure as a UK trade envoy. Reports suggest that the probe involves reviewing documents, communications, and international evidence connected to Epstein's network.

Search operations were also carried out at multiple properties, signaling the scale and seriousness of the investigation.

Nature of the Allegations
The case is reportedly based on newly surfaced records that suggest Andrew may have had deeper involvement with Epstein than previously understood. These materials allegedly include communications that raise concerns about the misuse of official position and access.

The central question investigators are pursuing is whether Andrew breached public trust while representing the UK abroad. Misconduct in public office carries significant legal consequences if proven.

Authorities have emphasized that the inquiry is ongoing and complex, involving multiple jurisdictions and extensive documentation.



A Controversy Years in the Making

Andrew's association with Epstein has long been a source of public scrutiny and criticism. Epstein, who was convicted of sex-related offenses, maintained relationships with several influential figures across the world.

Andrew has repeatedly denied wrongdoing. However, his public image suffered a major blow following a widely criticized television interview in 2019, which led to intense backlash.

In 2022, he reached a financial settlement in a civil case related to allegations connected to Epstein, though he did not admit liability. The controversy ultimately forced him to step away from official royal duties.

Fall From Royal Standing

Even before this latest development, Andrew's role within the monarchy had been significantly reduced. He had already lost military titles and

royal patronages, and he ceased representing the royal family in any official capacity.

Efforts by King Charles III to modernize and protect the monarchy's image had further distanced Andrew from royal life. His relocation away from prominent royal residences symbolized his diminished standing within the institution.

Public Reaction and Institutional Pressure

The arrest has triggered strong reactions across the UK and beyond. Many see it as a test of whether the legal system will treat powerful individuals the same as ordinary citizens.

Public discourse has focused on accountability, transparency, and the broader implications for institutions traditionally seen as above scrutiny. The case has also revived debates about privilege and responsibility within elite circles.

Buckingham Palace has remained largely silent on the specifics of the case but is expected to monitor develop-

ments closely.

What Lies Ahead

Andrew remains under investigation as authorities continue to gather and assess evidence. The next phase could involve formal charges, further questioning, or potential court proceedings, depending on the outcome of the inquiry.

Given the international scope of Epstein's connections, cooperation between multiple agencies may play a crucial role in determining the direction of the case.

A Critical Moment for the Monarchy

This episode represents one of the most serious legal challenges involving a senior royal in modern British history. Beyond its legal implications, it poses a broader challenge to the reputation and credibility of the monarchy.

As events unfold, the case is likely to have lasting consequences—not only for Prince Andrew but also for how the royal institution is perceived in an era increasingly defined by demands for accountability and transparency.

US Deploys Massive Air Power in Middle East Amid Rising Iran Tensions



A significant military buildup by the United States Armed Forces in the Middle East has heightened global attention, as advanced fighter jets and naval assets are rapidly positioned near Iran. The move signals a sharp escalation in strategic readiness amid ongoing tensions in the region.

Large-Scale Air Deployment

At the core of this buildup are cutting-edge aircraft such as the F-22 Raptor and the F-35 Lightning II. These jets, known for their stealth capabilities and advanced combat systems, have been deployed alongside other fighter aircraft and support units.

The scale of the operation is notable, with dozens of aircraft moved into key locations within a short period. These deployments are supported by aerial refueling systems and logistical networks, enabling sustained missions if required.

In addition to air power, naval forces have also been reinforced, including aircraft carriers and warships positioned strategically to enhance operational reach.

Strategic Context

The deployment comes during a period of heightened friction between the United States and Iran. Disagreements over security issues and Iran's nuclear ambitions have kept relations strained.

While diplomatic channels remain open, the military buildup reflects a parallel strategy—maintaining pressure while keeping options open in case negotiations fail.

A Powerful Signal

The presence of stealth aircraft like the F-22 and F-35 sends a strong message. These jets are designed for precision strikes, intelligence gathering, and operating in contested environments with minimal detection.

Their deployment suggests that the US is prepared for a wide range of scenarios, from deterrence to potential military action. However, officials have not indicated any immediate plans for conflict.

Iran's Reaction

In response, Iran has stepped up its own military preparedness. Exercises and strategic maneuvers have been conducted, particularly

around critical waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for global oil shipments.

Iranian authorities have warned against external pressure, emphasizing their readiness to defend national interests if necessary.

Global Concerns Rise

The situation has drawn concern from across the international community. The Middle East plays a crucial role in global energy supply, and any escalation could have widespread economic consequences.

There are also fears of unintended conflict, where miscalculations or minor incidents could rapidly spiral into a larger confrontation.

A Delicate Moment

With advanced aircraft deployed, naval forces on standby, and tensions running high, the region remains on edge. The current buildup underscores both the seriousness of the situation and the fragile balance between deterrence and diplomacy.

What happens next will depend on whether ongoing efforts can ease tensions—or whether the situation moves closer to open conflict.

Outrage in US After MAGA Leader's Remarks on Hanuman Statue

A controversy has erupted in the United States after comments made by MAGA figure Carlos Turcios about a Hindu religious statue sparked widespread backlash and debate over cultural sensitivity.

The issue began when Turcios publicly criticized a large statue of Hanuman located in the US, referring to it in derogatory terms. His remarks, which included calling it a "third-world alien" structure, quickly drew sharp reactions from various communities, particularly Hindu groups who viewed the statement as offensive and disrespectful.

The statue, installed in the state of Texas, is a prominent cultural and religious landmark. It represents devotion, strength, and unity for followers of Hinduism and stands as a symbol of the growing diversity within American society. For many, such monuments also reflect the contributions of immigrant communities in shaping the cultural landscape



of the country.

Turcios' comments triggered a wave of criticism on social media, with many users condemning what they saw as intolerance toward non-Western cultures and religions. Community leaders and activists argued that such rhetoric risks deepening divisions and fostering misunderstanding in an already polarized environment.

Supporters of religious harmony emphasized that the United States has long prided



itself on being a multicultural society where people of different beliefs coexist peacefully. They stressed that respecting religious symbols—regardless of one's personal views—is essential to maintaining social cohesion.

At the same time, the incident has reignited discussions around free speech. While some defended Turcios' right to express his opinions, others argued that freedom of expression should not be used to justify language that could

be perceived as hateful or demeaning.

The controversy also drew attention to broader issues surrounding immigration, identity, and cultural acceptance. As the US becomes increasingly diverse, such incidents highlight the challenges of balancing differing perspectives while ensuring mutual respect.

For many observers, the backlash against Turcios' remarks signals a growing awareness and sensitivity toward cultural and religious representation. It also underscores the importance of dialogue in addressing misunderstandings and promoting inclusivity.

Ultimately, the episode serves as a reminder of the delicate balance between free speech and respect in a diverse society. As reactions continue, it reflects a larger conversation about how communities can coexist while honoring each other's beliefs and traditions.

Ghost Employee Scam: Indian-Origin Man Accused Of Duping US Firm Of \$1.2 Million

A major fraud case in the United States has brought attention to how a so-called "ghost employee" scheme enabled an Indian-origin man to allegedly siphon off more than \$1.2 million from a company. The incident has raised serious concerns about loopholes in corporate hiring and payroll systems.

At the centre of the case is Karan Gupta, who is accused of masterminding the operation with the help of an associate. The scheme involved placing an individual on a company's payroll who either did minimal work or whose role was manipulated to appear legitimate while funds were diverted.

According to investigators, Gupta persuaded a friend to secure employment at a US-based firm. While the individual appeared to be a regular employee on record, a portion of the salary was allegedly redirected back to Gupta. Over time, these payments accumulated into a substantial sum, eventually exceeding \$1.2 million.



The fraud reportedly went unnoticed for a long period, highlighting gaps in internal monitoring and verification processes. In many modern workplaces—especially those with remote or hybrid setups—companies rely heavily on digital systems, making it easier for such schemes to slip through if oversight is weak.

The operation depended on trust and limited scrutiny. By using a real employee as part of the plan, the arrangement

avoided immediate suspicion. On paper, everything appeared normal, but behind the scenes, funds were being misused.

Authorities uncovered the scheme during a review of financial and employment records, which revealed inconsistencies between payroll data and actual work output. Legal action has since been initiated against those involved.

This case underscores the growing risks associated with

remote hiring and decentralized work environments. As companies expand globally and adopt flexible work models, ensuring that employees are genuine and actively contributing has become increasingly challenging.

Experts say the incident highlights the importance of strong internal controls. Regular audits, strict identity verification, and performance tracking can help prevent such frauds. Companies are also being urged to avoid over-reliance on referrals or informal trust when hiring employees.

Beyond its financial impact, the case also illustrates how personal relationships can be exploited for illegal gain. The involvement of a trusted associate played a key role in executing the fraud and delaying its detection.

Ultimately, the scam serves as a warning for businesses to strengthen their systems and remain vigilant. Even a seemingly simple scheme can lead to massive losses if proper checks and balances are not in place.

Kim Jong Un Drives Nuclear-Capable Rocket Launcher in Show of Power



In a bold display of military strength, Kim Jong Un was seen personally driving a nuclear-capable rocket launcher in Pyongyang, underlining the country's growing emphasis on advanced weaponry and strategic deterrence.

Images released by state media showed Kim behind the wheel of a large mobile launcher, inspecting rows of sophisticated military equipment. The vehicle is believed to be part of a new class of multiple rocket launch systems designed with the potential to carry nuclear payloads, marking a significant step in North Korea's military development.

The act of personally driving the launcher is symbolic. It reflected Kim's direct involvement in the country's defense programs and projected an image of control and confidence. Such displays are often carefully staged to send both domestic and international messages about leadership strength and technological progress.

The timing of this demon-

stration is particularly important, as it comes ahead of a major political gathering of the ruling party. Events like these are typically used to highlight achievements, reinforce internal unity, and outline future policy directions. Showcasing advanced weapons at such a moment signals a continued commitment to strengthening military capabilities.

These rocket systems are considered more advanced than traditional artillery. With improved precision and mobility, they are harder to detect and intercept, increasing their strategic value. Their potential nuclear capability also raises concerns about how they might be used in a conflict scenario.

The development and display of such weapons are likely to heighten tensions in the region. North Korea's military activities have long been a source of concern for neighboring countries and global powers, particularly as the nation continues to expand its nuclear arsenal. For North Korea, howev-

er, these advancements are framed as essential for national security. The leadership has consistently emphasized the importance of strong defense systems to deter external threats and maintain sovereignty.

Kim's public appearance in this role also serves a domestic purpose. It reinforces his image as a hands-on leader closely connected to the country's military strength. By associating himself directly with advanced weaponry, he strengthens internal narratives of resilience and progress.

This latest display fits into a broader pattern of military assertiveness. Over the years, North Korea has unveiled new missile systems, conducted tests, and invested heavily in modernizing its armed forces.

As tensions remain high, such demonstrations are closely watched around the world. They not only reflect North Korea's current capabilities but also hint at its future ambitions in an increasingly uncertain global security environment.

Upcoming IPOs Set to Hit the Market Next Week



India's primary market is gearing up for fresh activity, with several companies preparing to launch their initial public offerings (IPOs) in the coming week. Among the most closely watched issues are those of Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions, PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery, and Gaudium IVF & Women Health, each representing different sectors and offering investors varied opportunities.

Strong Pipeline Across Sectors

The upcoming IPO wave reflects a diverse mix of industries, including renewable energy, healthcare, and jewellery retail. Together, these companies aim to raise thousands of crores, signaling continued momentum in the primary market despite mixed investor sentiment in recent months.

The presence of businesses from unrelated sectors highlights how companies across the economy are turning to public markets to fund expansion, reduce debt, or strengthen their financial position.

Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions IPO

One of the largest offerings among the upcoming issues is from Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions. The company plans to raise a substantial amount through a combination of fresh issue and offer-for-sale.

The IPO is expected to open earlier in the week and is positioned as a major fundraising exercise in the renewable energy space. The company focuses on providing clean energy solutions to commercial and industrial clients, aligning with the growing global push toward sustainability and decarbonisation.

A significant portion of the funds raised will be used to repay existing borrowings, while the rest will go toward general corporate purposes. Its scale and sector relevance make it one of the most anti-

ipated IPOs in this batch.

PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery IPO

PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery is set to launch a ₹380 crore IPO, which will be entirely a fresh issue of shares. The price band has been fixed between ₹367 and ₹386 per share, with the issue opening mid-week and closing shortly after.

The company operates in the retail jewellery segment, offering a wide range of diamond-studded and precious metal jewellery. It currently has a presence across multiple cities through a mix of exclusive and partner-operated stores.

The primary objective of the IPO is expansion. A large portion of the funds will be used to open new stores, while a smaller share will go toward marketing and brand promotion. The remaining funds will be allocated for general corporate needs.

Investor interest appears moderate, with grey market trends indicating limited but positive listing expectations. This suggests cautious optimism rather than strong speculative demand.

Gaudium IVF & Women Health IPO

Another notable offering comes from Gaudium IVF & Women Health, which operates in the healthcare sector, particularly in fertility and women's health services. The company aims to raise a smaller amount compared to the other two but still represents a niche and growing segment.

The IPO is expected to include both a fresh issue and an offer-for-sale component. With increasing awareness and demand for fertility treatments in India, the company is positioned in a sector that has seen steady growth.

The funds raised are likely to support expansion and operational improvements, helping the company scale its services across more regions.

Market Sentiment and GMP Trends

Grey market premiums (GMPs) for these IPOs suggest modest expectations. PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery has seen premiums indicating potential listing gains of around 5%, while Clean Max Enviro's GMP reflects even more conservative expectations.

This indicates that while investors are interested, they are not overly aggressive. The broader IPO market in 2026 has shown signs of moderation, with listing gains becoming less predictable compared to earlier bullish phases.

What This Means for Investors

The upcoming IPOs present a mix of opportunities depending on investor preference:

- Those interested in sustainability and long-term growth may look at Clean Max Enviro.
- Investors seeking exposure to consumer retail may consider PNGS Reva.
- Those focused on healthcare and niche services might explore Gaudium IVF.

However, the relatively subdued grey market signals suggest that investors are being more selective. Factors such as company fundamentals, valuation, and growth prospects are likely to play a bigger role than short-term listing gains.

Conclusion

The next week is set to be active for India's primary market, with multiple IPOs opening across sectors. While the scale and diversity of offerings are encouraging, the tempered investor sentiment indicates a more mature and cautious market environment.

Rather than chasing quick profits, investors appear to be focusing on long-term value, making this IPO cycle a more balanced and fundamentally driven phase for the market.

Markets Snap 3-Day Rally as Sensex Plunges Over 1,200 Points, Nifty Slips Below 25,500

Indian equity markets witnessed a sharp downturn, breaking their recent winning streak as heavy selling pressure dragged benchmark indices significantly lower. The decline reflected a mix of global uncertainties, sectoral weakness, and investor caution after recent gains.

The BSE Sensex plunged by more than 1,200 points to close near 82,498, while the Nifty 50 dropped around 365 points, ending below the crucial 25,500 mark. The fall marked the end of a three-day rally and signaled a shift in market sentiment toward caution.

Broad-Based Selling Across Sectors

The sell-off was widespread, with most sectoral indices ending in the red. Information technology stocks were among the biggest losers, reflecting concerns over global economic conditions and demand outlook. Financial stocks also faced pressure, contributing heavily to the decline in benchmark indices.

Other sectors such as metals, auto, and FMCG stocks also witnessed selling, indicating that the weakness was not limited to a single segment but spread across the broader market.

Global Cues Weigh on Sentiment

One of the key drivers behind the market fall was negative global sentiment. Investors remained wary due to uncertainty around interest rates in major economies, particularly the United States. Strong



economic data abroad has raised concerns that central banks may delay rate cuts, keeping borrowing costs higher for longer.

This has led to cautious behavior among global investors, especially in emerging markets like India, where foreign portfolio investments play a crucial role in market movements. When global conditions turn uncertain, these investors often reduce exposure to riskier assets, triggering sell-offs.

Profit Booking After Recent Gains

Another major factor behind the decline was profit booking. After a steady rise over the previous sessions, many investors chose to lock in gains, leading to increased selling pressure.

Such corrections are common after short rallies, as traders and institutional investors rebalance

their portfolios. The recent upward movement had pushed several stocks to higher valuations, prompting some participants to exit positions and secure profits.

Weakness in Key Stocks

Heavyweight stocks across sectors contributed significantly to the fall. Large-cap companies, especially in IT and banking, saw notable declines, dragging the indices lower. Because benchmark indices are heavily influenced by a few large stocks, even moderate declines in these companies can lead to sharp index movements. This was evident in the day's trading, where losses in key constituents amplified the overall market fall.

Investor Caution Ahead of Key Triggers

Market participants are also adopting a wait-and-watch approach ahead of

important domestic and global triggers. These include upcoming economic data, policy decisions by central banks, and corporate earnings announcements.

Uncertainty around these factors often leads to reduced risk-taking, with investors preferring to stay on the sidelines until there is more clarity.

Volatility Likely to Persist

The recent decline highlights the ongoing volatility in the markets. While the broader trend may remain influenced by long-term growth prospects, short-term movements are likely to be driven by global cues, interest rate expectations, and investor sentiment.

Market experts believe that such corrections are a natural part of the market cycle and help in stabilizing valuations. However, they also caution that

volatility may continue in the near term.

Outlook for Investors

Despite the sharp fall, the overall outlook for the Indian market remains tied to macroeconomic fundamentals, corporate performance, and global developments.

Investors are advised to remain cautious and avoid panic selling during such corrections. Instead, a disciplined approach focusing on fundamentally strong stocks and long-term investment strategies may help navigate volatile phases.

In conclusion, the sharp drop in the markets reflects a combination of global uncertainty, profit booking, and sectoral weakness. While short-term fluctuations may continue, long-term investors may view such dips as opportunities, provided they remain selective and mindful of risks.

Swiggy Shuts Down 'Snacc' as 10-Minute Delivery Model Faces Reality Check



India's quick-commerce boom promised lightning-fast deliveries and a transformation in how people access food. However, the challenges of sustaining such speed-driven services are becoming increasingly evident. In a significant move, Swiggy has shut down its rapid food delivery service, Snacc, signaling that ultra-fast delivery may not be as viable as once imagined.

Snacc was introduced to cater to urban consumers seeking instant gratification, offering snacks, beverages, and ready-to-eat meals within minutes. The idea aligned with the growing demand for con-

venience, particularly in metropolitan areas. Yet, despite initial traction, the service struggled to achieve long-term sustainability.

The core issue lies in the economics of ultra-fast delivery. Meeting a 10-15 minute timeline requires a highly dense network of dark stores, efficient logistics systems, and a large number of delivery personnel ready at all times. These factors significantly drive up operational costs. On the other hand, customers are often unwilling to pay higher fees for such speed, creating a mismatch between expenses and

revenue.

The segment has also become highly competitive. Multiple companies entered the quick-delivery space, each trying to offer faster services than the other. This led to aggressive expansion and heavy discounting, which, while attracting customers, further strained profit margins. Over time, it became clear that scaling this model sustainably would be difficult.

Another challenge is the nature of demand. Unlike groceries or daily essentials, snack and quick-food orders are often impulsive and inconsistent. This makes it harder for companies to predict demand and efficiently allocate resources. Maintaining infrastructure for peak performance even during low-demand periods adds to inefficiencies.

Additionally, concerns around delivery timelines and rider safety have influenced how companies approach speed. Extremely short delivery promises can put pressure on deliv-

ery partners, leading to operational and ethical challenges. As a result, companies have started rethinking their approach to ultra-fast delivery.

For Swiggy, shutting down Snacc appears to be a strategic decision aimed at focusing on more sustainable business areas. The company is likely prioritizing services that offer better long-term profitability and stability rather than continuing to invest in a high-cost, low-margin model.

The broader quick-commerce industry is also undergoing a shift. While fast delivery remains an attractive concept, companies are now being pushed to demonstrate profitability rather than just rapid growth. The focus is gradually moving toward efficiency, better unit economics, and long-term customer retention.

Consumer demand for convenience is not going away. However, the way companies meet that demand is evolving. Instead of promising extreme de-

livery speeds, businesses may adopt more practical timelines that balance customer expectations with operational feasibility.

The closure of Snacc reflects a larger lesson for the startup ecosystem: innovation alone is not enough—sustainability matters. While the idea of 10-minute delivery captured attention and drove growth, it also exposed the limitations of a model built on high costs and thin margins.

Going forward, companies like Swiggy are expected to refine their strategies, improve logistics, and explore models that combine speed with efficiency. The emphasis is shifting from being the fastest to being the most reliable and sustainable.

In many ways, this move marks a turning point in India's quick-commerce journey. The race is no longer just about delivering faster, but about building a business that can endure in the long run.

IPO Market Loses Steam in 2026 as Listing Gains Shrink

India's initial public offering (IPO) market, which witnessed a strong run in recent years, has entered 2026 on a more subdued note. While companies continue to prepare for public listings, investor enthusiasm has cooled, largely due to moderate listing gains and growing caution around valuations.

At the start of the year, only a limited number of IPOs have reached the market, and their performance has been underwhelming. Most newly listed stocks have either debuted below their issue price or delivered only marginal returns. Only a few exceptions have managed to generate notable gains, highlighting the uneven sentiment among investors.

This marks a clear shift from the earlier IPO boom, when in-

vestors often saw quick and substantial profits on listing day. Over time, those gains have declined, and by 2026, the trend has become more pronounced. Investors are no longer approaching IPOs purely as short-term opportunities.

A major reason for this shift is the correction in market expectations. During the previous boom phase, many companies were priced aggressively, leaving limited scope for upside after listing. Now, investors are becoming more selective and are focusing on company fundamentals rather than hype. This change is also forcing issuers to adopt more realistic pricing strategies.

The broader market environment is also playing a role. On-

going volatility and global uncertainties have made investors cautious. Instead of rushing into new offerings, many are choosing to wait for clarity or are redirecting their investments into more stable options.

Despite the subdued sentiment, the pipeline of upcoming IPOs remains strong. A large number of companies are planning to go public, and the total value of these potential listings is expected to be significant. This indicates that businesses still see public markets as an attractive avenue for raising capital.

However, strong supply does not automatically ensure strong demand. Investors are now more disciplined and are less willing to overlook high valuations or weak financial

performance. They are increasingly prioritizing profitability, sustainable growth, and transparent business models before investing.

This shift may ultimately benefit the market in the long run. A cooling phase helps reduce speculative behavior and encourages higher-quality listings. Companies are now under greater pressure to demonstrate strong governance and credible growth prospects.

The SME IPO segment is also reflecting similar trends. After mixed outcomes in recent periods, expectations have become more grounded. Many listings have delivered only modest gains or even discounts, prompting both issuers and investors to recalibrate their approach.

Importantly, the moderation in listing gains does not necessarily signal a weak IPO market. Instead, it indicates a transition toward a more mature and balanced environment. Investors are gradually shifting their focus from quick profits to long-term value creation. For retail investors, this change calls for a more cautious strategy. Simply subscribing to IPOs for listing-day gains is no longer a dependable approach. Evaluating fundamentals, industry outlook, and valuations has become essential.

For companies, the message is equally clear. High valuations without strong financial backing are unlikely to attract sustained interest. Businesses need to present solid growth



stories and demonstrate their ability to deliver consistent returns.

Looking ahead, the IPO market in 2026 is expected to remain active but more selective. Companies with strong fundamentals are likely to attract investor interest, while weaker

offerings may struggle. Overall, the current phase represents a reset rather than a decline. The IPO market is evolving into a more disciplined ecosystem where both investors and companies operate with greater caution and realism.

₹4 Lakh for Kindergarten? Viral Post Sparks Debate on Rising Education Costs



A recent social media post by Aviral Bhatnagar, an alumnus of IIT Bombay, has ignited a widespread debate about the soaring cost of early education in India. His reaction to an unusually high kindergarten fee structure has resonated with thousands online, highlighting growing concerns about affordability in the education sector.

The controversy began when Bhatnagar shared that his cousin's daughter, enrolled in an Upper Kindergarten (UKG) class at a private school in Mumbai, was paying nearly ₹4 lakh annually. What made the revelation even more striking was his comparison: the amount was roughly half of what he had paid for his entire four-year engineering degree.

This stark contrast quickly captured public attention. For many, it underscored a troubling reality—education costs, even at the most basic levels, are rising at an alarming pace.

Bhatnagar described this phenomenon as a form of “hidden inflation,” suggesting that while traditional economic indicators may not fully capture it, families are increasingly feeling the burden. His comment also pointed toward a possible future solution, proposing that artificial intelligence-driven tutors might one day make education more accessible and affordable.

The post soon went viral, drawing significant engagement and sparking a heated discussion on social media. Many users expressed shock and frustration, questioning how preschool education could command such high fees. Several pointed out that early education, which was once considered relatively affordable, is now becoming a luxury for many families.

Some users argued that the issue reflects deeper structural problems within the system. They claimed that sectors like education, healthcare, and even weddings have become highly commercialized, making them inaccessible for the average household. Others criticized the state of public institutions, suggesting that declining quality in government schools has in-

directly pushed parents toward expensive private options.

However, not everyone agreed with this perspective. A section of users viewed the situation differently, arguing that such high fees are often linked to lifestyle choices rather than necessity. According to them, premium schools cater to affluent families who are willing to pay more for perceived quality, brand value, and additional facilities. In this view, the rising costs are less about inflation and more about market demand and social status.

Some even suggested alternative approaches, such as homeschooling or choosing more affordable schools, emphasizing that parents still have options if they are willing to look beyond elite institutions.

The discussion also raised broader questions about inequality in education. As private schools continue to increase fees, access to quality education may become increasingly divided along economic lines. This could have long-term implications for social mobility and equal opportunity.

Amid this debate, Bhatnagar's mention of AI tutors added another dimension. With rapid advancements in technology, many believe that personalized, AI-driven learning tools could disrupt traditional education models. Such tools might offer high-quality instruction at a fraction of current costs, potentially bridging the gap between affordability and quality.

While this vision remains speculative, it reflects a growing belief that technology could play a key role in reshaping education in the future.

Ultimately, the viral post has done more than just highlight a shocking fee figure. It has opened up an important conversation about the direction of education in India—one that touches on affordability, accessibility, and the evolving role of technology.

As costs continue to rise, the question remains: will education become increasingly exclusive, or will innovation help make it accessible once again?

Why Finnish PhD Graduates Receive a Hat and Sword



In Finland, earning a PhD is not just an academic milestone—it is marked by a unique and symbolic tradition involving a top hat and a sword. This centuries-old custom reflects the country's deep respect for scholarship, knowledge, and intellectual responsibility.

At Finnish universities, doctoral graduates participate in a formal ceremony known as a “doctoral conferment.” During this event, they are awarded a black top hat, often called a “doctoral hat,” which signifies academic freedom and the status of a scholar. The hat is a visible representation of the intellectual independence that comes with achieving the highest level of education.

Alongside the hat, many graduates also receive—or more accurately, gain the right to acquire—a ceremonial sword. This sword carries a powerful symbolic meaning: it represents the graduate's commitment to defend truth, knowledge, and ethical values. Rooted in traditions dating back to the 19th century, the sword embodies the idea that scholars must stand up for what is right and contribute responsibly to society.

The sword is not merely decorative.

It reflects the historical belief that education equips individuals with the tools to “fight” ignorance and misinformation—not through force, but through reason, evidence, and critical thinking. In this sense, the sword becomes a metaphor for intellectual courage.

The tradition is particularly prominent at institutions like the University of Helsinki, where the conferment ceremony is a grand and formal affair. Graduates dress in elegant attire, wear their doctoral hats, and carry their swords during processions and celebrations. These ceremonies often include speeches, music, and rituals that highlight the importance of academic achievement.

Interestingly, not all graduates automatically receive the sword; many choose to purchase it themselves. Despite this, it remains a cherished symbol of accomplishment and pride.

Finland's doctoral traditions stand out globally for their blend of ceremony and symbolism. By combining the top hat and sword, the country emphasizes that education is not just about acquiring knowledge, but also about upholding truth, integrity, and responsibility in the wider world.

“I Belong Here Now”: A Traveller's Emotional Goodbye to Goa



A foreign traveller's heartfelt farewell to Goa has struck a deep emotional chord online, capturing the essence of what makes the coastal Indian state so special. After spending two months exploring its landscapes, culture, and people, the traveller—identified as Fran—shared a moving message that resonated with thousands.

Fran documented his journey through a video posted on social media, reflecting on his time in Goa and the profound impact it had on him. What began as a temporary visit evolved into an experience that reshaped his feelings about India, leaving him with a sense of belonging that he hadn't anticipated.

In his farewell message, Fran expressed that leaving Goa did not feel like a final goodbye. Instead, it felt more like a pause in an ongoing relationship. He described his stay as transformative, noting that the connections he made and the warmth he experienced went far beyond what he had expected from a short trip.

During his time in Goa, Fran encountered people who left a lasting impression on him. He spoke about how strangers quickly turned into friends and, in some cases, even felt like family. This sense of community played a major role in shaping his experience, making his departure all the more emotional.

What stood out most to him was not just the scenic beauty or the well-known tourist attractions, but the spirit of the people. He observed that the locals offered a unique perspective on India—one that emphasized openness, kindness, and a relaxed way of life. This, he said, changed how he viewed the country as a whole.

Fran admitted that he arrived as an outsider but gradually began to feel like he belonged. The emotional connection he developed with Goa made him question the idea of temporary travel. By the end of his stay, the place no longer felt foreign—it felt like home.

His reflections highlighted that travel is not

only about visiting new destinations but also about personal transformation. For Fran, Goa became more than just a stop on a journey; it became a place that influenced his outlook, values, and emotional world.

In his message, he also shared a desire to return. He made it clear that his connection to Goa was not fleeting and that he intended to come back, not just as a visitor but as someone who wants to contribute positively. He mentioned hopes of engaging in meaningful activities, including helping local communities and animals.

The emotional tone of his farewell was captured in his words, where he emphasized that Goa changed something within him. He reflected on how the experience was shaped by feelings rather than just sights or activities. The atmosphere, the relationships, and the everyday moments all combined to create something deeply meaningful.

The video quickly gained attention online,

drawing thousands of views and a flood of comments. Many viewers appreciated how authentically Fran portrayed his experience. Locals, in particular, responded warmly, expressing gratitude for the way he represented their home.

Several commenters noted that his words perfectly captured what makes Goa unique. Some shared their own similar experiences, saying that the state had affected them in the same way. Others invited him to return, assuring him that he would always be welcome.

For many, Fran's story reflected a broader truth about travel in India—that the country's impact often goes beyond its physical attractions. Visitors frequently find themselves touched by the people, culture, and emotional depth of their experiences.

Goa, in particular, has long been known for its ability to leave a lasting impression. Its blend of cultural diversity, laid-back lifestyle, and strong sense of community creates an environment where visitors can feel

both relaxed and connected. Fran's story is a testament to that enduring appeal.

His journey also highlights how travel can bridge cultural gaps. Despite coming from a different background, Fran found common ground with the people he met. This connection transcended language, nationality, and other differences, reinforcing the idea that human experiences are often universal.

In the end, Fran's goodbye was not marked by sadness alone but also by gratitude and hope. While he acknowledged the difficulty of leaving, he also celebrated what he had gained—a deeper understanding of a place and a stronger sense of connection to the world.

His message serves as a reminder that sometimes, the most meaningful journeys are the ones that change us from within. For Fran, Goa was not just a destination—it became a part of who he is.

And as he said in his farewell, this was not truly a goodbye, but simply a promise to return.

“Safe, Welcoming And Diverse”: Australian Vlogger Urges Tourists To See The Real India

A viral video by an Australian travel vlogger has captured widespread attention online, offering a refreshing perspective on India and challenging long-held stereotypes about the country. Through his experiences, the creator highlights why he believes India is not only safe to visit but also incredibly diverse and worth exploring in depth.

The vlogger, who has been travelling across India as part of a global journey, shared his thoughts after spending considerable time interacting with locals, visiting different regions, and immersing himself in everyday life. His central message is simple: India is often misunderstood, and many of the fears surrounding travel in the country are exaggerated.

One of the key points he emphasized is safety. Contrary to common perceptions, he explained that he felt comfortable during his travels. While acknowledging that every country has its challenges, he noted that India should not be judged solely based on negative portrayals often seen online or in the media. His own experiences suggested that, with basic precautions, travelling in India can be both safe and enjoyable.

Beyond safety, the vlogger focused heavily on India's diversity—some-



thing he believes sets the country apart from most destinations. From landscapes and languages to food and traditions, he described India as a place where every region offers a completely different experience. This richness, he suggested, is often overlooked by tourists who limit their visits to a few well-known cities.

He encouraged travellers to step beyond typical tourist circuits and explore lesser-known destinations. According to him, doing a bit of research and venturing beyond popular urban hubs can reveal a side of India that is far more authentic and rewarding.

Another highlight of his journey has been the warmth of Indian hospitality. The vlogger shared multiple instances where

locals went out of their way to help him—whether by offering food, guiding him through unfamiliar areas, or simply welcoming him into their daily lives. He described this generosity as something unique and deeply memorable, reinforcing his positive view of the country.

He also spoke about how social media often distorts reality. Many viral travel videos, he pointed out, focus disproportionately on poverty or chaos, creating a one-sided narrative that does not reflect the full picture. While he did not deny that such issues exist, he stressed that they represent only a fraction of what India has to offer.

Instead, he urged viewers to approach travel with an open mind and to

form their own opinions. By doing so, he believes more people would discover the country's cultural richness, historical depth, and everyday vibrancy.

Food was another aspect he praised enthusiastically. From street meals to more formal dining, he found Indian cuisine to be consistently flavorful and diverse, adding to the overall travel experience. For him, the culinary journey was just as important as the destinations themselves.

The video quickly resonated with audiences online, many of whom appreciated the balanced and positive portrayal. In the comments, users thanked him for showing a side of India that often goes unnoticed and for countering negative stereotypes with genuine experiences.

At a broader level, the vlogger's message reflects a growing trend among international travellers who are redefining how India is perceived globally. Rather than focusing solely on its challenges, they are highlighting its strengths—its people, culture, and diversity.

Ultimately, the video serves as both an invitation and a reminder: India, as the vlogger puts it, cannot be understood through a single narrative. It is a country of contrasts, where complexity is part of its identity.

For those willing to look beyond assumptions, his message is clear: India is not just a destination—it is an experience—safe, diverse, and deeply rewarding.

West Indies End Group Stage On High With Convincing Win Over Italy

The West Indies cricket team signed off their group-stage campaign in the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup with a commanding 42-run victory over Italy, showcasing their strength and depth as they head into the next phase of the tournament. The match highlighted the Caribbean side's all-round superiority, combining explosive batting with disciplined bowling to outclass a spirited Italian unit.

Batting first, West Indies put up an imposing total after a confident start from their top order. The innings was built on aggressive stroke play and smart partnerships, allowing them to maintain a strong run rate throughout. Their batters looked in control from the outset, taking advantage of scoring opportunities while keeping the pressure on Italy's bowlers.

A key feature of the innings was the ability of West Indies players to accelerate at crucial moments. Even when Italy attempted to slow things down with tight overs, the West Indies lineup responded with timely boundaries. The middle-order contributed significantly, ensuring that the momentum never dipped. By the end of their innings, they had posted a challenging total that placed Italy under considerable pressure.

Italy, playing in their debut T20 World Cup cam-



paigned, showed determination but struggled to keep up with the required run rate during the chase. Their innings began cautiously, as they tried to preserve wickets early on. However, the mounting scoreboard pressure forced them to take risks, which led to regular dismissals.

West Indies bowlers executed their plans effectively, maintaining disciplined lines and lengths. They mixed pace variations with sharp field placements, making it difficult for Italian batters to find gaps. The bowlers capitalized on every mistake, steadily reducing Italy's chances of pulling off an upset.

Despite the loss, Italy

displayed moments of promise. Their participation in the tournament itself marked a significant milestone for the team, reflecting their progress on the international stage. A few individual performances hinted at their potential, but they were unable to string together a complete performance against a seasoned West Indies side.

The fielding effort from West Indies also stood out. Sharp catches and agile ground fielding added to Italy's woes, ensuring that no easy runs were conceded. The team's intensity in the field underlined their determination to finish the group stage on a positive note.

This victory not only

boosted West Indies' confidence but also reinforced their status as strong contenders in the tournament. Their balanced performance with both bat and ball suggests that they are peaking at the right time. With experienced players stepping up and younger talents contributing, the team appears well-prepared for the challenges ahead.

For Italy, the match served as a valuable learning experience. Competing against a top-tier side like West Indies provided insights into the level required to succeed at the highest stage. While their campaign may not have yielded many wins, the exposure gained will be crucial for their devel-

opment in international cricket.

As the tournament progresses, West Indies will look to carry forward this momentum into the knockout stages. Their ability to dominate in all departments makes them a formidable opponent for any team. Meanwhile, Italy can take pride in their journey and use this experience as a foundation for future tournaments.

In the end, the match was a clear demonstration of West Indies' class and consistency. Their comprehensive win ensured a strong finish to the group stage, setting the tone for what promises to be an exciting run in the latter stages of the competition.

Pakistan Great Reveals Backlash Over Suggestion To Drop Babar Azam



A revealing statement from former Pakistan cricketer Mohammad Yousuf has brought attention to internal tensions within the national team, particularly regarding star batter Babar Azam.

Yousuf disclosed that he faced strong opposition after suggesting that Babar be rested during a difficult phase in his form. According to him, the recommendation—made purely on cricketing grounds—was met with resistance from within the system, eventually forcing him to step down from his role.

He explained that his suggestion was based on performance concerns and the need to maintain team balance. At the time, Babar was going through a lean patch, struggling to deliver impactful performances. Yousuf believed that giving him a break could help both the player and the team.

However, the reaction to this idea was far from supportive. Yousuf revealed that many individuals within the setup opposed the move, leading to an uncomfortable environment where his viewpoint was not accepted. He described how the situation escalated to the point where he felt compelled to resign.

The episode highlights the challenges of making tough decisions in a cricketing environment where senior players carry significant influence. Babar Azam, regarded as one of Pakistan's premier batters, commands immense respect and fan following, making any sugges-

tion to drop or rest him highly sensitive.

This situation reflects a broader issue in team management, where balancing performance-based decisions with player reputation can be difficult. Selectors and coaches often face pressure when dealing with established stars, especially during high-stakes tournaments.

At the same time, such decisions are not uncommon in professional cricket. Even the best players experience dips in form, and temporary changes are sometimes necessary to maintain overall team performance.

Despite the controversy, many still believe in Babar's ability to return to form. His track record and consistency over the years suggest that he has the capability to overcome setbacks and deliver strong performances.

Yousuf's comments have sparked debate about whether teams should prioritize reputation or current form when making selection decisions. They also underline the importance of open communication and a supportive environment within the team structure.

As Pakistan continues its campaign, the focus will remain on performance and unity. Whether this episode leads to changes in approach, Babar Azam, remains an isolated incident, it has certainly highlighted the complexities involved in managing top-level cricket teams.

Pakistan Hockey Turmoil: Federation Chief Resigns Amid Financial Crisis Controversy



Pakistan's hockey administration has been thrown into fresh turmoil after the head of the national federation stepped down following widespread criticism over the team's financial struggles during an overseas tour. The resignation comes in the wake of shocking reports that players were forced to take on menial tasks, including washing dishes, due to a lack of

funds.

The controversy erupted when details surfaced about the national team's dire financial condition while participating in an international event. Reports claimed that inadequate planning and poor financial management left players without proper support, forcing them to manage basic daily needs on their own. The situation quickly sparked out-

rage among fans, former players, and the broader sporting community, who viewed it as a humiliating episode for a country with a proud hockey legacy.

Amid mounting pressure, the federation chief announced his resignation, acknowledging the growing criticism and the need for accountability. In his statement, he referred to the country's top leadership, suggesting

that broader institutional challenges and lack of consistent support had contributed to the crisis. However, many observers argue that internal mismanagement within the federation played a central role in the debacle.

The incident has once again highlighted the deep-rooted issues plaguing Pakistan's national sport. Once a dominant force in international hockey, the country has struggled for years with declining performance, administrative instability, and chronic funding shortages. Critics say that repeated governance failures have not only affected results on the field but have also damaged the morale and dignity of players.

Former athletes and analysts have called for urgent structural reforms, emphasizing the need for transparency, professional management, and sustainable financial plan-

ning. They stress that without meaningful changes, such incidents will continue to undermine the sport's revival efforts.

Meanwhile, players have expressed disappointment over the situation, noting that representing the country should not come with such hardships. Many have urged authorities to prioritize athlete welfare and ensure that basic facilities and support systems are in place during international assignments.

The resignation marks yet another chapter in the ongoing crisis within Pakistan hockey. While it may serve as a step toward accountability, the larger challenge remains addressing the systemic problems that have long hindered the sport's progress. Until those issues are resolved, concerns about mismanagement and neglect are likely to persist.

Heated Exchange Between Pakistan Captain and Coach Sparks Controversy



A tense moment during the T20 World Cup 2026 has drawn widespread attention after a heated exchange between Salman Ali Agha and head coach Mike Hesson went viral, raising questions about the atmosphere within the Pakistan camp.

The incident took place during a group-stage match, where cameras captured an animated discussion between the captain and coach in the dugout. The exchange appeared to occur shortly after Agha's dismissal, with emotions clearly running high. His visible frustration, including an aggressive reaction, suggested a disagreement over decisions made during the game.

While the exact cause of the argument remains unclear, it is widely believed to be related to tactical choices, possibly involving batting order or in-game strategy. In high-pressure matches, such disagreements are not unusual, but the public nature of this exchange has intensified scrutiny.

The presence of senior player Babar Azam during the incident added to the attention, as he was seen nearby while the situation unfolded. The moment quickly spread across social media, sparking debate among fans and analysts about team unity and leadership.

Despite the controversy, Pakistan went on to win the match, which helped maintain their position in the tournament. However, the episode has overshadowed the victory

to some extent, shifting focus toward internal dynamics rather than on-field performance.

Such incidents highlight the intense pressure of international tournaments, where every decision can have significant consequences. Captains and coaches are expected to work closely, but differences in opinion can emerge, especially during crucial moments of a match.

At the same time, not all disagreements indicate deeper issues. Competitive teams often have strong personalities, and passionate exchanges can sometimes reflect a shared desire to win rather than conflict. The key lies in how teams manage these moments and maintain cohesion moving forward.

The lack of an official response from team management has added to speculation. Without clarification, discussions continue about whether the argument was a one-off incident or a sign of underlying tensions.

As the tournament progresses, Pakistan's performance and team chemistry will be closely watched. Their ability to stay focused and united could play a crucial role in determining how far they go.

For now, the incident serves as a reminder that beyond skills and strategy, cricket is also shaped by emotions and human dynamics—factors that can sometimes take center stage even in the biggest competitions.

Harmanpreet Kaur Becomes Most-Capped Player In Women's International Cricket

Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur has created history by becoming the most-capped player in women's international cricket, marking a significant milestone in an already illustrious career.

The landmark moment came when she stepped onto the field for her latest international appearance, surpassing the previous record held by Suzie Bates. This achievement reflects not just her longevity in the game but also her consistency and importance to the Indian team over the years.

Harmanpreet's journey has been defined by determination and impactful performances. Since making her debut, she has evolved into one of India's most dependable players, known for her aggressive batting and ability to deliver in high-pressure situations. Her match-winning knocks and fearless approach

have made her a key figure in India's success across formats.

Beyond her individual performances, her leadership has played a crucial role in shaping the Indian women's cricket team. As captain, she has guided the team through important tournaments and helped build a competitive and confident unit. Her presence on the field often inspires teammates to raise their level of performance.

One of the defining aspects of Harmanpreet's career is her adaptability. She has remained a vital part of the team in Tests, One Day Internationals, and T20 Internationals—an achievement that highlights her versatility and cricketing intelligence. In an era where many players specialize in a single format, her ability to contribute across all formats sets her apart.

Her record also symbol-



izes the growth of women's cricket, both in India and globally. Over the years, the sport has gained increased recognition, better infrastructure, and a larger fan base. Players like Harmanpreet have been instrumental in driving this change, inspiring young athletes to pursue cricket professionally.

The milestone has been

widely celebrated by fans and the cricketing community, with many praising her dedication and commitment. Reaching such a record requires not only talent but also discipline, fitness, and the ability to perform consistently over a long period.

Looking ahead, Harmanpreet Kaur continues to be a central figure in Indian cricket. With her ex-

perience and leadership, she is expected to play a key role in future tournaments and guide the next generation of players.

Her achievement as the most-capped player is not just a personal milestone but also a moment of pride for Indian cricket, highlighting how far the women's game has come and the bright future that lies ahead.

'Hey Balwanth' Set to Be a Major Hit

Hyderabad, February 19 – The team of the upcoming Telugu entertainer Hey Balwanth exuded confidence at the release press meet held ahead of the film's premiere. Produced by B. Narendra Reddy under Trishul Visionary Studios and presented by Nandipati Entertainment and Bannivas Works, the film is directed by Gopi Achar and features Suhas, Shivani Nagaram, senior actor Naresh, and anchor Sravanthi in key roles. The movie is scheduled to release on February 20.

Producer Vamsi Nandipati shared his excitement about the project, stating, "We are releasing Hey Balwanth across more than 650 screens. Our confidence comes from the strong story, engaging emotions, and wholesome entertainment the film offers. We have already begun paid premieres from Thursday evening, covering all regions. Audiences don't need to spend a month preparing to watch this movie—just three hours in the theater will give them an unforgettable experience. We are confident it will be a hit."

Senior actor Naresh praised the film's mass appeal, saying, "Hey Bhagavan' has now transformed into Hey Balwanth with even greater impact. The film is releasing in over 300 theaters overseas, and houseful shows have already begun there. Industry peers have called it a blockbuster, and early media responses have been highly positive. This is a fresh, family-oriented entertainer for Telugu cinema. The cast has performed brilliantly, and Gopi is a director with a strong vision. With Vam-



si Nandipati backing the project, success is guaranteed."

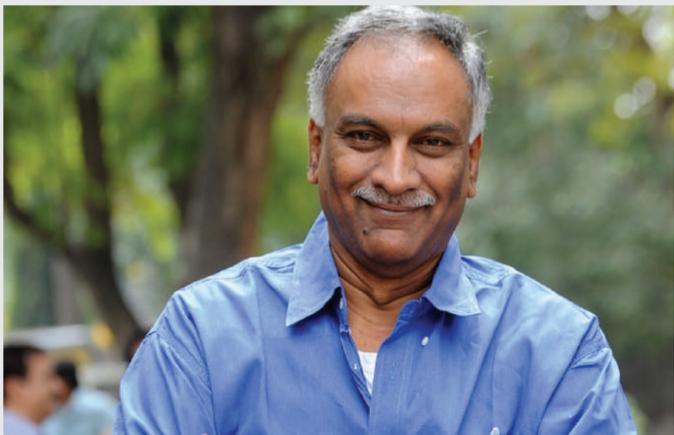
Hero Suhas expressed gratitude to the team and highlighted the personal commitment behind the film, stating, "The premieres began on February 19, and this is my biggest release and success so far. I approached this film with the mindset of delivering value for every rupee spent by audiences. I can guarantee that Hey Balwanth is like Suhas 2.0—it will impress everyone and leave a lasting impact."

The press meet reflected the team's optimism and excitement for the film's theatrical run. With a mix of comedy,

emotion, and entertainment, Hey Balwanth aims to cater to family audiences while offering memorable cinematic moments. The collaboration of a successful producer-director duo, a talented ensemble cast, and an engaging storyline has set high expectations among audiences and industry insiders alike.

With the paid premieres already generating buzz and the film hitting screens across India and overseas on February 20, Hey Balwanth is being positioned as a major Telugu cinema release of the year, promising laughter, excitement, and a wholesome theater experience.

Bharadwaja to Head Gaddar Awards Jury



Hyderabad, Feb 19: Veteran filmmaker and producer Thammareddy Bharadwaja has been appointed as the chairman of the Special Awards jury for the prestigious Gaddar Awards, signaling a key development in the selection process for one of Telangana's most prominent film honours. The appointment was confirmed through official orders issued by the Government of Telangana, replacing veteran director K. Raghavendra Rao, who previously served as the jury head. The change is seen as part of the government's effort to bring renewed perspective and credibility to the awards process, particularly for the special recognition categories.

Bharadwaja, known for his decades-long association with the Telugu film industry as a producer, director, and commentator, is widely respected for his outspoken views on cinema and in-

dustry issues. His leadership is expected to guide the jury in selecting recipients for honours that recognise lifetime achievements, technical excellence, and contributions that have shaped Telugu cinema's cultural landscape.

Instituted in memory of revolutionary balladeer Gaddar, the awards aim to celebrate cinematic excellence while highlighting films that reflect social consciousness and regional identity. Over the years, the Gaddar Awards have emerged as a significant platform for acknowledging both mainstream successes and meaningful storytelling, reinforcing Telangana's commitment to promoting its film industry.

Officials indicate that the Special Awards jury under Bharadwaja will evaluate a wide spectrum of contributions, including artists, technicians, and filmmakers who have made a lasting impact. The panel's recom-

mendations will play a crucial role in shaping the final list of honorees, adding prestige to the recognition process.

The upcoming edition of the awards is expected to honour films released during the previous calendar year, with the ceremony likely to be held during the festive Ugadi season. Industry circles have welcomed Bharadwaja's appointment, expressing optimism that his experience and independent voice will ensure a fair and balanced selection.

As preparations gather pace, the Gaddar Awards continue to strengthen their position as a major state recognition for cinematic talent. With Bharadwaja at the helm of the Special Awards jury, the forthcoming ceremony is anticipated to spotlight excellence across generations, celebrating the evolving spirit of Telugu cinema while paying tribute to its enduring legacy.

Second Single Promo Sparks Buzz for Ustaad Bhagat Singh

The makers of Ustaad Bhagat Singh have unveiled the promo of the film's second single, generating fresh excitement among fans and film circles. The promotional clip, released on social media, offers a glimpse into what promises to be a high-energy number designed to elevate the film's mass appeal.

The song, titled "Aura of Ustaad," showcases Pawan Kalyan in a stylish and commanding avatar, reinforcing the larger-than-life tone that the film has been building through its promotional campaign. The visuals hint at a celebratory track packed with vibrant choreography, energetic beats, and hero-centric moments that are expected to resonate strongly with audiences in theatres.

Directed by Harish Shankar, the project marks the much-anticipated reunion of the actor and director after their previous blockbuster collaboration, a factor that has significantly heightened expectations around the film. From the initial posters to song updates, every promotional release has consistently drawn strong engagement online, indicating robust pre-release momentum.

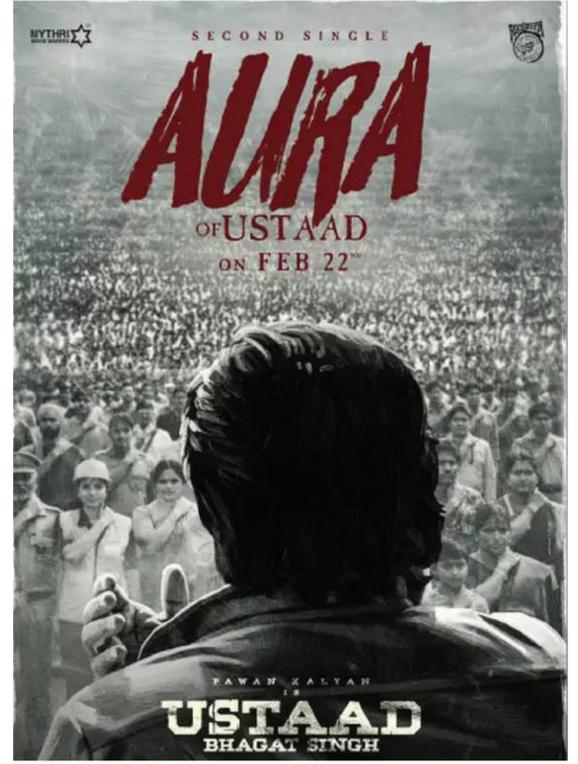
The film's music is composed

by Devi Sri Prasad, known for delivering chart-topping soundtracks for star-driven entertainers. Industry observers believe the second single will play a key role in strengthening the film's musical appeal and building further hype ahead of release.

Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, the film is expected to blend action, drama, and commercial elements, with Pawan Kalyan reportedly appearing in a powerful role crafted to appeal to both fans and general audiences. The team has been strategically rolling out updates, keeping the film in constant public conversation.

The full version of "Aura of Ustaad" is set to release soon, and expectations are high that the track will trend widely upon launch. With anticipation steadily building, the film is shaping up to be one of the most awaited Telugu releases, as fans eagerly await more promotional material in the run-up to its theatrical debut.

As the buzz continues to grow, the second single promo has successfully amplified excitement, reaffirmed the film's strong pre-release presence and setting the stage for a grand musical rollout in the coming days.



Love Song "Oosulaade" from Son Of Wins Hearts



Hyderabad, February 19 – The love song "Oosulaade" from the upcoming Telugu film Son Of,

starring Sai Simhadri, has garnered an overwhelming response from audiences. Produced un-

der the Sai Simhadri Cinema banner, the movie sees Sai Simhadri donning the dual roles of

hero and producer. Directed by Battula Satish, Son Of is slated for release on February 27.

The recently released track "Oosulaade" beautifully captures the love and chemistry between the hero and heroine, resonating with listeners across the board. Meera Raj plays the female lead, while senior actor Vinod Kumar appears in a pivotal role. The song's soulful composition and romantic lyrics have struck a chord with fans.

Music for the film is composed by Rishi M, while the lyrics for "Oosulaade" are penned by Bhaskarabhatla. The song is brought to life by the voices of Aditya and Sameera Bharadwaj, creating a melodious and soothing listening experience. Following the positive reception of the movie teaser and title track, the new release has continued the wave of excitement, further raising anticipation for the film's theatrical release.

Sai Simhadri, who is also producing the film, expressed confidence that Son Of will resonate with audiences, saying the movie has been crafted to highlight the emotional bonding between a father and son. This heartfelt theme, com-

bined with strong performances, is expected to create a meaningful cinematic experience for viewers.

The technical team behind Son Of adds depth and finesse to the film. Cinematography is handled by V.R.K. Naidu, while editing is by Amanath. Art direction by Battula Sahith Kumar and choreography by Raj Paidi ensure that the film is visually engaging and entertaining. The audio is released through Aditya Music, giving fans easy access to the tracks. Alongside Sai Simhadri, Meera Raj, and Vinod Kumar, the film also features Vasu Inturi and other supporting actors, contributing to the movie's overall charm. With a combination of melodious music, strong emotional storytelling, and a talented cast, Son Of is positioning itself as a promising entertainer for the audience this February.

With just days to go for its release, the makers are optimistic that the love song "Oosulaade" and other tracks from Son Of will create a strong connection with viewers, making the film one of the most awaited Telugu releases of the season.

Hebah Patel Joins High-Octane Action Entertainer Miracle

Hyderabad, February 19 – The upcoming action-packed film Miracle, directed by Prabhas Nimmala, is gearing up for its next schedule, with popular actress Hebah Patel set to join the team. Produced by Ramesh Eggidi, Srikanth Mogadasu, and Chander Goud under the Saida Family Entertainment banner, the film has already wrapped up two successful shooting schedules. The third schedule is slated to begin on February 24 in and around Hyderabad.

Hebah Patel's addition to the cast is expected to bring glamour and star power to the project. Randheer Bheesu plays the lead hero, supported by senior actors Sriram and Suresh in significant roles. Naiduendra is being introduced as the main antagonist, while senior journalist Dheeraj Appaji will portray a forensic officer. The film also features an exten-

sive supporting cast, including Janardhan, Yogi Katre, Vijay Surya, Imtiaz, Saibaba, Dil Ramesh, Jhansi, Suryanarayana, Sridhar, Srikanth, Shiva, Amani, Haimavathi, Navya (Ammu), Sameer Datta, Anushree, Bezawada Mastan, R. Kumar, and others.

Producers of the film emphasized that Prabhas Nimmala, known for his work on Satya Gang and Fighter Shiva, is confident that Miracle will live up to its name. The combination of high-voltage action sequences, powerful performances from senior actors, and Hebah Patel's screen presence are expected to make the film a major highlight of the year.

On the technical front, Nimmala has overseen the story, screenplay, dialogues, music, and direction, giving the film a cohesive creative vision. Cinematography is han-

dled by Surender Reddy, editing by Vishwanath, fight choreography by Srinu, and lyrics are written by Rambabu Gosala. Dheeraj Appaji is managing the film's publicity and promotions.

With its third schedule about to kick off, the makers are confident that Miracle will deliver an engaging mix of action, drama, and entertainment for the audience. Industry insiders are already predicting that the combination of Randheer Bheesu's dynamic performance, Hebah Patel's glamour, and Nimmala's direction will make Miracle a must-watch action entertainer.

As the excitement builds, fans can look forward to seeing some high-energy sequences and gripping storytelling that promise to make Miracle a memorable cinematic experience.

