



BUZZ POINTS

MONDAY is declared a Holiday on account of Maha Shivaratri



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AP Presents ₹3.32 Lakh Crore Budget for 2026-27



Amaravati, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav on Friday presented the State Budget for 2026-27, pegged at 3,32,205 crore in the Legislative Assembly, outlining a roadmap for growth, infrastructure development, and public welfare. The minister emphasized that the budget was designed to accelerate the state's development while prioritizing social welfare and inclusive growth, in alignment with the "Swarna Andhra 2047" vision. The budget allocates 2,56,143 crore for revenue expenditure, with a revenue deficit of 22,002 crore, and 53,915 crore for capital expend-

iture, leaving a fiscal deficit of 75,868 crore. Key allocations include 6,000 crore for Amaravati development, 28,000 crore for the Visakhapatnam Economic Region, and 30,000 crore for the Rayalaseema Global Horticulture Hub, aimed at boosting industrial and agricultural growth in the region. Infrastructure, transport, and energy sectors received significant focus, with 13,546 crore for roads, ports, and airports, and 13,934 crore for the energy sector. Housing and urban development were allocated 5,451 crore, while rural water projects received 9,906 crore. NTR Health Services will get 4,000 crore, and the Jal Jeevan Mission is allocated 4,000 crore to ensure drinking water security. For social welfare,

27,719 crore has been earmarked for pensions under NTR Bharosa, and 9,190 crore for ST welfare, including education, skill development, and scholarships. Minority welfare programs will receive 6,090 crore, SC component 20,644 crore, and BC component 51,021 crore. Women and child welfare programs are allocated 4,581 crore, and 1,420 crore has been set aside for women empowerment schemes. Education and skill development continue to receive priority, with 32,308 crore for school education, 2,566 crore for higher education, 2,946 crore for comprehensive training, and 3,836 crore for scholarships. Youth and sports are allocated 438 crore, while Manabadi-Mana Bhavishyathu initiatives receive 1,500

crore. Healthcare, including midday meals, receives 19,306 crore and 2,161 crore respectively. Minister Keshav highlighted measures to provide free electricity to handloom and powerloom workers, with 200 to 500 units per month, along with infrastructure support for police, IT, environment, fisheries, and industrial sectors. He stated that the budget aims to balance development with social equity, empower farmers and tribal communities, and create an investor-friendly ecosystem in Andhra Pradesh. The Finance Minister concluded that this budget marks a decisive step toward accelerating growth, improving citizens' quality of life, and ensuring that economic and social progress go hand in hand.

"We Trust the Judiciary, We Won't Back Down": Ambati Monika

TPN Bureau | Guntur, February 14, 2026:

Ambati Monika, daughter of former Minister Rambabu, today strongly refuted the statements made by Home Minister Anitha in the Legislative Council, asserting that her father has full faith in the judiciary and has never incited anyone to violence. Speaking to the media at her residence in Guntur, Monika described the recent incidents surrounding the Tirumala laddu controversy, which she said were politically motivated. She alleged that coalition leaders had put up flex banners blaming the YSRCP, and when her father condemned those banners, the same groups allegedly attempted to attack him and his home. Monika expressed outrage over the filing of 36 cases against Rambabu, which she termed as acts of political vendetta. She pointed out that while her father faced multiple legal challenges, those

allegedly responsible for attacks on his family and property were released on station bail. She stressed that Rambabu's recent "tagged le" gesture near the Guntur court was intended purely to boost the morale of party cadres and reflect confidence in justice, not to provoke anyone. Addressing the Home Minister directly, Monika questioned why no action was taken when TDP leaders allegedly attacked members of their family, including women. She also asked whether the criticism was genuinely directed at her father or aimed at Minister Lokesh, who had previously used similar words without consequence. According to Monika, the selective targeting of her father highlights the biased nature of political attacks and the misuse of law enforcement for partisan purposes. Monika further highlighted her father's courage during the attack, recalling that police had advised Rambabu to escape through a back route, but he chose to remain firm, demonstrating resolve and leadership. She criticized political leaders for selectively speaking about respect for mothers while remaining silent when women in opposition leaders' families are subjected to abuse. She also called on Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to respond, emphasizing that a party built on the principle of questioning authority cannot remain silent in the face of injustice. Monika accused the Home Minister of acting more like a party worker than a responsible official and reiterated that her father will continue to seek justice through legal and democratic means. Concluding her remarks, Monika stated unequivocally that the family's faith in the judiciary remains steadfast, and that they will not be intimidated or silenced. She reaffirmed Rambabu's commitment to law, order, and democratic principles, making it clear that political vendetta will not deter them from pursuing justice.

YSRCP Calls 2026-27 Budget a "Bundle of Lies" - Buggana

Tadepalli, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on Saturday strongly criticized the Andhra Pradesh state budget for 2026-27, calling it a "bundle of lies" that conceals more than it reveals and lacks substantive detail. Former Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath addressed the media, claiming that the budget's format had been altered to obscure figures and avoid presenting mandatory comparative data over the last ten years, which is essential to assess fiscal discipline. Rajendranath alleged that the budget exaggerates growth figures while the corresponding increase in revenue is minimal, indicating that the numbers were "cooked up" and do not reflect real-time financial security. He pointed

out the Jal Jivan Mission, a central government scheme, as a glaring example: while the Centre reportedly spent 8,500 crore nationwide, the coalition government claims expenditure of 10,000 crore, apparently taking credit for the Centre's funds. He further criticized the budget for leaving a wide gap between last year's revenue figures and revised estimates, raising questions about how the government plans to fill this shortfall in the final quarter. According to Rajendranath, not a single poll promise has been fulfilled, while state debt has crossed 3 lakh crore, which is not reflected anywhere in the budget. He also accused the coalition of failing to address the concerns of farmers, students, women, and the unemployed. "Loans, schemes, and allocations are hidden under various guises, leaving



citizens with no clarity on how their needs are being met," he said. Comparing the coalition government with the YSRCP administration under Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Rajendranath claimed that his government had achieved a 9 percent growth rate despite challenges posed by Covid, while the current coalition reports only 4.5 percent growth. He also highlighted welfare initiatives carried out during the YSRCP tenure, including direct cash transfers to beneficiaries, establishment of village secretariats,

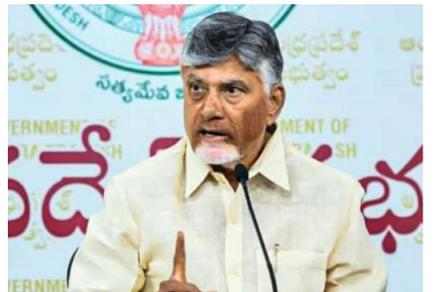
village clinics, and Resource and Business Centers (RBKs), calling them hallmarks of efficient governance. He concluded by asserting that the people are beginning to recognize the failures of the coalition, noting that the budget fails to reflect the real issues faced by the public or provide transparency in fiscal management. According to Rajendranath, the current government is attempting to portray the previous administration negatively while failing to deliver meaningful results.

AP Home Department Receives ₹9,165 Crore in 2026 27 State Budget

TPN Bureau | Amaravati, February 12, 2026:

The Andhra Pradesh government has allocated 9,165 crore to the Home Department in the 2026 27 state budget, reflecting its commitment to public safety, law and order, and disaster management. Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav presented the budget in the state Assembly on February 14, highlighting the department's critical role in ensuring the security and well being of Andhra Pradesh citizens. The Home Department allocation forms part of the state's overall budget of 3.32 lakh crore, which includes revenue and capital expenditures aimed at accelerating development, enhancing welfare schemes, and promoting infrastruc-

ture growth across sectors. The department's funding will support police modernization, training, operational readiness, and the implementation of key safety programs in both urban and rural areas. Officials noted that the allocation also includes resources for disaster preparedness and management, enabling the state to respond efficiently to floods, cyclones, and other emergencies. Investments in technology, surveillance, and community policing initiatives are expected to improve law enforcement efficiency and strengthen public trust in safety systems. The budget further emphasizes the importance of inclusive growth, with a clear focus on maintaining law and order while ensuring that citizens feel secure in their homes,



workplaces, and public spaces. The Home Department complements other key sectors, such as education, health, and rural development, contributing to a holistic approach to governance. Finance Minister Keshav described the 2026 27 budget as a roadmap for sustainable development, balancing fiscal responsibility with citizen-centric priorities. The government has maintained a fiscal deficit of 3.84% of GDP and aims to channel

funds efficiently across critical departments, including Home, to enhance public welfare and economic growth. State officials said that with the Home Department receiving substantial financial support, initiatives like strengthening community policing, upgrading security infrastructure, and enhancing disaster response mechanisms are expected to be implemented effectively, ensuring a safer Andhra Pradesh for all residents.

ST Students to Receive NEET, IIT Training Under New Budget

Amaravati, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Amaravati: Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday announced initiatives to train Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in gurukuls to secure seats in NEET, IIT, and other competitive exams, highlighting the government's focus on empowering tribal youth. Speaking at the 287th birth anniversary celebra-



tions of Sant Sri Sevalal Maharaj, held at the camp

office, Naidu praised the dedication of students from tribal regions, emphasizing their growing determination to achieve high academic standards. He expressed confidence that these students will reach top positions in the future. The Chief Minister said the coalition government is working to promote tribal development inspired by the social service ideals of Sant Sri Sevalal Maharaj. The state has allocated

9,190 crore in the 2026-27 annual budget for ST welfare, including infrastructure, scholarships, and skill development initiatives. Naidu added that the Sevalal Maharaj Jayanti is being celebrated as a state festival with an initial allocation of 50 lakh, and further funds will be dedicated in the coming days. During the event, Naidu garlanded a portrait of Sevalal Maharaj and paid tribute before addressing

the audience. He said that although Sevalal Maharaj was born centuries ago in the Anantapur district's Guthi Mandal, his teachings continue to inspire the Banjara community and the wider society. "Sevalal's principles remain a guiding light. He dedicated his life to helping the poor, feeding the hungry, opposing animal sacrifices, and promoting dharma. His legacy is a model for all of us," the Chief Minister said.

Naidu emphasized that the government is committed to improving education, health, and livelihoods in tribal areas. Gurukuls have been established to provide quality education to tribal children, ensuring they are prepared for higher studies and competitive exams. He also highlighted efforts to develop tribal villages through special panchayats, promote local products, and provide infrastructure facilities, including free solar

rooftop installations. The Chief Minister pointed out that initiatives like promoting Araku coffee on a global scale and sustainable utilization of forest resources are part of the broader development plan for tribal areas. He urged citizens to draw inspiration from Sevalal Maharaj's service to society and work collectively for the welfare of marginalized communities.

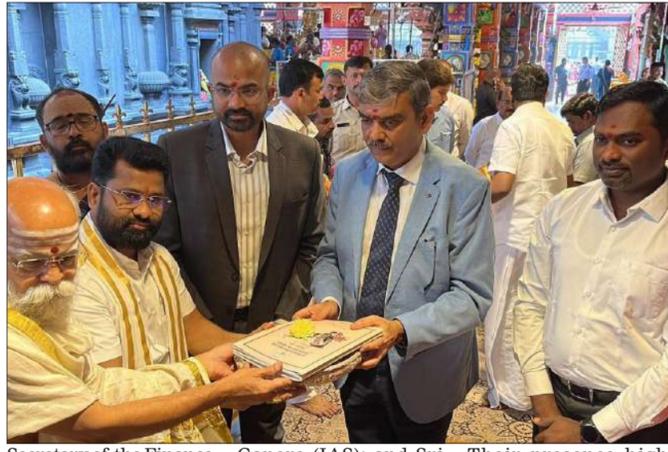
Special Budget Puja Held at Indrakeeladri

Indrakeeladri, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

In a unique ceremonial gesture ahead of the Andhra Pradesh state budget presentation, senior officials from the State Finance Department performed special pujas at the Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakeeladri hill in Vijayawada on the morning of February 14. The ritual symbolically blended tradition and governance, underlining the state's commitment to public welfare and prosperity. The ceremony involved placing symbolic budget copies at the feet of Goddess

Kanaka Durga, with officials praying for the smooth and effective implementation of the upcoming budget. The puja was conducted according to traditional scriptures, emphasizing the alignment of divine blessings with administrative duties and public development. The ritual also aimed to invoke prosperity, stability, and positive outcomes for the people of Andhra Pradesh through careful budget execution.

Senior officers participating in the ceremony included Sri Piyush Kumar (IAS), Principal Finance Secretary (PFS); Sri D. Ronald Rose (IAS),



Secretary of the Finance Department; Sri Suraj Ganore (IAS); and Sri Gautam Allada (IA&AS). Their presence highlighted the significance

of the ritual in fostering a harmonious integration between culture and governance.

Temple Executive Officer Sri Sheena Nayak warmly welcomed the visiting officials and escorted them to the sanctum sanctorum of the goddess. Following the completion of the puja, priests offered tirtha prasadam to the officials, symbolizing blessings and goodwill. The visiting officers also received guidance and blessings from Vedic scholars, who wished that the state budget, designed to strengthen public welfare, would be implemented effectively

and benefit all citizens.

The ceremony underscored the state's deep respect for cultural traditions, even within modern administrative practices. By incorporating spiritual rituals into governance, Andhra Pradesh demonstrates a holistic approach to planning and decision-making, acknowledging that prosperity and development are strengthened when aligned with ethical and cultural values.

Officials expressed their gratitude for the warm reception and the opportunity to seek divine guidance before one of the most signifi-

cant annual financial exercises of the state. The event was a symbolic affirmation of the government's focus on public welfare, state development, and the integration of traditional values into contemporary administrative practices. The Special Budget Puja at Indrakeeladri thus serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of culture, faith, and community in shaping policy decisions, ensuring that the forthcoming budget not only reflects economic priorities but also the aspirations and well-being of Andhra Pradesh's citizens.

ATCHANNAIDU Presents 53,752 Crore Agricultural Budget

Amaravati, February 14 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister K. Kinjarapu Atchannaaidu on Saturday presented the state's 2026-27 agricultural and allied sectors budget of 53,752.12 crore in the Assembly, under the flagship "Rythanna Meekosam" (For the Farmer) initiative. Atchannaaidu emphasized that the government aims to make farmers the "king" of the sector and strengthen rural economies by making agriculture highly profitable.

Speaking in the Assembly, Atchannaaidu outlined five key pillars—water security, demand-driven crops, AgriTech, food processing, and government support—expected to rejuvenate the state's agriculture. Under the Swarna Andhra-2047 vision, modern technologies including AI, IoT, drones, robotics, and satellite-based systems will be leveraged to increase farmer incomes.

He highlighted the government's focus on promoting high-nutrient, pesticide-free crops, reducing post-harvest losses, providing as-



secured prices, and encouraging natural farming practices. Special measures include early sowing for Kharif crops and mitigating cyclone impact in Krishna and Godavari delta regions. Sector-wise allocations under Atchannaaidu's leadership include:

- Agriculture: 12,152.32 crore for seeds, fertilizers, crop insurance, and mechanization, benefiting over 46.86 lakh farmer families under schemes like PM-Kisan.
- Horticulture: 1,123.86 crore to boost high-value crops, inter-crops like cocoa, and expand micro-irrigation.
- Sericulture: 95.87 crore to support silk farmers.
- Agricultural Marketing: 515.39 crore to stabilize prices, modernize farmer markets, and launch digital/mobile platforms.
- Cooperatives & Allied Sectors: 209.30 crore for PACS modernization and storage.
- Animal Husbandry: 1,121.26 crore for livestock health, fodder supply, and Go-Aadhaar identification.
- Fisheries: 523.53 crore for marine and freshwater development, aquaculture parks, and subsidies.
- Agri-Education & Research: Over 800 crore for universities including Acharya

N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, Dr. YSR Horticultural University, and Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University.

• Rural Power & Employment: 13,722 crore for free agricultural electricity and 500 crore under VB-G RAMG for employment in agriculture-related activities. Atchannaaidu stressed that profitable agriculture is key to a robust rural economy and that Andhra Pradesh is set to become a model state for sustainable, high-value, and tech-driven farming. Total Budget Proposal for Agriculture & Allied Sectors (2026-27): 53,752.12 crore.

AP to Emerge as Global Tourism Hub: Kandula Durgesh

Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh is set to establish itself as a world-class tourism destination, announced Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Cinematography, Kandula Durgesh, during a media briefing at the Assembly on Saturday. Expressing delight over the allocation of 439 crore for tourism and cultural sectors in the 2026-27 state budget, the minister outlined ambitious plans for branding, promotion, marketing, and hosting events to attract visitors and investments.

Minister Durgesh praised the budget, prepared under the guidance of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and with the support of Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, describing it as a comprehensive blueprint for the state's progress. He thanked Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, Agriculture Minister Achennaaidu, and Technology Minister Naralokesh for their contributions, emphasizing that the budget aligns with public aspirations and ongoing reforms.

Highlighting the gov-



ernment's achievements since taking office, Durgesh noted that the new tourism policy for 2024-29, along with industrial status granted to the sector, has been transformative. In the past year and a half, roadshows and regional investor summits across the country have attracted investments worth 20,088 crore, generating approximately 1,22,637 employment opportunities. Projects valued at 6,681 crore are currently under implementation statewide.

To boost tourism infrastructure, seven anchor hubs will be established across Visakhapatnam, Araku, Rajamahendravaram, Amaravati, Srisailem, Gandikota, and Tirupati. Over 25 thematic circuits are being

developed to ensure visitors explore beyond pilgrimage spots. The state plans to host more than 60 festivals, including Visakha Utsav, Anakapalli Utsav, Araku Utsav, Gandikota Utsav, and Amaravati Avakaya Festival, throughout the year to strengthen AP's brand and increase inbound tourism.

Durgesh also confirmed 60 crore has been allocated for preliminary works for the 2027 Godavari Pushkaralu and expressed confidence in receiving further central assistance. He acknowledged support from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Tourism and Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, noting 428 crore in central grants for eight projects

have already been sanctioned.

In addition, the government is enhancing wellness centers, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism alongside traditional hotels and resorts. Investments in rural and link roads, e-buses under the 'Purvodaya' scheme in Visakhapatnam and Araku, and increasing hotel room capacity to 50,000 in the next three years were highlighted.

Concluding with the slogan "Healthy, Wealthy, Happy," Minister Durgesh reaffirmed the coalition government's commitment to transforming Andhra Pradesh into a global tourism destination and a key engine of the state's economic growth.

AP Budget 2026 27 a Vision for Welfare – Kollu Ravindra

Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government has unveiled its 2026 27 state budget, which officials describe as a comprehensive vision document for the state's development and welfare. Highlighting the coalition government's commitment to making Andhra Pradesh a leader in all sectors, the budget emphasizes the upliftment of marginalized communities, education, healthcare, and rural development.

The budget allocates a total of 91,527 crore for welfare programs, reflecting a strong focus on supporting the economically weaker sections of society. Specific allocations include 51,000 crore for BC welfare, 20,644 crore for SC welfare, 9,190 crore for ST welfare, 6,090 crore for minority welfare, and 4,582 crore for women's welfare. Officials emphasized that this unprecedented focus demonstrates the government's dedication to inclusive development and the well-being of the underprivileged.

In addition to social welfare, the budget prioritizes education, with



32,308 crore allocated to school and higher education. The Panchayati Raj department receives 22,942 crore, underlining the government's commitment to rural development and grassroots governance. Healthcare and medical services are allotted 19,306 crore, aimed at ensuring better access and quality care for the state's economically vulnerable population.

The budget is designed in alignment with the "Vision 2047" framework, intended to guide Andhra Pradesh toward sustainable and multi-sectoral growth. Officials highlighted

that the allocation strategy reflects careful planning to balance welfare with infrastructure, agriculture, industry, and water resource development. By addressing all sectors comprehensively, the government aims to foster holistic growth and long-term prosperity.

Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, said the budget provides a clear roadmap for the state's future, stating that it positions Andhra Pradesh for all-round progress. "The 2026 27 budget is designed to shape the future of five crore Andhra residents," he

said, adding that it prioritizes historically neglected areas and ensures funds are directed where they are most needed. The government claims that the budget's combination of welfare allocations, infrastructure investment, and sector-specific support makes it a transformative financial plan, addressing both immediate social needs and long-term developmental goals. It is expected to accelerate inclusive growth, improve living standards, and strengthen the state's position as a model for governance in India.

AP 2026-27 Budget Focuses on Roads, Infrastructure, and Inclusive Development

Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh's 2026 27 budget, presented by Minister for Roads, Buildings, Investments, and Infrastructure B.C. Janardhan Reddy, aims to provide a strong impetus to the state's development while ensuring balanced growth across sectors and communities. The budget emphasizes significant allocations for infrastructure, roads, public welfare, and investment promotion, marking a decisive step toward comprehensive state progress.

A total of 9,856 crore has been allocated for transport, roads, and building projects. The minister highlighted that past road conditions had caused major difficulties for citizens, but in just nine months under the coalition government, the state has been made pothole-free. In the last year alone, 3,000 crore was invested in road development—the highest allocation in the history of unified Andhra Pradesh. The government intends to continue improving road quality and connectivity across the state in the coming days.



To further promote investments and infrastructure, 1,280 crore has been earmarked. Minister Janardhan Reddy noted that over the past 20 months, improved infrastructure has strengthened investor confidence. Under Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, Andhra Pradesh is now emerging as a prime destination for global investment, achieving 25% of national investment inflows despite having only 25% of the country's population. The budget also pri-

oritizes inclusive growth. 91,000 crore has been set aside for welfare schemes aimed at supporting the underprivileged, while 30,000 crore has been allocated to develop Rayalaseema into a global horticulture hub, reflecting the government's commitment to regional and comprehensive development.

Minister Janardhan Reddy emphasized that the budget's balanced allocations across development and welfare sectors demonstrate the coalition government's dedication to equitable

growth. He reiterated that sustainable, reliable, and strong governance under Chandrababu Naidu remains the foundation for achieving holistic progress in Andhra Pradesh.

The 2026 27 budget underscores the government's vision of combining infrastructure development, investment promotion, and social welfare to transform Andhra Pradesh into a model state with modern facilities, improved connectivity, and a robust economic environment.

AP Charts Vision to Become Global Tourism Hub at National Travel Mart 2026

Visakhapatnam, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Visakhapatnam: The Andhra Pradesh government, in collaboration with the Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), successfully concluded the National Travel Mart 2026 at the V Convention Center in Visakhapatnam on February 13-14. The two-day event showcased the state's tourism potential and laid out strategic plans to elevate Andhra Pradesh to a global travel destination.

The second day featured high-level panel discussions on key aspects of tourism development, focusing on seven anchor hubs—Visakhapatnam, Araku, Rajahmundry, Amaravati, Srisaillam, Gandikota, and Tirupati. Officials unveiled strategies to enhance the tourism ecosystem, em-

phasizing both spiritual and cultural experiences. Special attention was given to developing pilgrimage centers like Srisaillam with world-class infrastructure while enriching visitors' experiences through storytelling and improved facilities.

Panels highlighted women's participation in tourism, promoting women-led homestays and female guides to foster inclusive development. Plans were also discussed to train tribal youth in Araku as tour guides, turning homestays into employment opportunities. The Krishna Valley was proposed as a key Buddhist tourism hub, combining heritage and community engagement.

Tourism Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain and ADTOI representatives unveiled the "Andhra Pradesh Tourism Vision 2047" road-



map. Key initiatives include granting industrial status to the tourism sector to attract investment, integrating artificial intelligence into tourism services, and creating dedicated bureaus for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE). To position the state as a top wedding destination, campaigns such as "Wed in Andhra" and innovative events like the Andhra Wedding Mart were announced.

During the closing session, titled "ADTOI Chapter Speaks," dele-

gates from various states shared their experiences, emphasizing collaborative opportunities between tourism entrepreneurs and tour operators. State officials expressed optimism that these initiatives would bring revolutionary changes to Andhra Pradesh's tourism sector and contribute to economic growth.

Minister Kandula Durgesh expressed his satisfaction with the successful conclusion of the National Travel Mart, emphasizing the government's commit-

ment to showcasing Andhra Pradesh's diverse tourism assets to both domestic and international travelers. He reiterated that the state is determined to emerge as a global tourism hub in the near future.

The event marks a significant step in Andhra Pradesh's roadmap to developing sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality tourism infrastructure, while promoting the state as a prime destination for culture, spirituality, weddings, and MICE tourism.

Yanamala Ramakrishnudu Hails AP Budget as People Centric



Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Amaravati: TDP Politburo member and former Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnudu on Saturday lauded the state's 2026-27 Annual Budget, calling it a comprehensive plan that addresses citizens' aspirations while maintaining fiscal discipline. Yanamala said the budget strikes a balance between growth priorities and social justice, expressing optimism about the state's economic future under the current fiscal strategy.

According to Yanamala, the budget goes beyond mere numerical allocations and embodies a thoughtful effort to translate public expectations into tangible benefits. He highlighted that the government has focused on long term stability by emphasising

debt management and financial discipline, which he believes will help steer Andhra Pradesh out of previous financial stress.

"We hope that the allocations made in this budget will fulfil the aspirations of the people," Yanamala said. He specifically pointed to measures aimed at controlling debt and reducing interest burdens, which he believes are key to restoring fiscal health and improving the state's economic standing.

Praise was also extended to the budget's emphasis on industry, investments, and development initiatives, which the senior leader called "positive steps" toward enhancing job creation and economic activity across sectors. He noted that focusing on growth engines such as infrastructure and business friendly policies

could attract both domestic and global investment, fostering sustainable economic expansion. In addition to economic priorities, Yanamala appreciated the budget's tilt toward social justice, highlighting that targeted allocations for welfare segments can help uplift marginalized communities and bridge development gaps. While he did not elaborate on specific schemes, he underlined that the budget's orientation toward equity is a welcomed direction.

Overall, the former finance minister expressed confidence that the Andhra Pradesh budget for 2026-27 lays a strong foundation for growth, stability, and inclusive development, and he urged stakeholders to back the state government's fiscal roadmap as it moves forward with implementation.

AP Budget a "Numbers Illusion," YSRCP MLCs Criticize Allocations

Velagapudi, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) Legislative Council members on Saturday termed the Andhra Pradesh 2026-27 State Annual Budget a "numbers illusion," alleging that it prioritizes political glorification over addressing citizens' concerns. Speaking at the Assembly media point, Opposition Leader Botsa Satyanarayana, along with MLCs Parvathaneni Chandrasekhar Reddy, Varudu Kalyani, Kalpalatha Reddy, Kumbha Ravibabu, and PDF MLC Borra Gopimurthy, criticized the 3.32 lakh crore budget as unrealistic and politically driven.

The YSRCP leaders alleged that the budget speech repeatedly mentioned top leaders instead of focusing on the public, with the Chief Minister referred to nearly 100 times, Lokesh 75-80 times, and Pawan Kalyan about 20 times. They highlighted that farmers bore heavy losses last year, with no Minimum Support Price (MSP) provided for

crops like tobacco, chilli, mango, and jowar, eroding their confidence in government support. They also questioned the disappearance of zero-interest loans for DWCRAs groups, noting that claims to create entrepreneurs in every household were unsubstantiated.

The MLCs flagged significant discrepancies in debt figures, stating that while the budget claims state debt at 9.46 lakh crore, YSRCP records show borrowings of only 3.21 lakh crore during their tenure. They highlighted a deficit of about 97-98 thousand crore, nearly one-third of the budget, criticizing the government for borrowing heavily without corresponding wealth creation. They also pointed out zero allocations for unemployment allowances and the promised Aadabidda Nidhi of 1,500 per month for around 1.2 crore women. Key welfare schemes like Cheyutha, Asara, and zero-interest loans were reportedly scrapped, with replacement programs left un-



funded. Fee reimbursement dues of 8,500 crore remain pending, and no tenant farmers received Rythu Bharosa payments in two years despite card issuance.

YSRCP leaders further claimed that the budget fails to honor signed bonds and promises to households. Employees' PRC, DA arrears, and IR remain

unpaid, and despite stated welfare allocations for police, no meaningful funding was provided. They labeled the government a "double cheating government" rather than a double-engine administration, accusing it of neglecting farmers, women, unemployed citizens, and employees.

Concluding their re-

marks, the YSRCP MLCs asserted that the budget relies on falsehoods and imaginary projections, and they vowed to hold the government accountable and expose the discrepancies in the Legislative Council, demanding transparency and genuine development for the state's five crore residents.

Lokesh Says AP Budget Focuses on Growth, Welfare



Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh IT and Education Minister Nara Lokesh on Saturday welcomed the state's 2026-27 Annual Budget, describing it as a balanced and forward looking financial plan that prioritises both development and welfare. Speaking after the budget was presented in the state assembly by Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, Lokesh highlighted key aspects of the budget that he said would strengthen the state's economic base and improve quality of life for its citizens.

Lokesh said the budget reflects a clear focus on inclusive growth, emphasising both infrastructure spending and social support measures.

According to the minister, allocations across sectors such as education, health, agriculture, and industry convey a strong message that the government is commit-

ted to uplifting all sections of society and creating opportunities for youth and entrepreneurs. He pointed out that the 3.32 lakh crore budget aims to fulfil public aspirations while ensuring responsible financial management. The minister also noted that the budget's emphasis on welfare schemes directly addresses the needs of vulnerable groups. He said that targeted support for farmers, women, and students—through enhanced allocations for schemes such as financial aid for agriculture families and expanded education support—underscores the government's intent to bridge development gaps and promote social equity.

Lokesh highlighted the government's commitment to creating a conducive environment for investment and economic expansion. He said that strategic spending on infrastructure projects and emerg-

ing sectors would attract private investment, generate jobs, and strengthen the state's competitiveness. This, he added, aligns with the broader vision of transforming Andhra Pradesh into a business friendly state with robust growth potential.

Assessing the budget as a whole, Lokesh described it as not just a statement of numbers but a roadmap designed to support sustainable development, boost investor confidence, and enhance public welfare. He expressed confidence that the budget would promote balanced progress across urban and rural areas alike.

The minister urged citizens and stakeholders to view the budget as a comprehensive strategy for long term growth, reaffirming the government's commitment to transparency and accountability in implementation of the budgetary commitments.

Agriculture Budget Exposes Naidu's Failed Governance - Kannababu

Tadepalli, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Tadepalli: Former Agriculture Minister Kurasala Kannababu on Saturday criticized the Andhra Pradesh government for failing farmers and said the state's 2026-27 agriculture budget itself exposes "derailed governance." Speaking at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, Kannababu accused the coalition government of abandoning farmers while blaming the previous regime, calling its record a "bitter experience." He alleged that several YSRCP-era schemes were merely renamed but poorly implemented, with little support extended to families of farmers who died by suicide.

Kannababu questioned the government's claim of "bitter experience," asking whether implementing Rythu Bharosa, provid-

ing free crop insurance, and supplying immediate inputs after natural disasters during Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure were bitter experiences—or whether scrapping these benefits after assuming power constituted the real hardship. He accused the government of ignoring price collapses in crops like onion, turmeric, chilli, tomato, mango, maize, and Bengal gram, leaving farmers in distress.

He criticized the handling of Rythu Bharosa Kendras, saying renamed kiosks are poorly maintained and fertilizer supply is inconsistent, forcing farmers to queue for days or buy from the black market. Despite these challenges, the government claims fertilizer and pesticide usage is declining. Kannababu said the budget allocates 6,600 crore for Annadata Sukhibhava,



but coverage for 46 lakh farmers falls short of the required 10,200 crore, leaving tenant farmers entirely excluded.

Highlighting discrepancies in support measures, he said annual allocations for price stabilization dropped from 3,000 crore under YSRCP to 300 crore. Input subsidies, previously credited on time, are now only 310 crore, and free crop insurance

support has fallen from nearly 5,000 crore to 250 crore. Interest-free crop loans are promised with 250 crore, but he questioned whether they were disbursed at all.

Kannababu also criticized the proposal for the Rayalaseema Global Horticulture Hub costing 1 lakh crore, questioning the state's ability to fund it amid unmet commitments like fee reimbursements and medi-

cal college support.

Kannababu further condemned the PPP model for Rythu Bazars, arguing it undermines farmers' interests and favors corporates. He cited government data showing 394 farmer suicides last year, over one per day, and said no meaningful budget support was provided for affected families. He accused the government of favoring real estate and corporate sectors while neglecting job creation, welfare schemes like Aadabidda Nidhi, and unemployment allowances.

Concluding his remarks, Kannababu asserted that governance in Andhra Pradesh has failed across rural and urban sectors, with policies disconnected from ground realities, and that the agriculture budget highlights the coalition government's neglect of farmers and rural communities.

Women's Inter-University Netball Tournament Begins

Vijayawada, 14 February 2026 | TPN Bureau

The much-anticipated All India Inter-University Netball (Women) Tournament 2025-26 commenced today at Maris Stella College, Vijayawada, organized by Krishna University, Machilipatnam, and running from 14th to 18th February. The competition follows a knock-out cum league format under the supervision of the Netball Association of India, strictly adhering to its rules and regulations.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by eminent dignitaries including Sri M. Ram Prasad

Reddy, Minister for Transport, Sports and Youth Services, Government of Andhra Pradesh; Sri G. Rammohan, MLA, Vijayawada East; Smt. D. Aparna, Corporator, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation; Sister Dr. Inyasamma, Principal of Maris Stella College; and officials from Krishna University including Vice-Chancellor Prof. K. Ramji, Registrar (I/c) Prof. N. Usha, and Rector (I/c) Prof. Mandava Basaveswararao. Representing the Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi, Dr. Vishnu Chaudhari, Director of Sports, Madhav University, Rajasthan,



also attended the event. Sri Akash Bathra served as the Chief Referee of the tournament.

During his welcome address, Prof. K. Ramji highlighted Krishna University's ongoing com-

mitment to promoting sports alongside academics across its affiliated colleges.

The ceremonial proceedings featured a colorful march past by all 55 participating

teams, with Maris Stella College students leading the tricolor parade, followed by the host university contingent. Students from St. John's School, Gannavaram, added grandeur with a melo-

ous band performance. The Association of Indian Universities flag was hoisted by Minister Sri M. Ram Prasad Reddy, while Miss Mounika of Krishna University administered the sports oath on behalf of all par-

ticipants. The national flag was hoisted by Sri G. Rammohan, MLA, who formally declared the tournament open.

In his address, the Minister praised the spirit and talent of women athletes, emphasizing

that "Netball is more than a game - it is empowerment, confidence, and friendship. These amazing players inspire us with their skills and sportsmanship."

The tournament promises to be a showcase of exceptional talent, teamwork, and determination, highlighting the values of discipline, unity, and women empowerment through sports. Following the ceremony, managers, coaches, and players from all teams were formally introduced to the guests, marking a grand start to the five-day sporting extravaganza.



Unified Forum Discusses Pending Employee Issues in Vijayawada

Vijayawada, 14 February 2026 | TPN Bureau

A large-scale meeting of the All India Unified Forum of Government Employee Associations was held today at the Andhra Pradesh Government Employees Association State Office, Vidyadharapuram, Vijayawada. The meeting focused on reviewing issues previously raised with the government and discussing possible solutions.

Addressing the gathering, Forum Chairman Sri K.R. Suryanarayana expressed dissatisfaction over the delay in constituting the 12th PRC Commission, noting that over 30 months have passed since its due date. He urged the government to immediately establish a three-member commission under a retired judge and announce an interim relief package to ad-

dress employees' longstanding concerns.

The meeting also discussed pending dues, noting that representatives of 175 MLAs and 58 Legislative Council members had been approached previously on behalf of government employees. The forum requested the state assembly to announce a policy decision for clearing all pending payments. It suggested that pending dues could alternatively be settled by allocating land to employees, which would benefit both government employees and construction workers, providing financial gains through housing initiatives.

The Revised Pension Rules 2026 Draft formed a major part of the discussions. Forum members conveyed employees' concerns, and officials assured that the draft would be reviewed again to make it

more beneficial for government teachers and staff.

Key demands reiterated during the meeting included:

1. Cancellation of CPS/GPS and revival of OCS
2. Immediate implementation of the 12th PRC and timely DA payments
3. Regularization of NMR, contract, and outsourced employees
4. Implementation of Additional Quantum of Pension for pensioners
5. Better Employees' Health Scheme
6. Allocation of housing plots for employees and teachers
7. Permanent resolution of Teachers Unified Service Rules issues for improved education systems

Participants expressed concern over workload pressure on village and ward secre-

tariat employees, which has led to health risks and fatalities. They urged the government to reduce work pressure and issue clear guidelines to prevent employee stress. It was decided that the next unified forum meeting will be held in the second week of March, where comprehensive discussions will take place and future actions will be determined. A special committee was proposed to work closely with the government for prompt solutions.

The meeting was attended by Secretary General Baji Parthan, Co-Chairman K. Harikrishna, APGEA Director M. Ramesh Kumar, Vice-Chairpersons Kedarshwar Rao, Venkateswara Reddy, Karim Rajeshwar Rao, Pensioners Association President P. Ramachandra Reddy, KV Raman, and other association members.

Mahashivaratri Celebrations at Kanaka Durga Temple, Indrakeeladri



Vijayawada, 15.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

The renowned Sri Durga Malleshwara Swamy Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada is set to host grand Mahashivaratri celebrations on Sunday, February 15, 2026. Devotees from across Andhra Pradesh are expected to participate in the series of sacred rituals and festivities, marking one of the most significant occasions in the Hindu calendar.

The day-long celebrations will commence with Trikala Abhishekam (ritual baths) in the morning, beginning at 6:00 AM and continuing until 9:00 AM. This will be followed by another session of ab-

hishekam from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, ensuring that the deity is worshipped throughout the morning hours with traditional Vedic rites. In the afternoon, the sacred rituals will resume from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM, allowing devotees to witness and participate in the ceremonial offerings.

The evening schedule will be highlighted by Mahayasa at 9:00 PM, an elaborate and solemn ritual invoking divine energies and blessings. Following this, the Lingodbhava Kalabhishekam will be performed, commemorating the cosmic emergence of Lord Shiva. The evening rituals will culminate with Maha Nivedana (offering of food), Harathi (waving of lamps), and

Mantrapushpam (offering of flowers with chants), creating a spiritually immersive experience for devotees.

One of the key highlights of the celebrations will be the Divine Leela Kalyanotsavam of Sri Ganga Parvati (Durga) with Malleshwara Swamy, symbolizing the celestial wedding of the deities. The sacred wedding will be conducted with traditional Vedic rites, and devotees wishing to participate in the Arjita Seva (paid service) can do so for a fee of 1,116 per person. The wedding ceremony will take place at the temple premises, with devotees receiving prasadam consisting of Shesha Vastra (1), Ravik (1), and

Sri Chakra Laddu (1). Tickets for participation can be obtained at the temple's Arjita Seva counter or through the official temple website at www.kanakadurgamma.org.

The temple administration has invited devotees to partake in these spiritual festivities, which combine devotional fervor, elaborate rituals, and community participation. With meticulous arrangements in place, the Mahashivaratri celebrations at Kanaka Durga Temple promise to be a deeply sacred and memorable occasion for all attendees, reinforcing the enduring religious and cultural significance of Indrakeeladri as a pilgrimage center.

V.K. Seena Nayak Conducts Surprise Bus Inspection at Indrakeeladri



Vijayawada, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

In a proactive move to enhance devotee services, Executive Officer V.K. Seena Nayak of the Sri Durga Malleshwara Swamy Devasthanam conducted a surprise inspection of temple buses and facilities at Indrakeeladri on Saturday. The inspection aimed to ensure smooth transportation and overall convenience for devotees visiting the temple.

The exercise began with a detailed check of the Durga Snanaghata areas, where Nayak examined cleanliness, arrangements, and operational standards. Following this, he personally boarded one of the temple's free buses to inspect services on the route up the hill. This hands-on approach al-

lowed the EO to evaluate seating, cleanliness, and other facilities provided to the pilgrims.

During the bus journey, Nayak interacted directly with devotees, asking for feedback on temple transportation services, staff behavior, and any difficulties faced during travel. Many devotees expressed satisfaction with the services, while also offering suggestions for further improvements. The EO emphasized the importance of listening to devotees' experiences to enhance service quality.

Nayak also instructed the temple transport staff to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene on all buses and to treat pilgrims respectfully at all times. He advised running additional trips during peak hours to pre-

vent overcrowding and ensure that devotees do not face unnecessary delays.

The inspection highlighted the temple administration's commitment to providing safe, comfortable, and efficient transport for pilgrims. Nayak underscored that continuous monitoring and prompt action on any reported inconvenience are key to maintaining high service standards.

"Devasthanam staff must ensure that devotees have a smooth and pleasant travel experience. Any issues observed must be immediately reported and resolved," Nayak stated. He added that the temple is constantly working on improving facilities to meet the growing expectations of pilgrims and

enhance their overall experience at Indrakeeladri.

Officials confirmed that such surprise inspections are part of an ongoing initiative to upgrade temple services, ensuring that transportation, seating, and other amenities meet the highest standards of comfort and safety. The EO's field-level engagement reflects the administration's hands-on approach to improving devotee satisfaction and maintaining Indrakeeladri's reputation as a well-managed pilgrimage center.

With proactive supervision and direct feedback mechanisms, the temple administration aims to create a seamless experience for all visitors, combining devotion with convenience and safety.

AP Liquor Scam: CID Registers Another Case



Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh liquor scam investigation has taken another significant turn with the Crime Investigation Department (CID) registering a fresh case related to alleged irregularities in the transport tenders for liquor supply. Officials said the latest case was filed after preliminary findings suggested possible fraud in the tenders issued to transport liquor from government depots to state run retail outlets, potentially causing financial loss to the government.

According to CID sources, the irregularities in the transportation contracts are estimated

to involve financial discrepancies ranging between 200 crore and 400 crore. Investigators believe that inflated charges and irregularities in the tendering process may have led to serious fiscal damage to the state treasury. The probe into this aspect of the liquor policy has now been formally recorded as a separate case, with investigative responsibility entrusted to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) Chief S.V. Rajasekhar Babu. The AP liquor scam has been a high profile case drawing intense media and political attention, with alleged multi crore irregularities in the excise department under scrutiny. Au-

thorities have estimated that total illegal transactions in the broader scam may exceed 3,500 crore, and the case remains under concurrent investigation by both the CID and the Enforcement Directorate. In a related development, the Supreme Court recently rejected the bail petition of one of the key accused, Raj Kesireddy, who is considered a principal figure in the case. The Supreme Court's remarks also touched on the alleged involvement of political figures and officials, underlining the seriousness with which the judiciary is handling the matter.

So far, authorities have issued notices to multiple individuals and ar-

rested several suspects in connection with the liquor scandal. Investigators have also indicated that a number of accused are believed to have fled abroad and their whereabouts are being actively pursued by law enforcement.

As the probe continues, political reactions have intensified, with parties on both sides accusing each other of misuse of power and politicization of the investigation. Meanwhile, the public awaits further updates on the multiple facets of this sprawling case that combines alleged financial fraud, administrative lapses, and high stakes political implications.

Vasamsetti Subash Pays Tribute to Pulwama Martyrs

Ramachandrapuram, 14 February 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Labour Minister Vasamsetti Subash today paid rich tributes to the brave soldiers who lost their lives in the Pulwama terror attack, describing their sacrifice as a permanent and revered part of India's history. Speaking at a solemn event, Minister Subash expressed profound sorrow over the tragic loss and honoured the courage of the martyrs who laid down their lives in service of the nation.

Minister Vasamsetti Subash highlighted that



the Pulwama attack remains a dark chapter in India's history, a shocking incident that shook the entire nation. He said the selfless sacrifice of these soldiers will always be remembered as an enduring inspiration for every Indian, especially the younger generation. "The valour, determination, and patriotism displayed by our armed forces are unmatched. Their dedication to protecting the country's integrity and security is beyond measure," he said.

Reiterating the government's commitment to supporting the fami-

lies of the martyrs, Vasamsetti Subash assured that the state would continue to provide assistance to the bereaved families and ensure that their sacrifices are never in vain. "Every soldier who lays down their life for the nation embodies courage, honour, and devotion. The government stands firmly beside their families, recognizing their sacrifices and ensuring that their heroism is always remembered," he said.

Minister Subash also emphasized that the bravery of Pulwama martyrs serves as a

source of inspiration for future generations, instilling a sense of patriotism, unity, and responsibility among citizens. He called upon everyone to remember the martyrs' dedication to the nation and to honour their memory through respect, solidarity, and national pride.

In his tribute, Vasamsetti Subash prayed for the eternal peace of the souls of the martyrs and expressed deep condolences to the families, urging the people of Andhra Pradesh and across India to unite in remembrance of their supreme sacrifice. He

stressed that such courage and heroism are invaluable to the nation and must be celebrated as a legacy for future generations.

Concluding his address, the minister paid homage to the bravery of the soldiers and expressed gratitude to all members of the armed forces who continue to serve tirelessly. He ended the event with the patriotic slogans: "Jai Hind! Jai Jawan!", urging everyone to uphold the spirit of courage, sacrifice, and dedication exemplified by the Pulwama martyrs.

Unauthorized Construction Raises Concerns in Pidimgoyya, East Godavari

East Godavari, 14 February 2026 | TPN Bureau

An unauthorized multi-storey construction in Pidimgoyya Panchayat, Rajahmundry Rural Mandal, has sparked controversy after the Panchayat Secretary issued a formal notice to the concerned builder. The notice claims that P.J. Constructions, while permitted by the Rajahmundry Urban Development Authority (RUDA) to build up to four floors, had reportedly added an additional floor without approval. Authorities have ordered an immediate halt to construction and demanded submission of valid legal permissions, warning that the extra floors must be demolished if compliance is not met.

The incident has raised questions about oversight, especially since under the secretariat system, every construction—from small huts to permanent buildings—falls under the monitoring of the Panchayat Secretary and local planning authorities. Despite RUDA granting approval for only four floors, construction beyond the sanctioned limit contin-



ued unchecked, prompting concerns over administrative negligence. Residents note that the notice was issued only after the transfer of the previous Panchayat Secretary, suggesting that earlier inaction may have allowed violations to persist.

The issue also highlights the low response rate to government regularization schemes, such as the Building Penalization Scheme (BPS) and Layout Regularization Scheme (LRS). While these programs invite applications to regularize unauthorized constructions, officials admit that only about 30-40% of eligible property owners take advantage of them. Experts suggest that while the government encourages

regularization, the simultaneous failure to control unauthorized construction reflects gaps in enforcement.

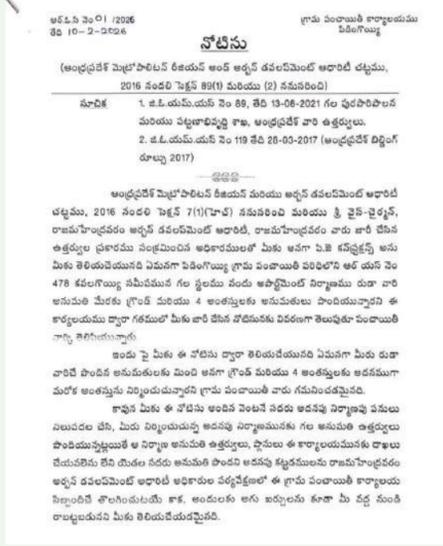
Concerns have also been raised over loss of potential revenue, including Transferable Development Rights (TDR) funds, which the government could have earned from properly sanctioned construction. Critics argue that RUDA and Panchayat negligence not only harms the public exchequer but also undermines fairness for those adhering to the law.

Local residents are now demanding a joint inquiry by RUDA and the Panchayat and strict disciplinary action against officials responsible for lapses. They stress that transparent

and consistent enforce-

ment is essential, emphasizing that law and regulations must apply equally to all.

Observers say that proactive monitoring, rather than reactive notices after officer transfers, is critical to prevent violations and maintain public trust. They insist that encouraging legal construction and preventing unauthorized buildings is the benchmark of effective local governance.



KVPS District Chief Secretary K. Krantibabu Slams AP Budget Over Dalit Welfare Shortfalls

Bhimavaram, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

KVPS District Chief Secretary K. Krantibabu has strongly criticized the Andhra Pradesh state budget presented by Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, alleging severe neglect of Dalit welfare and public welfare initiatives. According to Krantibabu, while the budget allocates ₹20,644 crore for Scheduled Caste (SC) welfare, more than ₹11,700 crore is already directed toward schemes such as NTR Bharosa and Talli Ki Vandana, leaving only a limited portion for actual Dalit development programs.

He highlighted that tens of thousands of Dalit unemployed youth and women have applied for SC Corporation loans, and questioned how the remaining funds would be effectively used to support their economic and social development. "The government must clarify how these allocations will promote the growth of Dalit communities and their settlements," Krantibabu said.

The KVPS official also pointed out discrepancies between last year's budget allocations and actual expenditure. While the previous budget had allocated ₹18,497 crore, only ₹16,830 crore was spent, leaving ₹1,667

crore unutilized. Adding these unspent funds to the current budget, he argued, results in a mere additional ₹480 crore for Dalit welfare, which he considers grossly insufficient. Furthermore, Krantibabu claimed that more than half of these funds are directed toward the implementation of the Super Six schemes, further limiting benefits for Dalits.

Under the SC/ST Sub-Plan Act, 2013, funds should be allocated in proportion to the population, meaning Dalits are entitled to over ₹5,000 crore. However, the current budget allocates only about 6 percent, according to Krantibabu. He criticized Minister Keshav for devoting the budget speech largely to praising corporates, investors, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while failing to address critical issues such as housing for the poor, employment generation, and social welfare.

"The budget offers nothing substantial for Dalits," Krantibabu said, demanding that the government immediately re-start and implement the land purchase scheme to support marginalized communities. He emphasized that meaningful attention to the needs of the poor and unemployed is essential to en-



sure equitable development in Andhra Pradesh.

Krantibabu's statement underscores growing concerns among social activists and community leaders that the current financial plan prioritizes corporate investment over public welfare, particularly for vulnerable groups such as Dalits. He has called on the state government to take immediate corrective measures to ensure that budget allocations fulfill their intended purpose and promote inclusive growth.

Nadendla Manohar Praises Budget's Development Focus



Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Nadendla Manohar welcomed the 2026 27 state budget, saying it provides a solid roadmap for comprehensive development and welfare. While speaking to the media, Manohar highlighted the government's emphasis on capital expenditure, social support schemes, and expansion of core services for the people.

The minister noted that the budget's focus on strong infrastructure and asset creation reflects a shift toward long-term economic stability

and urban development, will help create jobs while improving living standards in both urban and rural areas. The minister emphasized that the budget's formulation demonstrates a commitment to balanced development and public welfare, adding that the state government has taken important steps to ensure support for young people, women, and marginalised communities. He highlighted the importance of ensuring that budget allocations translate into effective implementation on the ground, helping to realise the aspirations of the state's citizens.

Manohar also acknowledged that while there are areas for improvement, the overall approach to planning and prioritisation in the budget offers a reason for optimism. He urged all stakeholders to assist the government in its efforts to deliver on the promises made, particularly in sectors that impact daily life. Overall, Manohar described the 2026 27 Andhra Pradesh Budget as a positive blend of development, welfare, and fiscal discipline, echoing the government's stated aim of boosting both economic growth and quality of life for residents across the state.

Manohar also acknowledged that while there are areas for improvement, the overall approach to planning and prioritisation in the budget offers a reason for optimism. He urged all stakeholders to assist the government in its efforts to deliver on the promises made, particularly in sectors that impact daily life. Overall, Manohar described the 2026 27 Andhra Pradesh Budget as a positive blend of development, welfare, and fiscal discipline, echoing the government's stated aim of boosting both economic growth and quality of life for residents across the state.

Heritage Foods Refutes Any Link to TTD Ghee Controversy



Amaravati, 14.02.2026 | TPN Bureau

Heritage Foods Limited has strongly rejected allegations connecting it to the controversial ghee supply at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), calling the claims "baseless, defamatory and politically motivated." The company issued a clear statement on Friday, denying any involvement in supplying ghee to the temple trust between 2014 and 2019.

Addressing recent accusations made by political figures, Heritage Foods said some parties and media outlets have incorrectly linked it with Indapur Dairy, a Maharashtra based dairy that has emerged

in the broader controversy surrounding ghee supplies to the TTD. The company stated that Indapur Dairy is an entirely independent entity with no ownership, operational, or management ties to Heritage Foods.

Heritage Foods stressed that while it maintains contract manufacturing arrangements with certain dairies for products such as paneer, cheese, skimmed milk powder, and UHT milk, it has never had any contract or agreement to supply ghee to the Tirumala temple at any point in time. The company also dismissed claims that it was part of a syndicate with "five other dairies"

allegedly involved in supplying ghee, terming such assertions "complete and total lies."

In its response, Heritage Foods made it clear that the allegations are aimed at maligning its reputation, which it has built over more than three decades in the dairy business with a commitment to food safety and quality standards. The firm stressed its ISO 22001 certification and quality assurance processes as evidence of its adherence to high manufacturing norms. Heritage Foods also warned that it will pursue legal action, including defamation cases, against individuals and organisations responsi-

ble for spreading these claims. The company said it will not remain silent while "deliberate misinformation" is circulated, especially on matters that touch religious sentiments and public trust. The controversy over adulterated ghee used in temple prasadam has been a subject of intense investigation and political debate, with law enforcement agencies probing irregularities in the procurement and supply chains. However, Heritage Foods has made it unequivocally clear that it should not be linked to these allegations and any such connections are unfounded and inaccurate.

BNP's Landslide Victory Masks a More Complex Political Shift in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's February 2026 general election has delivered a resounding victory for the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which secured a commanding two-thirds majority in parliament by winning 212 of the 299 contested seats. On the surface, the outcome appears decisive and potentially stabilizing after years of political tension. However, beneath the headline result lies a far more intricate political landscape. The resurgence of Jamaat-e-Islami, the continued influence of Muhammad Yunus, and the conspicuous absence of the Awami League together signal that Bangladesh's political story is far from settled.

The BNP's return to power was widely anticipated, especially given the absence of its long-time rival, the Awami League. With the party of Sheikh Hasina sidelined due to legal and political constraints, the BNP emerged as the principal national alternative. For many voters, this election was less about enthusiastic endorsement and more about choosing the only viable mainstream option available.

Yet the nature of the victory deserves scrutiny. Voter turnout was lower than expected, suggesting that a segment of the electorate may have felt disengaged or unrepresented. In traditional Awami League strongholds, the BNP faced little organized resistance. The lack of meaningful competition in several constituencies created an electoral environment that, while procedurally smooth, lacked the vibrancy of a fully contested democratic exercise.

Perhaps the most consequential development of this election was not the BNP's majority but the remarkable performance of Jamaat-e-Islami. Historically a marginal force in parliamentary politics, Jamaat dramatically expanded its footprint, winning dozens of seats and emerging as a powerful parliamentary bloc. This marks the party's



strongest showing in decades and repositions it as a central player rather than a peripheral actor.

Jamaat's gains were particularly notable in northern and western border regions. In several constituencies, it either outperformed expectations or ran extremely close to the BNP. This geographic spread suggests that its appeal is no longer confined to isolated pockets of ideological support. Instead, the party appears to have broadened its base, including among younger voters and in university towns where its student wing has become increasingly active.

The party has also shown a strategic ability to adapt its messaging. By highlighting younger faces and promoting a more contemporary image, Jamaat has softened its public profile without necessarily altering its ideological foundations. This recalibration has allowed it to connect

with a generation that may not be as tied to the historical narratives that once limited the party's appeal.

Equally important is Jamaat's role in supporting the constitutional referendum held alongside the general election. The referendum introduced significant structural changes to Bangladesh's governance framework, including decentralization of executive authority and enhancements to parliamentary oversight. By endorsing these reforms, Jamaat positioned itself not merely as an electoral beneficiary but as an active participant in shaping the country's institutional future.

The absence of the Awami League from this election remains one of its defining features. As the party associated with Bangladesh's independence movement and decades of governance, its exclusion left a substantial ideological and political vacuum.

Supporters of secular nationalism and the party's traditional voter base found themselves without a direct vehicle for representation.

This absence had tangible consequences. Lower turnout in certain areas and reduced political debate point to an electorate that did not experience a full spectrum of choice. Democracy thrives on competition between differing visions, and this election, while orderly, lacked the balance that typically animates national contests.

For the Awami League to regain relevance, it will need to rebuild organizational structures, restore public trust, and redefine its political strategy. The challenge is formidable, particularly after years of polarization and the legal battles that have sidelined its leadership. However, its long historical roots suggest that it cannot be counted out permanently. Hovering over this entire

transition is the figure of Muhammad Yunus. The Nobel laureate and former caretaker leader played a pivotal role in overseeing the political transition and shaping the constitutional reforms put before voters. His influence extended beyond administrative stewardship; he was central in drafting and promoting the structural changes that will guide governance in the coming years.

The referendum itself generated debate. Combining constitutional reform with a general election is unusual and raised concerns about whether voters fully understood the breadth of the proposed changes. Some provisions adjust the balance of power between executive and legislative branches, while others introduce broader institutional modifications. Supporters argue these reforms will prevent excessive centralization and strengthen democratic accountability.

Critics contend that the process lacked sufficient public deliberation.

Yunus's imprint is also visible in economic policy shifts initiated during the caretaker period. Negotiations over trade partnerships and import diversification signaled a willingness to recalibrate Bangladesh's economic alignments. While such moves may reflect strategic diversification, they have also sparked debate over the proper scope of authority for a transitional administration.

For neighboring India, the new political landscape presents both opportunity and uncertainty. Historically, relations between Dhaka and New Delhi have fluctuated depending on which party held power in Bangladesh. The BNP's earlier tenures were marked at times by diplomatic friction, particularly around border management and regional security con-

cerns. However, economic interdependence between the two countries has grown substantially in recent years.

Trade volumes have expanded, Indian businesses maintain significant investments in Bangladesh, and cooperation in infrastructure and energy remains robust. The new government will likely seek to preserve economic stability, even if political rhetoric occasionally reflects domestic sensitivities. At the same time, Bangladesh has diversified its international partnerships, engaging more actively with China, Pakistan, and other regional actors. This multipolar outreach adds another layer of complexity to foreign policy calculations.

Ultimately, the BNP's victory represents both an end and a beginning. It closes a turbulent chapter dominated by political confrontation and transitional governance. Yet it also opens a new phase in which multiple forces will compete to shape Bangladesh's direction.

Jamaat-e-Islami's resurgence ensures that ideological debates once thought settled are returning to the forefront. The Awami League's absence raises questions about inclusivity and the health of competitive politics. Muhammad Yunus's reforms have altered the institutional framework in ways that will only reveal their full impact over time.

Bangladesh stands at a crossroads. The promise of stability under a strong parliamentary majority is real, but so too are the underlying tensions that could surface if political dialogue narrows or governance becomes exclusionary. The coming years will test whether the country can translate electoral dominance into inclusive growth, institutional balance, and regional harmony.

The election result may appear decisive, but Bangladesh's political evolution remains very much in motion.

Inside the Crisis That Nearly Toppled UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer — And How a High-Stakes “Rescue Operation” Bought Him Time

Britain's political landscape has entered turbulent territory. Once regarded as a stable democratic power with a rich history of commanding statesmen and women, the United Kingdom now finds itself grappling with a leadership crisis that has rattled Westminster. At the centre of this storm is Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who, despite securing a historic electoral majority less than two years ago, now leads amid deep scepticism — both from the public and from within his own party.

Starmer's leadership has been steadily eroded over months of conservative attacks, policy U-turns, and a growing perception of drift. Polling has been dismal; approval ratings have plunged to levels once unthinkable for a sitting British prime minister. Many pundits argue that, if a general election were held today, the Labour Party — the party Starmer leads — would struggle to hold onto power.

What Starmer has managed to do, however, is survive — for now. And it's this survival, experts say, that tells the real story: not of a strong or confident leader, but of a political figure whose authority depends on carefully orchestrated crisis management rather than organic support from his ranks.

The Trigger: The Mandelson Fallout

The catalyst for the present turmoil was the decision to appoint Lord Peter Mandelson as the United Kingdom's ambassador to the United States — a pick that quickly became one of Starmer's costliest errors. Soon after the appointment, explosive revelations emerged

linking Mandelson to controversial figures, triggering a wave of public and political backlash.

The unveiling of email correspondence detailing the depth of Mandelson's association with a convicted sex offender sparked shockwaves in political circles. It wasn't merely embarrassment for Downing Street — it became a full-blown crisis, prompting intense questioning of the prime minister's decision-making and judgment.

Even senior figures within Labour began suggesting that Starmer's leadership was untenable. Some openly demanded that he step aside, while others hinted that his continued premiership was damaging not only to Labour's credibility but to Britain's standing on the global stage.

Crisis Control: Scripted Posts and Coordinated Support

Faced with mounting calls for his resignation, Starmer's team initiated what political insiders have dubbed a “rescue operation” — a coordinated effort aimed at stalling internal rebellion and stabilising public perception.

The centerpiece of this strategy was an emergency messaging campaign inside Downing Street. Senior ministers were moved to issue statements endorsing Starmer, sometimes with suggested language or talking points provided directly by aides. One high-profile deputy released a carefully worded message on social media platforms urging colleagues and the public to recognise Starmer's electoral mandate and rally behind him.



Behind the scenes, late-night phone calls were placed to wavering MPs to secure conditional endorsements. These calls weren't framed as simple showings of loyalty — they came with pointed questions for ministers: Who would realistically replace the prime minister? Was another leadership contest likely to improve Labour's electoral chances? Given the party's current political exhaustion, many found themselves without an obvious alternative.

Those interventions succeeded in buying Starmer time, but they did not fundamentally resolve the underlying tensions in the party. Instead, they revealed that support for him was often transactional and contingent — and in some cases dependent on reassurance that his continued leadership posed fewer risks than forcing a lead-

ership change. Inside the Party: No Obvious Successor

One reason the rebellion within Labour has yet to coalesce into a full-blown coup is the lack of a clear successor. Several names have been floated — including some of Starmer's senior colleagues — but each has drawbacks. Some are viewed as too polarising; others lack broad support across all wings of the party.

Among those mentioned is the current Home Secretary — a figure viewed by some as steady and institutional, with a reputation for competence outside factional battles. Her rise would mark a historic moment and reflect the increasingly diverse face of British politics. Yet questions remain about whether she could unite a fractious parliamentary party or navigate the tightrope of

Labour's internal ideological divides.

This leadership uncertainty mirrors a wider malaise in British politics: the absence of a clear narrative or direction that resonates strongly with voters. Many in Labour fear that a leadership change now could plunge the party into prolonged internal conflict, weakening its position ahead of crucial elections.

The Perception Problem

Compounding Starmer's woes is a perception problem that has plagued his government for months. Critics argue that his leadership style is overly cautious, reactive rather than proactive, and lacking in boldness. Policy U-turns and mixed messaging have fuelled narratives that Downing Street is out of touch — not just with the electorate, but with its own parliamentary

cohort.

These communication missteps have contributed to broader frustration. Some Labour MPs privately complain that the leadership has failed to articulate a compelling vision for the country. Instead, the government has appeared defensive, constantly attempting to manage crises rather than champion new initiatives that could re-energise public support.

This internal discontent is reflected in political commentary across British media, with many commentators noting that the party's direction has become unclear. What once appeared to be a period of stability under Starmer's leadership now looks precarious — patched together by crisis management rather than conviction.

Beyond Westminster: Broader Implications

Starmer's struggles aren't unfolding in isolation. The United Kingdom is navigating an increasingly uncertain global environment — from economic pressures to security challenges and shifting alliances. A prime minister perceived as weak or under siege internally risks projecting an image of instability on the world stage. Allies and adversaries alike may take note, complicating diplomatic efforts and strategic planning.

For Britain's national interests, continuity and credibility matter — whether in trade negotiations, defence cooperation, or international alliances. A prolonged leadership crisis could hinder Downing Street's ability to effectively engage with other govern-

ments and business partners, potentially weakening Britain's influence at a critical time.

What Comes Next?

For now, Starmer remains in office. The immediate threat of an internal revolt has been defused, at least temporarily, and his team continues to steer the government through the next set of political challenges. But whether this respite holds — or simply postpones the inevitable — remains a matter of debate in Westminster.

The upcoming local elections and by-elections will be important barometers of public sentiment. Poor performances could reignite leadership anxieties and embolden critics calling for change. Conversely, stronger showings could stabilise Starmer's position and give him the political space to redirect Labour's strategy.

What is clear is that Britain's current political climate is far from stable. The era of confident governance that many hoped would follow Labour's return to power has yet to materialise. Instead, a series of crises have revealed deep fissures within both the party and the broader UK political system.

Survival, in this context, has become an achievement in itself — but one that may only delay a reckoning yet to come. Starmer's premiership has been bought time by strategic crisis management and coordinated support. Whether that time can be turned into renewed leadership authority is the question that now defines British politics.

BJP Says Rahul Gandhi's Meeting With Farmers on India-US Trade Deal Was Scripted; Opposition Rejects Claim

A political row has erupted after Rahul Gandhi met with a group of farmers to discuss concerns over the proposed India-United States trade agreement, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accusing the opposition leader of staging and managing the event. The BJP's criticism has intensified debate around the merits and messaging of the trade pact, highlighting deep political divisions ahead of key national discussions.

Farmer Meeting on Trade Deal

Rahul Gandhi, a leading figure in the opposition and a Member of Parliament, met with farmers in northern India to hear their concerns about the potential impact of the India-US trade deal. The meeting was focused on how the agreement could affect domestic agriculture, including fears about cheap imports under tariff concessions and the implications for farm incomes.

During the interaction, several farmers voiced apprehensions that lowering tariffs on certain US agricultural commodities could put pressure on Indian growers who already face cost challenges and fluctuating market prices. Issues around cotton, pulses and edible oil featured prominently in the discussions, with farmers warning that sudden import liberalisation could lead to price volatility and threaten their livelihoods. Gandhi appeared attentive and engaged, noting their worries and pledging to raise these issues in Parliament and public forums.

BJP's Criticism

The BJP has dismissed the farmer meeting as "scripted" and "managed," saying it was more of a political show than a genuine grassroots engagement. Party leaders argued that such gatherings are organised to create misleading narratives about the trade agreement, contending that the union government has taken steps to ensure protections for Indian producers.

According to BJP spokespeople, the government has been consulting widely through of-



ficial channels and industry bodies before finalising aspects of the trade deal, and public concerns should be addressed through structured parliamentary debate rather than orchestrated events. They also contended that some opposition leaders are using the issue to score political points rather than engage in substantive dialogue about the complex economics of international trade.

Opposition's Response

Rahul Gandhi and his political allies have rejected the BJP's accusations outright, asserting that meeting with farmers is an essential part of democratic engagement — especially on matters that directly affect livelihoods. They argue that organising discussions with affected groups is neither unusual nor "scripted," but rather a way for elected representatives to hear firsthand from citizens.

Opposition leaders have pointed out that farmers and agricultural workers have legitimate concerns about market access and competition under the proposed trade framework, and that these should be taken seriously by policymakers. They emphasise

that trade agreements have long-term implications for sectors such as agriculture and textiles, which support millions of jobs and rural economies.

Political Context

The clash over the farmer meeting is unfolding against a backdrop of heightened political tensions, with both sides seeking to frame the narrative in terms that benefit their broader electoral and policy agendas. The BJP has defended its governance record and economic strategy, while the opposition has accused the government of insufficient transparency and of neglecting grassroots voices in policy decisions.

Farmers have been a powerful political constituency in India for decades, and their stake in trade policy has become more pronounced as global agreements and market liberalisation increasingly influence domestic agriculture. Political parties across the spectrum have actively courted rural support, and debates over trade deals are likely to resonate with voters concerned about income stability, price shocks and market access.

Looking Ahead

The disagreement over whether the farmers' meeting was authentic or managed reflects deeper divisions over how public policy should be shaped and communicated. With the proposed India-US trade deal still under negotiation and final clauses not yet publicly disclosed, both sides are gearing up for a sustained political and parliamentary battle.

In Parliament, opposition members are expected to raise detailed questions about tariff structures, safeguard measures and transitional protections for vulnerable sectors. The BJP, meanwhile, is likely to continue defending the government's approach and emphasising projected export opportunities and strategic gains from closer economic engagement with the United States.

As the debate unfolds, the key issue for many observers will be whether policymakers can allay farmers' fears with concrete guarantees and transparent explanations — or whether political posturing will further polarise public opinion on the trade pact and its potential impact on India's agricultural economy.

Seva Teerth and Kartavya Bhavans Built to Fulfil Aspirations of Modern India, Says PM Modi

India's government has inaugurated a new administrative complex — Seva Teerth — along with two adjoining Kartavya Bhavan buildings, marking a major institutional shift in how the country's executive leadership operates. The complex now houses the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Cabinet Secretariat, the National Security Council Secretariat, and key ministries, and is intended to reflect a modern, citizen-centric vision for governance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the construction of Seva Teerth and Kartavya Bhavans as being driven by the aspirations and needs of the people of India, rather than remnants of colonial legacy that shaped older administrative structures. According to government statements, the new buildings have been built to fulfil the aspirations of the people of India, emphasising service, responsibility and dedication as core principles guiding India's governance into the future. The Prime Minister said this new chapter moves away from outdated colonial-era architecture and institutional symbolism toward facilities that better align with the goals of a developed, service-oriented republic.

A Symbolic and Functional Shift

Located in the heart of New Delhi's Central Vista area, the Seva Teerth complex consolidates several major government offices under one roof for the first time. This restructuring is designed to improve coordination among key decision-



making bodies, streamline administrative functions and enhance citizen access to government services. The accompanying Kartavya Bhavans will house important ministries, including Defence, Finance, Health, Education and Agriculture, making the functioning of government more efficient and collaborative.

Officials say the move will reduce operational inefficiencies, cut down costs previously incurred due to fragmented and rented office spaces, and provide a workplace environment suited to the demands of 21st-century governance. The complex is also built to modern environmental standards, with integrated digital systems, renewable energy, water conservation features and waste management infrastructure.

Breaking with the Past

The relocation represents a symbolic break from buildings like the historic South Block and North Block, which for decades served as the epicentre of executive power in India but were constructed under British rule and had become cramped and antiquated. Modi has

framed the transition as part of a broader effort to shed colonial-era mindsets and redefine India's identity in its infrastructure and institutions. He stressed that Seva Teerth embodies the spirit of service that should characterise governance — where duty to citizens takes precedence over symbols of power.

The inauguration was accompanied by remarks underscoring this shift toward citizen-focused governance, with the Prime Minister urging officials to ensure that every decision taken in the new complex serves the aspirations of India's population. Looking ahead, the government hopes the modern facilities will not only boost administrative efficiency but also inspire future generations to view public service as a noble mission grounded in the welfare of the people.

In essence, the new administrative heart of India is being presented not just as a physical relocation of offices, but as a milestone in the nation's march toward a governance model shaped by service, accountability and national aspirations.

PM Modi Makes Historic Landing on Assam Highway Aboard C-130J Aircraft



Prime Minister Narendra Modi created a milestone in India's civil aviation and defence history by conducting a historic landing aboard a C-130J military transport aircraft on a stretch of highway in Assam. The event marked the first time an Indian prime minister has landed on a road-turned-temporary airstrip, showcasing the nation's growing aviation capabilities and strategic preparedness.

The specially designed C-130J Super Hercules — a workhorse of the Indian Air Force — touched down on a reinforced section of national highway in Assam that has been upgraded to function as an emergency landing strip. The highway landing exercise was planned to demonstrate India's ability to operate aircraft in unconventional settings during times of crisis, such as natural disasters or defence contingencies, when traditional airbases might be inaccessible.

Before the landing, Prime Minister Modi reviewed the preparations with officials and defence personnel. The chosen stretch of highway had been strengthened to handle the aircraft's weight, and safety measures were put in place to ensure a smooth operation. Residents and volunteers witnessed the spectacle as the Prime Minister's aircraft made a flawless descent onto an improvised runway — an achievement that drew applause from both local crowds and defence

observers. In his remarks following the event, Mr Modi described the landing as a testimony to India's advancing infrastructure and operational readiness. He emphasised that such capabilities enhance the country's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies. According to him, utilising roadways as airstrips during critical situations underscores India's comprehensive approach to national security and disaster management.

Officials highlighted that modernising road networks to support military operations or emergency evacuation is part of a broader vision for enhancing connectivity and defence logistics. Highway landing strips have been conceptualised as part of contingency planning, enabling the armed forces to maintain operational fluidity even when regular airfields are compromised.

The C-130J aircraft is known for its versatility, including transporting troops, equipment and essential supplies, as well as performing search and rescue missions. Its ability to land on rough or short runways makes it suited for such experimental operations. The Prime Minister's participation was seen as an endorsement of the Air Force's skills and the strategic value of such exercises.

The landing also held symbolic significance for the northeastern region of

India, which has long been a focus of infrastructure development and connectivity efforts. Assam's strategic location near international borders adds to the importance of showcasing robust logistical and aerial capabilities in the region.

Local officials and residents gathered near the highway to witness the event, greeting the Prime Minister and cheering as the aircraft arrived. The atmosphere was described as celebratory, with many noting the pride in seeing their region play host to such an extraordinary demonstration.

The event attracted widespread attention across the country, with social media users and news audiences highlighting the Prime Minister's unique touchdown and the broader implications for India's defence strategy. For many, the highway landing represented not only a technological achievement but also a statement about India's growing self-confidence in its military and infrastructural strengths.

In the coming months, authorities may examine further opportunities for using select highways as auxiliary runways for defence and emergency planning. The successful landing in Assam paves the way for similar exercises and reinforces India's vision of integrated preparedness — blending civilian infrastructure with strategic utility in service of national security and swift mobilisation.

Parliament Data Shows Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Lagging Behind in Drone Adoption



Recent official data presented in the Lok Sabha has highlighted a significant disparity in drone adoption across Indian states, particularly pointing to Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as laggards compared to other regions. The figures have raised questions about how effectively states are leveraging the rapidly growing drone ecosystem for development and innovation.

According to the ministry's written reply, as of January 31, 2026, Madhya Pradesh recorded 480 registered drones, while Chhattisgarh had 161 registered units, placing both states far behind many others in terms of drone uptake. These numbers stand in stark contrast to states such as Maharashtra, which leads the country with over 8,000 registered drones, and Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Karnataka, each with several thousand registrations.

National Policy and Regulation Framework

The government has empha-

sised that India's drone regulatory framework has been progressively liberalised to encourage widespread drone use. Under the Drone Rules, 2021, and subsequent amendments, rules around drone operation — including training, registration, and pilot certification — have been simplified. Nearly 90% of Indian airspace has been classified as a "Green Zone," where drones can fly without prior permission, and a certification scheme aims to align India's drone ecosystem with global standards.

The stated policy intent is to promote safe, secure, and regulated drone operations, with special focus on developmental uses in rural and remote areas. Mandatory registration, pilot certification, and training requirements remain in place to prevent misuse, while harmful activities like carrying weapons or hazardous materials via drones are strictly prohibited.

Why the Adoption Gap Matters

The relatively low numbers

in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are striking given the regions' potential benefits from drone technology. Drones can play a transformative role in agriculture (for spraying and crop monitoring), infrastructure surveying, disaster management, forest monitoring, and health logistics — all areas of high priority for states with large rural populations and extensive terrain challenges.

Madhya Pradesh has articulated plans to position itself as a drone hub, including introducing a drone promotion and utilisation policy with subsidies and incentives for manufacturing, research, and development. The policy offers capital subsidies and grants for drone manufacturing units, yet the adoption figures still place the state well behind leaders.

Chhattisgarh's low drone registration presents similar concerns. The state's geography, which includes significant forested and remote areas, could benefit from enhanced

drone use for environmental monitoring, disaster response, and rural connectivity, but the current uptake remains modest by comparison.

Possible Challenges to Adoption

Several factors may be contributing to the lag in drone registrations in these states:

- **Awareness and Training:** Operators and potential drone users may not be fully familiar with registration processes or pilot certification requirements.
- **Infrastructure and Ecosystem Development:** States need stronger local ecosystems, including training institutions, manufacturing support, and commercial drone service networks.
- **Industry Engagement:** While national policies aim to create an enabling environment, actual deployment often depends on effective regional implementation and private-sector participation.

Looking Ahead

As India pushes to become a global drone hub and scale up commercial and developmental drone use, addressing uneven adoption across states will be crucial. Experts suggest that targeted awareness campaigns, enhanced local incentives, and stronger industry partnerships could help bridge the gap.

The parliamentary figures underscore that policy liberalisation alone is not sufficient; effective implementation and ecosystem support at the state level will be essential if Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are to fully harness the opportunities offered by drone technology in the coming years.

China's Budget Leak Reveals Multi-Million Dollar Payout to US-Born Olympic Stars

A recent budgeting error by Chinese authorities has inadvertently revealed that two high-profile athletes born in the United States — freestyle skiing star Eileen Gu and figure skater Zhu Yi — were slated to receive millions of dollars in funding from the Beijing Municipal Sports Bureau. The disclosure, published in a public government budget before officials quickly removed their names, has sparked debate about state support for athletes and raised eyebrows online.

According to the budget document, Gu and Zhu were scheduled to share a payout of approximately \$6.6 million in 2025. The same fiscal plan suggested that nearly 100 million yuan (roughly \$14 million) was earmarked for the duo over a three-year period stretching toward the 2026 Winter Olympics. The funds appear to have been allocated to support their competition preparations and qualification efforts ahead of the Games.

The names of both athletes were briefly visible in the budget released in early 2025, but were removed soon after the document drew attention. By the time the information circulated online, commentators were already questioning the size of the payments — and



discussions about the payout were reportedly taken down from social media in China shortly afterwards.

Gu, 22, has been one of the most prominent figures in winter sports in recent years. Born and raised in the United States, she became globally recognised after her standout performance at the 2022 Winter Olympics, where she won multiple medals competing for China. Her decision to represent China rather than the country of her birth continues to generate discussion in sports circles around the world.

Beyond her competitive suc-

cess, Gu has also built an impressive commercial profile through lucrative endorsement deals with international brands, making her one of the highest-earning winter athletes globally. In contrast to her high off-field earnings, competition prize money in winter sports tends to be comparatively modest. Reports indicate that her on-snow earnings for individual events amount to modest figures when compared to the scale of her endorsements and the newly revealed government support.

Zhu Yi, the figure skater whose name also appeared in the budget, has similarly been

part of China's effort to bolster its winter sports competitiveness by naturalising athletes with international backgrounds. Zhu, who later renounced her U.S. citizenship to compete for China, has had a more mixed competitive record but remains a symbol of the broader strategy to strengthen China's presence in elite international sports.

The budget disclosure has triggered debate about transparency in state funding for elite athletes, particularly those with links to other countries. While many nations provide financial support to their medal contenders, the size and structure of China's allocations — and the opaque manner in which they were revealed and then removed — have drawn scrutiny.

For Gu and Zhu, the situation underscores the intersection of global sport, national representation and commercial interests. As the Winter Olympics unfold, the spotlight on athlete earnings — from endorsements and competition earnings to direct government support — is likely to continue, raising questions about how nations invest in sporting success and how audiences perceive athletes who compete under flags different from their birthplaces.

US Military Prepares for Possible Weeks-Long Operations Against Iran



The United States military is reportedly preparing for the possibility of sustained operations against Iran that could last several weeks, should President Donald Trump authorise military action. The planning reflects heightened tensions between Washington and Tehran amid stalled diplomatic efforts over Iran's nuclear programme.

Scope of Potential Operations

According to officials familiar with internal discussions, the preparations go beyond the framework of limited or symbolic strikes. Instead, military planners are considering scenarios involving a prolonged campaign that could target not only Iran's nuclear facilities but also elements of its military and security infrastructure.

To support such contingencies, the Pentagon has increased its presence in the Middle East. This includes the deployment of additional aircraft carriers, fighter jets, missile destroyers and thousands of troops positioned to carry out both offensive and defensive missions. The expanded posture is designed to provide flexi-

bility should the White House decide to move forward with military action.

Diplomatic Efforts Continue

Despite the military buildup, diplomatic channels remain open. Recent talks between US and Iranian representatives aimed to de-escalate tensions and address concerns surrounding Tehran's nuclear ambitions. However, progress has reportedly been limited, and US leadership has continued to signal that all options — including military action — remain on the table.

Risk of Retaliation and Escalation

Military planners are said to expect that any sustained US operation would likely trigger retaliation from Iran. Tehran possesses a substantial missile arsenal and maintains influence through allied groups across the region, raising the risk that a conflict could spread beyond a direct US-Iran confrontation.

Regional instability remains a significant concern. An extended military campaign could impact neighbouring countries, disrupt maritime routes and poten-

tially affect global energy supplies. Iran has previously warned that any attack on its territory would be met with a forceful response, underscoring the high stakes involved.

Strategic and Political Implications

The reported preparations come amid strong rhetoric from Washington, with officials emphasising the need to prevent Iran from advancing its nuclear capabilities. At the same time, the military posture may serve as leverage in diplomatic negotiations, signalling readiness while leaving room for a political resolution.

Analysts note that while contingency planning is standard practice, a weeks-long campaign would represent a major escalation with far-reaching geopolitical consequences. The situation remains fluid, with developments likely to depend on both diplomatic progress and strategic calculations in Washington and Tehran.

For now, the increased US military readiness highlights the seriousness of the current standoff and the delicate balance between deterrence, diplomacy and the risk of open conflict.

Tarique Rahman's "Pakistan Test": Dhaka's Foreign Policy After the Yunus Reset

With Tarique Rahman poised to become Bangladesh's next prime minister following the Bangladesh Nationalist Party landslide election victory, one of the key foreign policy questions facing Dhaka will be how it manages its relationship with Pakistan while balancing ties with India and others in the region.

In recent months under the interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus, relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan saw some warming. Visa restrictions were eased and Pakistan was even given broader access to Bangladeshi waters, moves that raised concerns in New Delhi about potential security implications and a shift in Dhaka's strategic calculations.

As Rahman prepares to take on full leadership, many diplomats and analysts believe the BNP is unlikely to completely sever ties with Pakistan. Maintaining normal diplomatic relations with Islamabad — including cooperation on trade and regional forums — remains in Dhaka's interest. Yet officials on both sides of the border expect Islamabad to adopt a cautious stance initially, keeping a "wait and see" approach to Rahman's foreign policy until he consolidates power and outlines a



clear direction for his government.

At the same time, Rahman appears acutely aware that Bangladesh's strategic environment differs markedly from past eras. There is little appetite among the Bangladeshi public for reverting to pre-1971 power dynamics or allowing external intelligence agencies, such as Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), to gain influence within national affairs. Rahman's own rhetoric during the election campaign emphasised a "nation-first" policy, which suggests Dhaka may take a more pragmatic, independent line — neither aligning too closely with Pakistan

nor ignoring the priorities of other partners.

For New Delhi, the priority will be to ensure that India-Bangladesh ties remain stable and mutually beneficial. Indian authorities have already extended congratulations to Rahman, and senior Bangladeshi aides have spoken openly about strengthening bilateral connections — particularly through people-to-people ties, trade, investment, and continued cooperation on regional security. India's approach appears to involve a cautious reset of relations after the turbulence seen under Yunus, with an emphasis on shared economic and strategic interests rather than ideo-

logical alignment.

There is also scepticism within parts of Bangladesh about over-dependence on Pakistan. Some security officials have pointed to recent high-profile visits by Pakistan military and intelligence delegations as flirtations with influence that Dhaka should avoid if it wants to preserve its sovereignty and regional balance.

Rahman's immediate challenges will stretch beyond external relations. Bringing stability to a country that has experienced significant political violence and rebuilding trust among deeply divided domestic constituencies will be priorities. How he handles foreign partners — balancing good relations with Islamabad without triggering regional security concerns — will be a test of both his diplomatic skills and his commitment to national interests.

In essence, Bangladesh's "Pakistan test" under Rahman will likely involve maintaining standard bilateral ties with Pakistan while emphasising pragmatism, safeguarding sovereignty, and continuing to nurture strong relations with India and other neighbours. The outcome will shape Dhaka's broader regional posture in the months and years ahead.

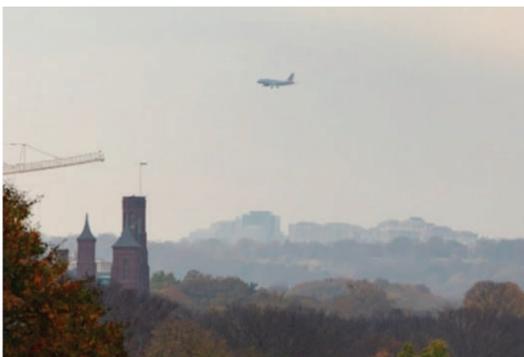
Cartel Drone Incident and Laser Strike Shut Down Texas Airspace — What Happened

Airspace over El Paso, Texas, was suddenly closed to all flights earlier this week after U.S. authorities took action against what they said were Mexican drug cartel drones breaching American airspace. The closure affected El Paso International Airport and the surrounding region, grounding commercial, cargo and general aviation flights for several hours before operations resumed.

According to U.S. officials, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) halted air traffic because a laser-based counter-drone system was used to neutralise the threat, raising safety concerns for aircraft in the area. The shutdown was initially announced as lasting up to ten days but was lifted much sooner once authorities confirmed there was no continuing danger to civilian flights.

The account from government spokespeople described the event as a response to cartel drones operating near the U.S.-Mexico border. Transportation officials said the threat had been neutralised, allowing flights to resume normally the following morning.

However, media reporting



and officials familiar with the situation suggest the circumstances were more complicated. The airspace closure stemmed from the deployment of a high-energy anti-drone laser weapon system by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) — technology that had been loaned from the Department of Defense for counter-drone missions. The laser was used near Fort Bliss, close to the airport, without prior coordination with the FAA, prompting safety concerns about its operation near commercial aircraft.

Some sources indicate that what was targeted that night may not have actually been cartel drones at all, but other airborne objects detected near the border. In one account, the laser engaged what was initially identified as a suspicious target, later characterised as a mylar party balloon — underscoring the complexity of identifying small airborne objects and the risk of counter-drone systems interacting with civilian aviation.

The incident highlighted deeper coordination challeng-

es between federal agencies tasked with border security and those responsible for civil aviation safety. Members of Congress and local officials criticised the lack of advance notice about the closure and the communication gaps between the FAA, CBP and the Defense Department.

Officials from the FAA emphasised that the measures were taken to protect commercial flights, and Transportation authorities maintained that cartel drones are a genuine concern in the border region. Drone incursions by criminal groups have been documented along the southern U.S. border, leading to expanded authority for more law enforcement agencies to address unauthorized drones when properly trained and authorised.

After the airspace was reopened, government officials reiterated there was no ongoing threat to air travel. The episode has spurred debate about how anti-drone technology is deployed near civilian airspace and the need for stronger inter-agency coordination to prevent similar disruptions in the future.

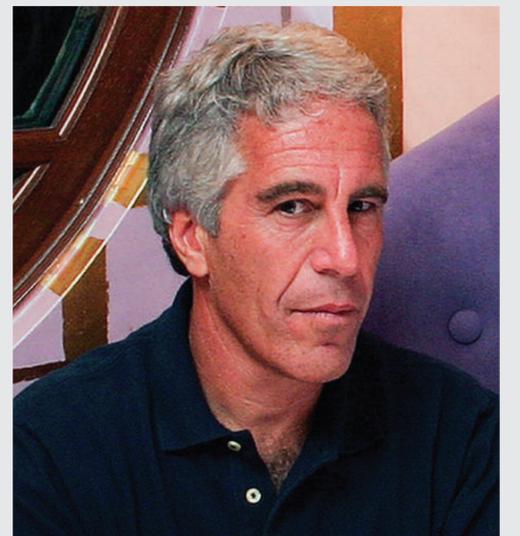
Doctor Who Observed Epstein Autopsy Says Death Was From Strangulation, Not Hanging

A physician who was present during the autopsy of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein has made a controversial claim about the circumstances surrounding his death. The doctor insists that Epstein's injuries were more consistent with strangulation than suicide by hanging, challenging the official conclusion and fuelling long-running public debate.

Epstein, a wealthy financier with connections to powerful figures, was found dead in his federal jail cell in August 2019 while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges. Authorities ruled his death a suicide by hanging, a finding that drew intense scrutiny because of irregularities at the jail, lapses in monitoring, and Epstein's high-profile connections.

The doctor who spoke out — a specialist in forensic pathology who observed the autopsy but did not conduct it — says he has studied the medical evidence closely. Based on the nature and pattern of the injuries, he believes that the trauma to Epstein's neck structures is more consistent with homicidal strangulation than with self-inflicted hanging. The doctor pointed to specific damage to ligaments and internal neck markings which, in his view, do not typically match the patterns seen in standard hanging cases.

In an interview, the physician explained that while hanging and strangulation can both result in fatal neck injuries, the distribution and character of the damage differs. Hanging usually produces a distinct pattern on the neck and airway structures due to suspension, whereas roughly applied force from an assailant can leave more varied signs. The doctor said that



certain findings at Epstein's autopsy fell into the latter category.

The physician stressed that he was not alleging a specific motive or naming individuals responsible, but is advocating for transparency and a thorough review of all medical evidence by independent experts. He noted that forensic pathology is often complex and conclusions can differ based on interpretation of the physical findings, which is why independent medical opinions are valuable in controversial cases.

Supporters of the doctor's stance argue that the unusual circumstances surrounding Epstein's death — including malfunctioning cameras, unmonitored prison guards, and a lack of routine checks at the time — already raised questions that deserved deeper scrutiny. They say the new medical interpretation adds weight to longstanding concerns about whether the of-

ficial ruling accurately reflects what happened.

Critics, however, caution against drawing definitive conclusions from a single interpretation, especially when other medical professionals have supported the original finding of suicide. They argue that variations in how bodies respond to trauma can sometimes lead to differing professional opinions, and that only a full, unbiased review of all forensic data can clarify the matter.

Epstein's death remains a topic of intense public fascination and speculation, and the release of new expert commentary is likely to reignite discussions about the circumstances of his final hours. Whether the medical community at large will re-evaluate the autopsy findings remains to be seen, but the debate underscores ongoing tensions between official accounts and alternative interpretations of high-profile deaths.

Markets Slip 1% As IT Stocks Take a Beating Amid Fresh AI Concerns



Indian equity markets ended the session in the red, with benchmark indices falling about 1 percent as heavy selling in information technology (IT) stocks dragged sentiment lower. The BSE Sensex dropped nearly 950 points, while the Nifty 50 declined over 220 points, erasing gains from recent sessions and reflecting renewed investor caution.

The IT sector emerged as the worst performer of the day. The Nifty IT index saw a sharp decline, with major technology companies witnessing notable losses. Shares of large-cap IT firms such as Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HCL Technologies, Wipro, and Tech Mahindra were among the biggest laggards. The sell-off was largely driven by revived concerns that rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) could disrupt traditional outsourcing and software service models — the backbone of India's IT industry.

Investors are increasingly worried that the growing adoption of AI-powered automation tools may reduce the demand for conventional IT services, potentially impacting revenue growth for companies heavily dependent on

global clients. As AI systems become more sophisticated, fears are mounting that tasks once handled by large teams of engineers could be automated, squeezing margins and altering long-term growth prospects.

Global cues also played a role in dampening domestic sentiment. Technology stocks worldwide have faced bouts of volatility amid similar AI-related anxieties and uncertainty over interest rate movements. Weakness in US tech shares spilled over into Indian markets, further intensifying the pressure on the IT pack.

In addition to sector-specific concerns, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) turned net sellers during the session, offloading equities and adding to the downward momentum. However, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) stepped in with buying support, helping limit deeper losses. The tug-of-war between foreign selling and domestic buying reflected cautious positioning rather than panic-driven exits.

Sectoral performance was mixed beyond IT. Financial services stocks showed relative resilience, while select energy and consumer-

oriented counters also managed to hold steady. Some small-cap and media stocks even posted gains, suggesting that investors are rotating capital into areas perceived as less vulnerable to AI-driven disruption.

Market experts believe that while AI presents long-term opportunities, short-term uncertainty around its impact on earnings models is prompting investors to reassess valuations in the IT space. After a strong rally in recent months, profit-taking in tech stocks further amplified the downturn.

Looking ahead, analysts expect volatility to persist as markets navigate a combination of global economic signals, evolving technology trends, and capital flow dynamics. The trajectory of AI adoption and its measurable effect on corporate earnings will likely remain a key theme influencing investor sentiment in the coming quarters.

For now, renewed AI fears have rattled one of India's most prominent sectors, reminding investors that innovation, while transformative, can also bring disruption — especially for industries built on traditional service models.

BSE Gets SEBI Approval to Launch Derivatives on Focused Midcap Index

The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to introduce derivative contracts on its newly created Focused Midcap Index, marking a significant expansion of its derivatives portfolio.

What Will Be Launched?

Following the regulatory nod, BSE plans to roll out cash-settled monthly index futures and options linked to the Focused Midcap Index. These contracts will follow the standard monthly expiry cycle, expiring on the last Thursday of each contract month, in line with prevailing market practice in India's derivatives segment.

The move is expected to provide traders and institutional investors with an additional instrument to hedge risk or take directional positions in the midcap space.

About the Focused Midcap Index

The Focused Midcap Index is designed to track the performance of the top 20 mid-cap companies based on free-float market capitalisation within the broader midcap universe. By concentrating on a smaller basket of relatively large and liquid mid-sized firms, the index aims to offer a sharper and more targeted representation of midcap market trends.



Unlike broader midcap indices that include a wider range of companies, this focused benchmark provides exposure to a more selective and potentially stable segment of mid-sized stocks.

Why This Matters

The approval strengthens BSE's position in India's competitive derivatives market. While BSE already offers derivatives linked to benchmarks such as the Sensex and Bankex, this new product expands its offerings into a more concentrated midcap segment.

For investors, derivatives on a focused midcap index open up fresh strategic possibilities:

- Targeted exposure to select mid-sized companies
- Hedging opportunities for portfolios with midcap holdings
- Trading strategies built around midcap volatility and sectoral trends

Midcap stocks are often seen as growth-oriented but more volatile

than large caps. Having derivatives tied to a curated midcap index can help market participants manage that volatility more effectively.

Broader Market Context

The launch comes at a time when India's derivatives market continues to evolve under regulatory refinements aimed at improving transparency and managing speculative activity. By introducing products aligned with regulatory standards, BSE is seeking to deepen liquidity and broaden participation in its derivatives segment.

The exchange is expected to issue detailed circulars outlining contract specifications, lot sizes, and launch timelines before trading begins.

With this development, BSE is reinforcing its efforts to compete more actively in the derivatives space and provide investors with diversified tools to navigate India's dynamic equity markets.

How Covered Calls Can Help You Monetise Your Portfolio

If you own shares that aren't moving significantly — neither rallying nor falling sharply — your investment may feel idle. One way to generate additional income from such holdings is through a strategy known as a covered call. This approach allows investors to earn premiums while continuing to hold their shares.

What Is a Covered Call?

A covered call is an options strategy where you sell (write) a call option on shares you already own. In exchange for granting someone else the right to buy your shares at a predetermined price (called the strike price), you receive an upfront payment known as a premium. This premium is yours to keep regardless of how the stock performs.

For example, suppose you hold 1,000 shares of a company trading at ₹500. You can sell a call option with a strike price higher than ₹500. The buyer pays you a premium for this right. If the stock does not rise above the strike price before expiry, you retain both the shares and the premium.



When Does This Strategy Work Best?

Covered calls are most effective when you expect the stock to remain relatively stable or rise only moderately during the option's duration. In such scenarios, the option may expire worthless, allowing you to earn consistent income while holding onto your shares. This makes the strategy particularly useful in sideways or mildly bullish markets where large price movements are unlikely.

Possible Outcomes

There are three primary outcomes when you write

a covered call:

- Stock remains below the strike price:

The option expires worthless. You keep the premium and your shares, and you may choose to repeat the strategy.

- Stock rises above the strike price:

You may be required to sell your shares at the strike price. You still keep the premium and gain any appreciation up to that level. However, profits beyond the strike price are forfeited.

- Stock declines:

You retain the premium, which helps offset some of the loss. However,

the premium only provides limited downside protection if the stock falls sharply.

Selecting the Right Strike Price

The strike price plays a crucial role in balancing risk and reward:

- Choosing a strike price closer to the current market price generally results in a higher premium, but increases the likelihood of your shares being called away.
- Selecting a higher strike price offers lower premium income, but provides greater room for potential price

appreciation.

Investors must align this choice with their market outlook and comfort with potentially selling the shares.

Advantages and Limitations

Advantages:

- Generates additional income from existing holdings.
- Can lower the effective cost of owning the stock.
- Suitable for relatively stable market conditions.

Limitations:

- Upside gains are capped at the strike price.
- Provides only partial protection against price declines.
- Requires ownership of sufficient shares to execute the strategy.

Final Thoughts

Covered calls are not a high-risk speculation

tool but rather a disciplined income-enhancement strategy. For long-term investors holding quality stocks, this method can help improve overall returns by turning dormant holdings into income-generating assets — especially during periods of muted market activity.

Gold Reclaims ₹5,000 as Cooling Inflation Boosts Expectations of Fed Rate Cuts



Gold prices in India surged back above ₹5,000 per 10 grams, driven by easing inflation data from the United States that strengthened expectations of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve (Fed). The yellow metal's rebound reflects renewed investor interest as global financial conditions show signs of stabilising, making gold — traditionally seen as a safe-haven asset — more attractive.

Why Gold Is Rallying Gold has historically benefited when inflation moderates and interest rates soften. That's because lower rates diminish the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding assets like gold, making them relatively more appealing compared to inter-

est-bearing alternatives. Recent data showing a slowing pace of inflation in major economies, particularly the US, has reignited hopes that central banks — especially the Fed — may start cutting rates sooner than previously anticipated. Expectations of easier monetary policy tend to support higher gold prices.

Global Cues Drive Domestic Prices

International markets have been signalling a shift in sentiment as traders price in potential policy easing. With inflation cooling, the market outlook has tilted toward the likelihood of rate cuts, and gold has responded positively. Investors typically flock to gold to hedge against market uncer-

tainties and currency volatility, especially during phases of economic transition.

Domestic gold prices closely track global trends. As global prices firmed up, Indian gold rates followed suit, lifting the benchmark for both 24-carat and 22-carat gold. In many Indian cities, 24-carat gold has once again crossed the ₹5,000 mark per 10 grams, reversing recent softness.

Investor Behaviour and Market Outlook

The rally in gold comes amid a broader shift in investor behaviour. With data suggesting inflationary pressures are cooling, market participants are adjusting positions across multiple asset classes. Fixed-income markets have seen increased speculation about interest rate reductions, which affects equities and commodities alike.

Gold, in particular, tends to benefit when real interest rates — which adjust nominal rates for inflation — fall. Lower real rates reduce the appeal of

traditional interest-bearing investments like bonds and savings instruments, making gold and other tangible assets more attractive.

The renewed confidence in gold was also reflected in improved trading activity among investors and traders. Retail demand in India has traditionally been strong, especially ahead of weddings and festivals, and firmer global cues have added momentum to buying sentiment.

Outlook for Gold Prices

Analysts suggest that if inflation data continues to show signs of moderation and central banks move toward actual rate cuts, gold prices could sustain their upward trajectory. However, the extent of gains will remain sensitive to global macroeconomic developments, particularly data on inflation, employment and monetary policy signals from the US and other major economies.

Conversely, if inflation unexpectedly accelerates or central banks adopt a more hawkish stance —

delaying rate cuts — gold prices could face headwinds, at least in the short term.

Key Takeaways for Investors

- Cooling inflation data globally, especially in the US, has strengthened expectations of interest rate cuts.
- These expectations have supported a rebound in gold prices, helping them reclaim key psychological levels like ₹5,000 per 10 grams in India.
- Investor interest in gold typically rises when real interest rates fall and when markets brace for uncertainty.
- The future path of gold prices will be closely tied to macroeconomic data and central bank decisions in the coming months.

In summary, gold's recent rebound reflects a dynamic interplay between inflation trends, central bank expectations, and shifting investor sentiment, underscoring gold's enduring role as a hedge in changing economic conditions.

RBI Tightens Broker Funding Rules: 100% Collateral Required, Banks Barred From Funding Prop Trading

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued new amendments to its banking regulations that significantly alter how commercial banks can lend to stock brokers and other capital market intermediaries. The revised framework, which will take effect from April 1, 2026, is aimed at strengthening risk management practices and reducing systemic vulnerabilities in the financial system.

Key Changes in the Rules

1. **Mandatory 100% Collateral** Under the new guidelines, banks can extend credit to brokers and SEBI-registered intermediaries only if the loans are fully secured by collateral. This marks a clear shift from earlier norms that allowed partial collateral or unsecured guarantees from promoters. Such unsecured backing will no longer be acceptable, and lenders must ensure complete security coverage before disbursing funds.

2. **Stricter Norms for Bank Guarantees** The amendments also tighten conditions for bank guarantees issued in favour of stock ex-



changes or clearing corporations. At least 50% of such guarantees must now be backed by collateral, with a minimum 25% in cash. If shares are used as collateral, they will be subject to a minimum 40% haircut for valuation purposes, meaning only a reduced portion of their market value will be considered for securing the exposure.

3. **Ban on Funding for Proprietary Trading** Banks are now prohibited from financing proprietary (prop) trad-

ing activities undertaken by brokers using their own capital. However, exceptions have been made for certain activities such as market-making and short-term warehousing of debt securities, provided these are backed by secured credit facilities.

4. **Margin Trading Funding Allowed — With Safeguards** While prop trading funding has been restricted, banks can continue to finance margin trading facilities offered by brokers to clients. These arrangements

must include proper margin call provisions to ensure collateral remains adequate and is monitored regularly.

Implications for the Market

All credit exposure to brokers and capital market intermediaries will now be classified under banks' capital market exposure limits. This could potentially reduce the overall lending capacity available to such entities, particularly for smaller brokers who may struggle to provide high-quality collateral.

For banks, the new rules necessitate stronger risk management systems and closer monitoring of collateral values. For brokers, funding costs may rise due to stricter collateral requirements.

Overall, the RBI's amendments are designed to enhance financial discipline, reduce excessive leverage, and protect the banking system from risks linked to capital market activities. The move underscores the regulator's intent to ensure that lending to market intermediaries remains secure, transparent, and prudently managed.

Indian Expat in Dubai Says Rising Rents Consume Most of Your Salary — Here's What Life Is Really Like



An Indian professional who moved to Dubai two years ago has shared a candid, sometimes sobering account of what it's really like to live and work in the glittering Gulf city — and why many newcomers find themselves struggling with high costs, especially when it comes to housing.

Dubai is often presented on social media as a land of opportunity and prosperity — a place with impressive skyscrapers, tax-free salaries, and a vibrant expatriate lifestyle. But for this expat, those glossy images only tell part of the story. After spending two years in the emirate, he says newcomers need to be prepared for a reality that differs significantly from what they see online.

In a video he posted on social platforms, the expat explained that when he arrived, his expectations were shaped largely by online content showcasing Dubai's attractions. He looked forward to career opportunities, exposure to an international work environment and a lifestyle that, on paper, seemed hard to beat. While he acknowledges that some of those perks are real, they come with trade-offs that aren't often discussed openly.

For him, one of the biggest challenges has been the cost of living, particularly rent. Apartment prices in Dubai are high relative to many Indian cities, and even with a decent salary, a large portion of take-home pay can be absorbed by housing costs. In prime areas and popular expat neighbourhoods, monthly rent can quickly consume a significant share

of income, leaving little left for savings or discretionary spending.

He also highlighted how smaller, unexpected expenses can add up. From fines and service fees to daily living costs, putting together a budget that feels comfortable requires careful planning — and sometimes compromises in lifestyle or location. Beyond financial pressures, the expat touched on the emotional toll of life abroad. Watching others spend freely or enjoy luxuries while he was focused on budgeting and saving could feel discouraging. Long workdays and the hustle of everyday life sometimes left him wondering whether progress was being made, even though he recognised he was gaining valuable experiences.

Yet it's not all bleak. The expat was clear that he wouldn't describe his experience as negative — merely more nuanced than many outsiders assume. He spoke warmly about the safety of the city, the opportunity to meet people from a variety of cultures, and the occasional treat — whether it's a nice meal or a day out — that reminds him why the move made sense in the first place.

He summed up his message as a reminder that growth often comes at a cost, and while Dubai offers opportunities many aspire to, newcomers should be prepared for both the thrills and the stresses of life there. For those considering a move, his candid reflections offer a valuable perspective: dream big, but plan realistically.

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Welcomes Its First Woman Ticket Examiner in 145-Year History



The iconic Darjeeling Himalayan Railway — affectionately known as the Toy Train — has marked a historic milestone with the appointment of its first woman Traveling Ticket Examiner (TTE) in its nearly 145-year existence. This achievement is being celebrated not only as a breakthrough for gender inclusion in a traditionally male-dominated field but also as a fresh chapter in the rich legacy of one of India's most beloved heritage railways.

The newly appointed TTE, Sarita Yolmo, brings decades of experience to her role and recently stepped into the prestigious assignment that places her aboard the scenic mountain railway connecting New Jalpaiguri with the hill town of Darjeeling. Her journey to this historic position spans more than 30 years in Indian Railways, where she has served in diverse roles, including public announcements, ticket checks, and rail customer services, before taking on this landmark operational duty.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the oldest mountain railways in the world. Its narrow-gauge tracks wind through winding Himalayan terrain, climbing from plains to hills over a breathtaking landscape that draws visitors from across the country and abroad. For generations, the Toy Train has stood as a symbol of engineering ingenuity and cultural heritage — and now, with Sarita's appointment, it reflects evolving social change within the rail sector itself.

Taking on her duty has long been a coveted role in this heritage line, involving direct interaction with passengers and the responsibility of en-

suring smooth operations throughout some of the route's most challenging stretches. For Sarita, the appointment wasn't just another posting — it was a moment of personal pride and professional validation. Colleagues and passengers alike have acknowledged her achievement as both inspiring and overdue.

Her rise to this position highlights a broader shift within Indian Railways, which in recent years has seen increased participation of women in front-line and operational roles that were once considered unconventional for female employees. Rail authorities have described her appointment as a reflection of changing attitudes and growing opportunities for women across different work profiles in the railways.

Sarita's story is resonating beyond the railway community, as it echoes larger conversations about gender equality and representation in professions historically dominated by men. Her success is being celebrated as a step forward for inclusivity and an example that traditional roles — no matter how longstanding — can evolve.

For locals and visitors riding the Toy Train, seeing a woman TTE uniforms the spirit of change with the nostalgia of heritage. Her role adds a contemporary chapter to the storied history of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, showing that institutions rooted in tradition can also be platforms for progress.

As she continues her duties on this legendary route, Sarita's journey stands as an inspiring reminder: barriers can be broken, histories can be rewritten, and longstanding legacies can grow more inclusive with time.

Techie Draws the Line: Refuses to Dance or Strut for Client, Sparks Online Debate

In a story that has set social media buzzing, a tech professional made headlines not for work achievements but for politely refusing two highly unusual requests from a corporate client — and ended up igniting a broader conversation about personal boundaries in professional spaces.

The episode began when a software engineer — let's call him Rohan — was contracted by an overseas client for a long-term project. The work, focused on app development, was progressing smoothly until one day when things took an unexpected turn during a virtual meeting.

According to Rohan, the client suddenly shifted gears during a video call and asked him to perform a solo dance and later a fashion walk on camera — all supposedly to “impress stakeholders and show creative energy.” Taken aback, Rohan was firm but polite in his response: he declined both requests, saying that dancing and modeling were neither part of his job description nor appropriate in a professional setting.

What followed was a mix of reactions — some supportive, others critical — once Rohan shared the experience on social media. Hundreds chimed in with opinions. Many applauded him for upholding professional boundaries, emphasizing that no client should demand personal performances from



someone just because they are on a screen. Others argued that being accommodating can sometimes help build rapport and land future opportunities, especially in cultures where going the “extra mile” is valued in business.

A large group of commentators stressed the importance of respectful workplace conduct. They pointed out that while creative industries might involve out-of-the-box tasks, software development typically does not include impromptu dance routines or runway walks. Asking unrelated personal performances, they argued, could cross into uncomfortable territory, especially when power dynamics

are at play between freelancer and client.

Many women and men in the tech and corporate community shared anecdotes of being asked awkward favors — like posing in photos, appearing on camera without professional context, or making personal appearances during meetings — and stressed that it's important for professionals to feel empowered to say “no” when something feels inappropriate.

Others took a lighter view, suggesting that if someone genuinely enjoys performing or wants to show off hidden talents, there's nothing inherently wrong with spontaneous fun — just that it should

always be offered, never demanded. They pointed out that cultural norms vary, and what may seem odd in one context could be normal in another, as long as mutual respect is maintained.

Amid the debate, Rohan's core message gained traction: professionals should have the space to define what is acceptable in their own work environment without being pressured into situations that make them uncomfortable. Setting boundaries, he said, does not mean being rigid or difficult — it means recognizing one's own values and maintaining dignity in professional interactions. The incident has

sparked wider reflection about where lines should be drawn in today's increasingly virtual and informal work culture. With remote work blurring personal and professional spaces, many workers are reconsidering what kinds of requests are reasonable — and which should be politely but firmly turned down.

In the end, Rohan's story may not be about viral fame or dramatic confrontation. Instead, it's about a simple yet powerful reminder: even in a world that encourages creativity, there's nothing wrong with saying “no” when a request oversteps the boundaries of professionalism.

Traveller Turns Flight Tickets Into Wall of Memories, Internet Applauds His Unique Post-Trip Ritual



In an age where travel memories are usually stored on smartphones or cloud albums, one young traveller has captured the internet's attention with a refreshingly simple and heartfelt tradition. Instead of discarding his boarding passes after each journey, he turns them into a growing wall display — creating a visual timeline of his adventures that doubles as room

décor. The ritual belongs to 25-year-old Deeraj Ds, who recently shared a video of his post-trip habit on social media. In the clip, he is seen carefully placing his latest flight ticket onto a section of his bedroom wall already filled with boarding passes from previous trips. Over time, what began as a small collection has transformed into a colourful collage of

memories representing destinations he has explored both within India and abroad.

For Deeraj, adding a boarding pass to the wall has become a “mandatory ritual” after every journey. Rather than letting these small paper slips gather dust in drawers or wallets, he preserves them in plain sight — each one symbolising a story, a city, or a special moment in

time. The simplicity of the idea struck a chord with viewers, and the video quickly gained widespread attention online.

Social media users flooded the comments with praise, calling the idea creative, nostalgic, and deeply personal. Many admitted they had never thought of preserving flight tickets in this way, while others shared their own traditions for remembering their travels. Some people collect fridge magnets from every destination. Others keep metro cards, museum passes, or even currency notes as souvenirs.

A few commenters pointed out a practical challenge: boarding passes are often printed with ink that fades over time. Months later, some tickets may appear nearly blank. However, many users felt that even faded slips hold sentimental value — much like old photographs or handwritten notes that grow softer with age but remain meaningful.

The post also sparked a wave of nostalgia. Some

users reminisced about older airline ticket designs and how travel once felt more tangible in a pre-digital era. In a time when many boarding passes are issued electronically, the act of holding onto a physical ticket carries a certain charm.

Others chimed in with their own quirky keepsake ideas. One traveller revealed they turn boarding passes into bookmarks for books purchased at airports, blending travel and reading into one lasting memory. Another joked about saving train ticket screenshots instead, adding a humorous touch to the conversation.

Ultimately, what resonated most about Deeraj's ritual was its authenticity. It doesn't require expensive scrapbooks or elaborate framing — just a wall and a willingness to celebrate small moments. In a world increasingly dominated by digital experiences, his simple tradition serves as a reminder that sometimes the smallest souvenirs can carry the biggest memories.

Canadian Travellers Call Sleepless Indian Train Ride an Unforgettable Experience

Two Canadian tourists who set off on what they thought would be a restful train journey across India ended up with a lively and deeply memorable experience that they say they “wouldn't change for the world.”

What was supposed to be a peaceful seven-hour ride turned into a spontaneous celebration of community spirit and new friendships. The couple, including traveller Kim Greenwood, had booked sleeper class tickets hoping for much-needed rest between destinations. They were travelling early in the morning on an Indian passenger train and, expecting sleep in “sleeper class,” were surprised to learn that this coach often functions more like a shared space than a quiet cabin meant just for them. Rather than being a secluded, restful compartment, their space

soon became filled with curious local children and fellow passengers.

Almost immediately after boarding, the Canadians found children gathering around their berths. Instead of retreating or becoming annoyed, they embraced the unexpected company. What was meant to be a restful break quickly turned into a lively hub of interaction. The children were fascinated by the foreign visitors, and the group began playing games and talking, much to the delight of everyone in the coach.

Greenwood later shared her thoughts online, describing how impressed she was by the warm, collective energy of the journey. She spoke about the way families and individuals from diverse backgrounds came together in their small section of the train, sharing food, smiles

and stories as the journey unfolded. Some passengers even brought snacks and treats — some items bought from vendors boarding the train at stops, others prepared by families travelling in the same coach. The Canadians were touched by these gestures of hospitality and generosity.

Despite the bustle and the fact that neither of them got a minute of sleep during the entire seven-hour journey, Greenwood summed up the adventure with enthusiasm. She said she would not trade the experience for a quiet or solitary trip. For her, the sleepless hours were transformed into something far richer: a shared human experience and a genuine immersion into one of the most characteristic aspects of travel in India — connecting with people on the move.



Their story struck a chord with many who saw the travel post online. Social media users praised the couple's open-minded approach, saying that being flexible and friendly in unfamiliar situations often leads to the most memorable travel moments. Many agreed that train journeys in India offer far more than a way to reach

the next city; they provide a unique glimpse into daily life, an opportunity to connect across cultures, and a theatre of spontaneous human interaction.

Travel, as the Canadians discovered, sometimes has little to do with reaching a destination — and everything to do with embracing the moments between.

New Details Emerge on MS Dhoni's Captaincy Exit – It Wasn't His Decision, Says Source



Fresh insights into Mahendra Singh Dhoni's decision to step down as captain of the Indian cricket team have surfaced, suggesting that the choice may not have been entirely his own. According to people familiar with the matter, officials within the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) played a more active role in the process than what was publicly understood at the time.

Dhoni famously relinquished India's limited-overs captaincy in early 2017, ending an era that had included numerous trophies, including the 2011 World Cup, the 2013 Champions Trophy, and multiple IPL titles with Chennai Super Kings. His calm leadership and finishing skills made him one of India's most suc-

cessful captains, and his departure marked a turning point in Indian cricket leadership.

The newly shared details suggest that the BCCI about leadership transition had begun well before Dhoni's official announcement. According to insiders, senior administrators were growing increasingly concerned about the long-term planning and succession process within the team. They believed it was time to gradually hand over leadership to the next generation of players to ensure a smooth transition and sustained success.

While Dhoni was certainly a part of these discussions, the impetus for the timing of his captaincy resignation reportedly

came from the board rather than being wholly Dhoni's personal decision. Some in the administration felt that it was necessary to act sooner rather than later so that a new leader could take charge fully before major tournaments such as the 2019 World Cup.

Former teammates and coaching staff have also weighed in over the years on Dhoni's tenure, often emphasising how much the team benefited from his presence. Many noted that even after stepping down as captain, Dhoni continued to provide crucial support and guidance to the squad as a senior player, mentoring younger teammates and offering strategic input.

The transition period saw Virat Kohli assume the captaincy in all for-

mats, ushering in a new leadership era. Kohli's appointment was seen as part of a broader strategy to build a captain around whom the team's core future could be shaped. The board's forward-looking approach was intended to balance respect for Dhoni's legacy with the need to plan for upcoming challenges.

Fans and cricket experts have long debated whether Dhoni might have stayed longer if not nudged by administrative pressures. Some believe that Dhoni, known for his own instincts and leadership philosophy, would have continued to lead effectively for several more years had he been left to make the choice entirely on his own terms.

The chatter about captaincy transitions high-

lights the complex interplay between player preferences and organisational strategy in elite sports environments. Boards must weigh respect for iconic players with broader considerations about team evolution, particularly when planning around events such as global tournaments and youth development.

For Dhoni, the legacy remains monumental, regardless of how or when the decision was made. His impact on Indian cricket — as captain, wicket-keeper, finisher and mentor — is etched into the sport's history. The new revelations offer fans a deeper look at what went on behind the scenes during one of Indian cricket's most talked-about transitions.

Shahid Afridi Unveils Strategy for Pakistan to Defeat India in T20 World Cup 2026

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has drawn up a strategic blueprint for how his team can beat India in the much-anticipated T20 World Cup 2026 clash — a match that has captured the imagination of cricket fans worldwide. As one of Pakistan's most charismatic and experienced former players, Afridi's analysis combines tactical insight with a deep understanding of the psychological aspects of this fierce rivalry.

Afridi's plan emphasises early momentum and disciplined bowling. Knowing that India boasts a powerful batting line-up capable of explosive starts, he believes Pakistan must strike early by targeting the top order with tight lines and variations in pace. He has repeatedly spoken about the value of disciplined bowling at the start of the innings, suggesting that building pressure through dot balls and early wickets can disrupt India's rhythm and force them into cautious play.

On batting strategy, Afridi argues that Pakistan should rely on fluent stroke-players and strong strike rotation rather than attempting boundary after boundary. His approach emphasises running hard between the wickets and punishing loose deliveries. Afridi also stressed the importance of having stable partnerships that can absorb early pressure and then accelerate in the middle overs with calculated



aggression.

Fielding, in Afridi's view, must be "relentless." He has urged Pakistan's team management to prioritise agility and sharp ground fielding to save crucial runs. In close T20 games, Afridi notes, saving even a few runs in the field can shift momentum and increase pressure on the opposition.

Another key element of Afridi's plan is spin bowling. With pitches in the Caribbean expected to play in favour of slower bowlers at times, Afridi believes that Pakistan's spin attack can play a crucial role in choking the Indian batsmen in the middle overs. He has pointed to

specific match-ups where spin could exploit weaknesses in India's lineup and force mistakes under pressure.

Beyond tactics, Afridi emphasises mental preparation. He feels that Pakistan's players must approach the game with confidence but without undue pressure. India-Pakistan encounters often take on emotional intensity far beyond typical cricket matches, and Afridi recommends that the team management prepare players to stay calm and focused, treating the contest like any other high-stakes game rather than letting atmosphere dictate performance.

Afridi also urged the leadership group to use analytics and data smartly — analysing Indian player tendencies, preferred scoring zones and past performance under pressure. According to him, understanding where India's batsmen struggle and where Pakistan's bowlers excel can guide smarter on-field decisions.

Fan reactions to Afridi's strategic insights have been enthusiastic. Many supporters praised his blend of tactical savvy and motivational leadership, arguing that his status as a former great gives extra weight to his prescriptions. Others took a more cautious view, saying that

while strategy is important, execution on the field ultimately determines the result.

Cricket pundits have also weighed in, noting that while Pakistan has the talent to challenge India, consistency and temperament in key moments often decide the outcome in high-pressure T20 matches.

As the countdown to the marquee fixture continues, Afridi's blueprint adds another layer to the pre-match build-up, giving fans and analysts alike plenty to debate about how Pakistan might triumph over its arch-rivals on cricket's biggest stage.

T20 World Cup 2026: Armed Guards, Special Traffic Plan in Place for India-Pakistan Clash in Colombo



Authorities in Colombo have rolled out extensive security and traffic arrangements ahead of the high-voltage India vs Pakistan match at the T20 World Cup 2026. With the fixture set to take place at the R. Premadasa Stadium, officials are leaving no room for lapses as thousands of fans are expected to attend one of cricket's most anticipated rivalries.

Elite Security Cover for Both Teams

Sri Lankan authorities have confirmed that armed security personnel will escort both teams from the moment they land in Colombo until their departure after the match. The deployment includes specially trained units tasked with providing round-the-clock protection to players, team officials and match administrators.

Security presence will be heightened not just at the stadium but also at hotels, practice venues and along travel routes used by the teams. Officials have stressed that the measures are precautionary and designed to ensure the safety of all participants amid the intense spotlight that accompanies an India-Pakistan encounter.

Special Traffic Arrangements Announced

Given the scale of the event, Colombo Police have introduced a dedicated traffic management plan around the stadium. Diversions, restricted zones and regulated vehicle movement are expected in key areas leading to the venue. Authorities have advised spectators to arrive well in advance of the scheduled start time to avoid delays caused by

security screenings and congestion.

Gates will open several hours before the match to facilitate smooth entry, and fans have been urged to cooperate with security personnel during checks. Emergency services will also have priority access routes to ensure quick response capability if required.

High Stakes On and Off the Field India-Pakistan matches consistently draw massive global audiences and heightened emotions. With both teams reportedly in strong form during the tournament, the anticipation surrounding this Group A clash has reached fever pitch. The contest is expected to be played before a packed house, with millions more watching worldwide.

Officials say the elaborate security setup reflects both the significance of the match and the responsibility of the host nation to ensure a seamless event. Authorities have emphasized that the focus should remain on cricket, and that robust arrangements are in place to prevent any untoward incidents.

A Showcase Event for the Tournament

The India-Pakistan fixture is widely regarded as one of the marquee events of the T20 World Cup. Successfully managing the logistics of such a high-profile match is seen as crucial for the tournament's overall success.

With armed protection, detailed traffic planning and multi-layered security checks in place, Colombo is preparing to host one of the most closely watched clashes in world cricket under maximum safety protocols.

Mohammad Amir Fires Back at Abhishek Sharma Ahead of India-Pakistan T20 World Cup Clash

With the high-stakes India vs Pakistan match at the T20 World Cup 2026 just days away, former Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir has once again taken aim at Indian batter Abhishek Sharma, reigniting a war of words that has added spice to one of cricket's fiercest rivalries.

Amir, who retired from international cricket in his late twenties but remains one of Pakistan's most recognised pace bowlers of recent years, has been outspoken on social media and in interviews in the build-up to the blockbuster contest. The latest exchange centres on comments made by Abhishek Sharma in previous interactions, which Amir interpreted as dismissive or disrespectful toward Pakistan's bowling attack.

Rather than back down, Amir doubled down on his criticism, suggesting that Abhishek's remarks showed a lack of understanding about the intensity and significance of India-Pakistan clashes. Amir accused the young Indian batter of "underestimating the challenge" posed by Pakistan's bowlers and questioned his mental readiness for an encounter watched by hundreds of millions around the world.

Observers say Amir's comments, while personal in tone, reflect the heightened emotions that accompany every India-Pakistan fixture, where pride and pressure run just as high as run rates and strike rates. Internationals from both sides often find themselves drawn into verbal sparring long before the first ball is bowled, and fans on social media have reacted enthusiastically to the latest salvo.

Abhishek Sharma, known for his aggressive batting style and recent strong form, has not formally responded to Amir's remarks. However, in past press conferences and interviews he has maintained that his focus remains on performing for India and contributing to the team's success. He has generally avoided being drawn into prolonged personal exchanges, preferring instead to let his batting do the talking on the field.

Cricket analysts note that pre-



match banter — while intense — is part of what makes India-Pakistan encounters so compelling. For fans, these verbal duels amplify the anticipation and narrative surrounding the match, and broadcast coverage frequently highlights such exchanges in the lead-up to play.

Amir himself has walked a fine line between commentary and confrontation. As a retired star who represented Pakistan with distinction, his views carry weight in the cricketing world, and his confidence in his national team's capabilities is a reflection of his enduring passion for the sport and his country. But critics argue that personal barbs risk detracting from the spirit of the game, particularly when aimed at young players who are still establishing themselves at the international level.

The upcoming match between India and Pakistan is expected to draw massive viewership and a sell-out crowd, making it arguably the most anticipated fixture in this T20 World Cup campaign. Both teams have shown strong performances in earlier matches, and each dressing room will be conscious that a win here would be a major boost to momentum and morale.

As cricket fans countdown to the big day, the Amir-Sharma exchange has only added fuel to the excitement. Whether the verbal sparring influences performances on the field remains to be seen, but it has certainly captured the imagination of supporters across both nations.

At its core, the rivalry transcends mere sport — blending national pride, personal narratives, and theatrical flair in a way that few other fixtures in world sport can match.

Funky Opens to a Strong Start on Valentine's Day Weekend



The Telugu romantic comedy Funky, starring Vishwak Sen and Kayadu Lohar, opened in theatres on February 13, 2026, and recorded a promising first-day box office performance worldwide. Early estimates suggest that the film grossed around ₹2.5-2.6 crore on its opening day, signaling a positive start for the youthful entertainer.

In India, the net collections for Day 1 were approximately ₹2.2 crore, with Andhra Pradesh and Telangana contributing the majority of the revenue. When combined with earnings from other regions and overseas markets, the total worldwide gross reached around ₹2.5-2.6 crore. The film's release over the Valentine's Day weekend helped attract audiences looking for light-hearted romance and comedy, giving it a favorable launch window.

Directed by Anudeep KV, Funky tells the story

of a quirky filmmaker navigating the challenges of making his dream project while developing an unexpected bond with his producer's daughter. The film blends humour, romance, and relatable slice-of-life moments, appealing particularly to younger audiences seeking a fun and entertaining cinematic experience.

Although early responses from critics and viewers were mixed regarding the screenplay and comedic elements, the first-day collections indicate strong initial interest. Trade analysts note that the Valentine's ambience likely boosted theatre footfall, giving Funky momentum for its opening weekend. The youthful energy of the cast and the relatable, romantic storyline have helped the film carve out a solid audience base on its debut.

The film's visuals, music, and performances,

especially by the leads Vishwak Sen and Kayadu Lohar, have been highlighted by viewers as key attractions. The chemistry between the protagonists and the film's playful, humorous moments appear to resonate well with the target audience.

With a Day 1 gross of ₹2.5-2.6 crore, Funky has laid a modest yet encouraging foundation for its box office run. The team hopes that positive word-of-mouth, combined with its Valentine's Day appeal, will sustain audience interest and extend its performance through the opening weekend and beyond.

Overall, Funky's first-day performance demonstrates that the film has successfully captured attention in a competitive market, giving it the potential to become a popular choice among fans of lighthearted romantic comedies in Telugu cinema.

"Chaatu Chaatu" Single from Purushaha Debuts at Kasturba Gandhi College



Amidst the excitement surrounding the upcoming Telugu film Purushaha, the team has released the second single, Chaatu Chaatu, in a unique and heartwarming launch at Kasturba Gandhi Degree & PG College for Women. Following the runaway success of the first single, Jaali Paddevvadu, sung by Oscar-winning composer MM Keeravani, expectations were high—and the song has already begun to captivate fans.

Purushaha, produced by Battula Koteswara Rao under Kalyan Productions and directed by Veeru Vulavala, promises a relatable slice-of-life story about married life told with humour and heartfelt honesty. The film also marks the debut of Pavan Kalyan Battula, who leads a talented ensemble cast including Saptagiri, Kasireddy Rajkumar, Rayancha Kok-

kuri, Vishika, Hasini Sudheer, Sri Sandhya, Gabi Rock, Anaira Gupta, Vennela Kishore, Rajeev Kanakala, Pammi Sai, and VTV Ganesh.

Chaatu Chaatu beautifully portrays the inner world of a college girl silently admiring her beloved from afar. Lyricist Ananta Sriram captures the tender, unspoken emotions of love with simple yet poignant words. The track is further elevated by Shravan Bharadwaj's soulful music, blending subtle instrumentation with a classic melody that tugs at the heartstrings. Chinmayi Sripaada's vocals add grace and warmth, perfectly conveying the song's quiet longing. On-screen, Rayancha Kokkuri impresses with a delicate performance, while Pavan Kalyan Battula brings dignity and restraint to his role.

The song's release on

Valentine's Day adds a timely romantic touch, making it an instant favorite among music lovers. The innovative college launch also reflects Purushaha's playful, off-beat promotional style, which has already generated curiosity among audiences.

Behind the camera, the film boasts impressive technical expertise: cinematography by Satish Muthyala, editing by Koti, and art direction by Ravibabu Dondapati. The post-production is in full swing, with the release date expected to be announced soon.

With its heartfelt story, engaging performances, and melodious tracks like Chaatu Chaatu, Purushaha is shaping up to be a refreshing entertainer that blends humour, romance, and emotion in a way that resonates with viewers of all ages.

Allu Sirish's Valentine's Day Post for Nayanika Wins Hearts

Telugu actor Allu Sirish has once again captured the attention of fans with a heartfelt Valentine's Day post dedicated to his fiancée, Nayanika Reddy, ahead of their wedding scheduled for March 6, 2026. The post, a short and sweet reel on Instagram, showcased candid moments of the couple and was captioned simply, "Happy Valentine's Day, Cutesh." Fans were quick to respond with warm wishes and messages of love, making the post an instant hit on social media.

This Valentine's Day celebration comes during a series of pre-wedding festivities for the couple. The celebrations began with an intimate pasupu ceremony, a traditional ritual attended by close family and friends, marking the joyful start of the wedding celebrations. Prior to that, the couple hosted a yacht party in Dubai, which was attended by their close circle, including Allu Sirish's brother, superstar Allu Arjun, and his wife Sneha Reddy. The event was filled with laughter, music, and cherished memories, setting the tone for the upcoming wedding.

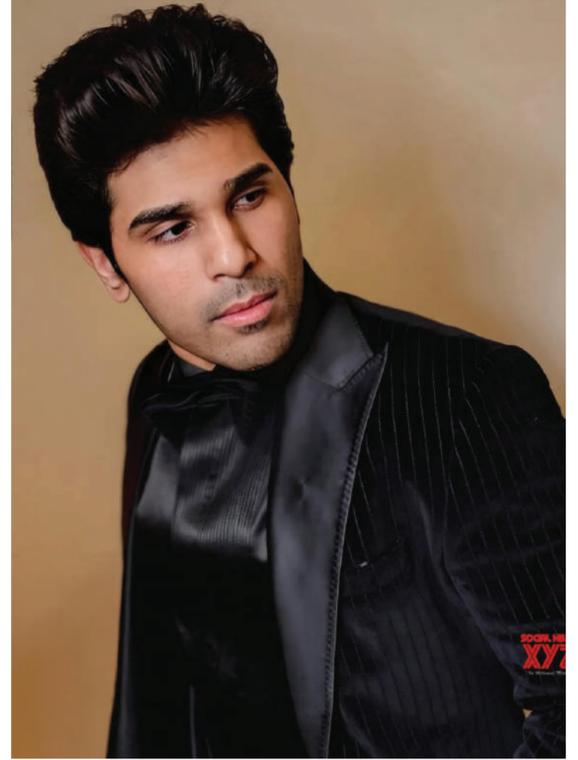
Allu Sirish expressed his excitement at seeing the public's reaction to the film Couple Friendly and shared how honored he felt by the appreciation

of superstar Prabhas, saying that it felt like a personal victory. Similarly, fans have showered the couple with support and love, not only for their posts but also for the authenticity and warmth they share in celebrating their personal milestones.

Nayanika Reddy's charm and grace, combined with Sirish's playful and affectionate expressions of love, have resonated deeply with fans. Their online interactions, photos, and videos continue to capture the essence of their relationship, making the countdown to their wedding a joyful experience for admirers.

The couple's engagement last year was a widely celebrated event in Tollywood, bringing together family, friends, and industry colleagues. Their upcoming wedding has become one of the most anticipated personal milestones in Telugu cinema this year, blending tradition, family warmth, and modern romance.

As the big day on March 6 approaches, Allu Sirish and Nayanika continue to win hearts with their affectionate gestures and posts on social media, turning every update into a celebration of love. Fans eagerly await more glimpses of the couple as they prepare to embark on their journey together as husband and wife.



"Band Melam Set to Strike a Chord: Director Bobby Confident at Glimpse Launch"



Valentine's Day brought an exciting surprise for Telugu film fans as the glimpse of the upcoming romantic entertainer Band Melam was unveiled on social media by acclaimed filmmaker Trivikram. Presented by Mango Mass Media and produced by Kona Venkat under the Kona Film Corporation banner, the film is directed by Satish Javvaji and stars Harsh Roshan and Sridevi in lead roles. The movie is

slated for a March 13 release.

At the special press meet, celebrated director Bobby, a chief guest alongside writer BVS Ravi, expressed his confidence that Band Melam will become a blockbuster. "I insisted on releasing the glimpse on Valentine's Day," Bobby said. "After watching it, I called Roshan immediately—his performance was so natural and confident. Sridevi's charm and

social media appeal shine in the film. Satish Javvaji may appear quiet, but his writing has sharp satire, and it clearly reflects in the film. This movie could even inspire men to wear 'thaali!'"

Producer Kona Venkat, recalling his experiences producing Ninnu Kori, shared his excitement about Band Melam: "When Satish narrated the story, I immediately imagined Roshan and Sridevi in the leads. I

only produce films I truly believe in, and this one felt special from the start. The glimpse had to be released, and Trivikram supported us instantly. I hope the audience loves it as much as we do."

Writer-editor BVS Ravi praised the direction and performances: "Satish has done a fantastic job. The visuals by Satish Muthyala are remarkable, and Vijay Bulganin's music elevates every

scene. Harsh Roshan and Sridevi have delivered wonderful performances."

Both lead actors also shared their excitement. Harsh Roshan thanked the team and fans, promising that Band Melam would remain memorable, while Sridevi said, "This film is very special to me. My character will make the audience laugh and cry. Working with Roshan again was a pleasure, and I hope the film surpasses even Court in success."

Director Satish Javvaji expressed gratitude for the support and highlighted the emotional depth of the film. Music director Vijay Bulganin, art director Narni Srinivas, and other technical members added their voices of optimism, assuring fans of a visually stunning and musically rich cinematic experience.

With its mix of romance, comedy, and emotion, Band Melam promises to be one of the most talked-about releases of the year. Audiences can look forward to experiencing the full film on March 13.

"Prabhas' Praise Feels Like a Win," says Santosh Shobhan at Couple Friendly Success Party

The Valentine's Day weekend has brought a grand celebration for the team of Couple Friendly, as the film opened to a strong response in theatres across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Presented by UV Creations and produced by UV Concepts in Telugu and Tamil, with Ajay Kumar Raju P as co-producer, the romantic entertainer is directed by Ashwin Chandrasekhar and distributed in the region by Dheeraj Mogilineni.

To mark the success, the cast and crew hosted a lively celebration at Gokul Theatre in Hyderabad, cutting a cake and sharing the joyous moment with audiences.

Lead actor Santosh Shobhan expressed his excitement: "I have watched many films at Gokul Theatre, but seeing my own film here today with such a wonderful response makes me extremely happy. Prabhas



also thanked fans, saying, "Your energy and excitement make us very happy. Celebrate Valentine's Day by watching our film, and share the experience with your friends. We're grateful for all the love coming our way."

Distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni highlighted

the significance of the superstar's appreciation: "Prabhas watched our film and said that, just like Varshana was special for him, Couple Friendly will be special for Santosh. This truly motivates us. Santosh's 2.0 phase begins with this film, and he is set to become a major hero this year. Mana-

sa Varanasi has won everyone's hearts, and director Ashwin should continue making films in Telugu and establish himself in Hyderabad. From the very beginning, I believed this film would be a hit, which is why we distributed it. We will continue engaging with audiences throughout the week."

Director Ashwin Chandrasekhar thanked the audience and Prabhas for the warm reception: "We are thrilled to see viewers celebrating Valentine's Day with Couple Friendly. Special thanks to Rebel Star Prabhas for watching and appreciating our film."

With its romantic story-