



BUZZ POINTS

BRS Leaders Stage Protest Alleging Political Harassment of KCR



PAGE 05

BUZZ POINTS

Centre Once Again Discriminates Against Telangana: Ponnam Prabhakar

PAGE 02

Ponnam Prabhakar Defends Phone Tapping Probe, Slams BRS for Undemocratic Rule

PAGE 03

Union Budget Violates Federal Principles, Says Sridhar Babu

PAGE 04

Ponnam Prabhakar Calls for United Congress Push in Mahabubabad Municipal Polls

PAGE 05

Operation Smile Yields Major Success in Adilabad District



PAGE 05

SIT Concludes Questioning of KCR in Phone-Tapping Case

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Sunday concluded its questioning of former Chief Minister and BRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) in connection with the alleged phone-tapping case, marking a crucial stage in the ongoing investigation.



Senior police officials constituting the SIT arrived at the former Chief Minister's residence in the afternoon and questioned him on various aspects related to the alleged illegal surveillance carried out during the previous BRS government's tenure.

The phone-tapping case came to light after a senior police officer lodged a complaint regarding missing surveillance equipment and the destruction of files and hard disks from the SIB office.

disposed of, prompting the state government to constitute a Special Investigation Team to probe the matter comprehensively.

Before appearing for the inquiry, KCR had raised objections to the notices issued to him, terming them improper. However, he later agreed to cooperate with the investigation and presented himself for questioning.

The SIT has already examined several former officials and collected substantial material evidence in the

case. Investigators are reportedly trying to establish the chain of command, the decision-making process behind the alleged surveillance, and the circumstances under which crucial evidence was destroyed.

Security was tightened in and around the former Chief Minister's residence during the inquiry to prevent any untoward incidents. While no immediate confrontation was reported, the development has intensified political debate in the state.

and the BRS alleging political targeting of its leadership.

With the completion of KCR's questioning, the SIT is expected to analyse his statement along with other evidence already gathered. Sources indicated that further notices to other key individuals cannot be ruled out as the investigation progresses.

The phone-tapping case continues to be one of the most closely watched investigations in Telangana, carrying significant political and legal implications for the state.



Minister Seethakka Reviews Sanitation Arrangements at Medaram Jatara Site

Medaram, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Dasari Anasuya Seethakka on Saturday conducted a detailed review of sanitation management at Medaram, following the conclusion of the world-renowned Sammakka-Saralamma Maha Jatara.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Seethakka lauded the tireless efforts of sanitation workers, stating that their services were invaluable to the successful conduct of the mega tribal festival.

The minister expressed her appreciation to the sanitation staff for ensuring that the jatara premises re-

mained clean, safe, and hygienic throughout the event. She noted that their round-the-clock services played a crucial role in providing a comfortable and safe environment for devotees from across Telangana and other states.

Emphasising that sanitation work does not end with the conclusion of the jatara, Minister Seethakka said post-event cleanliness was equally important. She instructed officials to ensure that sanitation operations continue until Medaram is restored to complete cleanliness.

The minister directed sanitation staff and officials to remain stationed at the site and monitor cleanliness activities closely. She stressed that Medaram should be returned to villagers in a clean and orderly condition, reflecting the government's commitment to public health and environmental responsibility.

Calling for coordinated efforts, Minister Seethakka asked all concerned depart-

ments to work in close coordination to achieve total sanitation in the jatara area. She underlined that accountability and teamwork were essential to completing the massive clean-up operation efficiently and within the stipulated time.

She further instructed officials to ensure proper waste disposal and prevent any environmental damage in forest and surrounding regions due to the large influx of pilgrims. The minister said special attention should be given to clearing temporary structures, waste accumulation points, and access routes used during the festival.

Reiterating the importance of sanitation workers, Minister Seethakka said the Sammakka-Saralamma Maha Jatara's success was not possible without their dedication and commitment. She assured the staff of the government's support and recognition for their services.

The review meeting concluded with directions to maintain the same level of responsibility and dedication even after the festival, ensuring that Medaram stands as a model of cleanliness and efficient post-event management.

Union Budget 2026-27 Focuses on Growth, Inclusive Development



New Delhi, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau :

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2026-27 in Parliament on Sunday, outlining a roadmap aimed at boosting economic growth, infrastructure, employment, and fiscal stability.

Sitharaman emphasized three key pillars: sustainable economic growth, inclusive development, and job creation. The budget retains fiscal discipline with a targeted fiscal deficit of 4.3 percent of GDP, while prioritizing public invest-

ment-led growth to enhance long-term competitiveness and resilience.

Infrastructure development received a major focus, with plans for seven new high-speed rail corridors connecting major cities, development of 20 new national waterways, and dedicated freight corridors to improve logistics and reduce transportation costs.

Support for critical sectors was also highlighted, including additional allocations for MSMEs, agriculture, and the bio-pharma industry to drive rural income and create employment opportunities.

transaction tax (STT) and tax collection at source (TCS), aimed at benefiting specific segments of the economy.

Innovation and advanced manufacturing were prioritized, with plans to expand semiconductor production and reinforce chemical parks to reduce import dependence and strengthen domestic value chains.

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

were also raised by several states, including Telangana, which argued that state-specific needs and projects were not adequately represented in the allocations. State leaders have indicated they will seek further discussions with the Union Government to address these gaps.

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

Centre Ignoring Telangana in Union Budget: Bhatti Vikramarka

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau :

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has strongly criticised the Union Budget, alleging that the Centre has completely neglected Telangana despite repeated representations and high expectations from the state government.

Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the Chief Minister, along with all ministers, had met the Prime Minister and Union Ministers, and later a delegation comprising Members of Parliament also approached the Centre seeking support. "We expected key projects such as the Musi River rejuvenation, the Regional Ring Road, and Metro Rail expansion to be included in the Budget. Unfortunately, not a single rupee was allocated," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister expressed particular concern over the Centre's stated focus on biopharma. He pointed out that Telangana, especially Hyderabad, is already a major pharma and chemical hub, with companies like



ACIL established during the Congress regime and well-developed chemical parks. "Even when the Centre announced new chemical parks, Hyderabad was ignored," he remarked.

He also highlighted neglect in other sectors. Despite Telangana's Vision Document giving prominence to sports and the establishment of a Sports University in the state, there was no mention of Telangana in the Centre's affordable sports goods initiative. Similarly, Hyderabad's role in the orange economy was overlooked, with related initiatives being shifted to Mumbai.

Bhatti Vikramarka further noted that Telangana was missing from announcements

on regional medical hubs and semiconductor development, even though the state has submitted proposals and has the ecosystem to support such projects. "The Centre said it would examine semiconductor proposals, but there were no allocations or announcements," he said.

On tourism, he accused the Centre of adopting a step-motherly attitude. Despite Ramappa Temple receiving UNESCO recognition and global attention to Sammakka-Saralamma, including visits by New Zealand tribal representatives, Telangana received no tourism-related funds. "Between the Krishna and Godavari rivers, we have rich temples, forests, and heritage, yet

the Centre continues to ignore us," he said. The Deputy Chief Minister also criticized the weakening of welfare schemes, especially the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, calling the reduction of the Centre's share to 60:40 "highly deplorable." He said Telangana MPs would soon meet the Union Finance Minister to demand allocations and urged pressure on the Centre beyond party lines. On allegations of vendetta politics, Bhatti Vikramarka clarified that the government's objective is transparent governance and that ongoing inquiries, including phone-tapping cases, would proceed strictly according to law.

Centre Once Again Discriminates Against Telangana: Ponnam Prabhakar

Narsampet, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar has accused the Union Government of once again showing a step-motherly attitude towards Telangana in the Union Budget, stating that none of the demands placed by the state were considered. Addressing a media conference at the Narsampet MLA office, the minister spoke alongside Narsampet MLA Donti Madhava Reddy, DCC President Ayub, and senior leader Ashok Goud.

Ponnam Prabhakar said the people of Telangana had hoped that the Centre would allocate funds in a fair, disciplined, and just manner at least in this Budget. "Unfortunately, Telangana has been subjected

to discrimination once again. Not a single proposal we placed before the Centre was approved," he alleged. He recalled that when the Centre acted negligently towards Telangana last year, the state government questioned it on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

The minister said the Chief Minister and ministers repeatedly met the Prime Minister and Union Ministers to submit representations on crucial state requirements. He added that the government also appealed to all political parties to unite and launch a collective movement for Telangana's interests, on the lines of Tamil Nadu. "Despite all these efforts, the Centre has continued its indifferent ap-



proach," he said.

Highlighting the state's progress, Ponnam Prabhakar described Telangana as one of the

most progressive growth-oriented states in the country, moving forward with a long-term vision towards 2047 be-

yond party affiliations. He emphasised Hyderabad's role as the nation's leading IT hub, offering employment

opportunities, favourable climatic conditions, and rich natural resources. "As Hyderabad expands rapidly and the core urban area grows, we demanded the Regional Ring Road and road development between the Ring Road and the Regional Ring Road. The Centre showed a stubborn refusal even on these basic infrastructure needs," he stated.

He said the state also sought funds for the Musi River rejuvenation project but received no support. Clarifying his position, the minister said Telangana does not object to allocations made to Andhra Pradesh. "Our concern is not about others getting funds, but about Telangana being ignored despite being a young state

with genuine developmental needs," he said, adding that the previous government failed to assert the state's rights effectively over the past decade.

Ponnam Prabhakar also criticised the Prime Minister for not attending the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jatarra, despite attending several international events, saying it hurt the sentiments of Telangana people. He praised the state government's extensive arrangements for the Jatarra, including the operation of 4,000 RTC buses, installation of nearly 50,000 barricades, and round-the-clock efforts by officials and staff. He saluted RTC drivers and conductors for their dedication and urged them to ignore

criticism.

Turning to local politics, the minister said Congress is aiming to win all 156 municipal seats in the Mahabubabad parliamentary constituency, which has seven municipalities represented by Congress MLAs. Highlighting welfare measures, he said the government has sanctioned 3,500 Indiramma houses, issued ration cards, supplied fine rice, provided 200 units of free electricity, subsidised gas cylinders, implemented Rythu Bharsa and farm loan waivers, and extended interest-free loans to women. He added that special funds are being allocated for planned urban development, focusing on roads, drainage, and employment generation.

'Ambedkar's Constitution, Not KCR's Rule, Governs Telangana Now': Vakiti Srihari

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Minister Vakiti Srihari on Saturday asserted that the so-called "KCR's regime" has come to an end in Telangana and that the state is now being governed strictly under the Constitution framed by Dr B.R. Ambedkar. Addressing a media conference at the CLP office along with MLC Addanki Dayakar, the minister strongly defended the ongoing phone-tapping investigation and rejected allegations of political vendetta against former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Srihari challenged KCR to come forward and face the inquiry transparently. "If KCR has honesty and integrity, he should come out openly and respond to the allegations. Even his own daughter has alleged that her phone was tapped. This itself raises serious questions," he said. He also accused the previous BRS government of creating chaos in the land and real estate system through the Dharani portal, calling it a major administrative failure. The minister



said BRS leaders were still behaving as if their rule continued, despite repeated electoral setbacks. "The people of Telangana have taught BRS a lesson in Assembly, Parliamentary, and local body elections. Yet, there is no change in their attitude," he remarked. Calling phone tapping a grave crime, Srihari said it was more dangerous than theft and even murder. "This is not a minor offence. It is a direct attack on democracy and a brutal violation of citizens' personal freedom and privacy," he stated. According to him,

the alleged phone-tapping incident in Telangana is one of the most heinous in the country and has damaged the state's reputation at the national level. Clarifying the government's intent, the minister said the investigation was not aimed at settling political scores. "Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the ministers, and this government have no personal grudge against KCR or his family. This is a purely legal and constitutional process. Our only objective is to bring out the truth," he said. He explained that the

case came to light after an Additional Superintendent of Police filed a complaint regarding missing equipment and destruction of files in the SIB office. During the Panjagutta police investigation, it was revealed that several hard disks were allegedly cut using cutters and disposed of in the Musi river and nearby forest areas. "These are not allegations but facts that emerged during the police investigation. Only after such evidence surfaced was a Special Investigation Team constituted," he said.

While phone tapping can be justified for national security or preventing terrorism, Srihari questioned its alleged misuse in Telangana. "How can tapping the phones of ordinary citizens, traders, journalists, film actors, and even husbands and wives be justified?" he asked, terming it unconstitutional and a gross violation of privacy.

He questioned why CCTV cameras were switched off at the SIB office on December 4, why 42 hard disks were destroyed, and why hundreds of files were wiped out. He also asked whether large-scale surveillance equipment could have been procured from Israel without the Chief Minister's knowledge.

Stating that no one is above the law, Srihari cited examples of leaders like Jayalalithaa, Lalu Prasad Yadav, and B.S. Yeddyurappa, who faced investigations. He alleged that evidence was destroyed because BRS lost power, concluding that the probe is essential to protect democracy, people's freedom, and constitutional values in Telangana.

KTR Declares KCR 'Invincible' Amid Seat Inquiry



Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) Working President K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Sunday came out strongly in defence of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), calling him "invincible" amid the ongoing seat inquiry and political controversies. KTR praised KCR's unwavering commitment to Telangana, highlighting his decades-long struggle for statehood and his steadfastness against pressure and adversity. Speaking to the media, KTR said that KCR has never wavered even for a moment in the long fight for Telangana. "No matter what challenges came his way, KCR never stepped back. He has stood like

a mountain against all forces of malice," he said.

He added that KCR is beyond petty political manoeuvres or malicious attacks. "Your small-time politics and cheap tricks cannot shake him. KCR is undefeated. Those who fail to understand history cannot even grasp the significance of his leadership," KTR remarked. Warning political rivals, he said, "Just hearing his name should give you pause. You don't even have the stature to mention him. No matter how much venom is spread today, no one can touch him."

KTR described KCR as the embodiment of Telangana's history. "KCR is Telangana's history itself. You cannot even be a footnote in that history," he

said, underlining the former Chief Minister's unparalleled legacy and leadership in shaping the state.

The remarks come amid political turbulence and scrutiny of KCR's seat, but BRS leadership has reiterated that their founder's contributions and leadership remain untouchable. KTR emphasised that KCR's resilience, courage, and dedication to Telangana continue to inspire the people and remain unshaken in the state's political landscape.

He concluded by asserting that opponents' attempts to intimidate or discredit KCR will not succeed, reinforcing the former Chief Minister's position as a symbol of strength, perseverance, and Telangana pride.

720 Crore Released to Clear Government Employees' Pending Bills

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

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Harish Rao Terms SIT Probe Against KCR 'Political Vendetta'

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) senior leader and former minister T. Harish Rao on Sunday sharply criticised the Special Investigation Team (SIT) action against former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) in the alleged phone-tapping case, calling it a politically motivated attack rather than a legitimate legal inquiry. He alleged that the ruling Congress government was misusing investigative agencies to target opposition leaders for political gain. Addressing the media, Harish Rao said the notices issued to KCR were part of a vendetta strategy rather than a transparent probe. He criticised the SIT for acting under political pressure, describing it as an instrument carrying out instructions of the state leadership in-

stead of functioning independently. According to him, issuing notices to a leader of KCR's stature in a high-profile case reflects a vindictive mindset rather than adherence to legal norms. Harish Rao also questioned the choice of procedural methods, including the venue and manner of issuing notices, terming them "cheap political tactics" designed to embarrass the former Chief Minister publicly. He accused the Congress government of using the controversy to divert attention from governance failures, broken promises, and pressing issues affecting the public, especially ahead of local body elections.

He further asserted that the ruling party's strategy aims to shift focus away from critical issues like agricultural distress, youth unemployment, and economic stagnation

by targeting opposition leaders through manufactured controversies. Despite his strong criticism, Harish Rao emphasised that KCR has cooperated with the investigation process as a responsible citizen and is respecting the legal framework.

Reiterating that political harassment under the guise of inquiry would not intimidate the BRS, Harish Rao warned that the party would firmly oppose any unjust actions against its leadership or cadre. He stressed that the SIT's current approach undermines public confidence in impartial investigations and is perceived by many as an attempt to undermine KCR's political legacy. Harish Rao's remarks highlight the growing political tension in Telangana, where the phone-tapping case has become a focal point of debate. Opposition leaders and

Konda Surekha Launches Congress Campaign in Khammam

Khammam, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Minister Konda Surekha, appointed as the Congress Party's district in-charge for the upcoming municipal elections, arrived in Khammam district on Saturday and formally launched the party's election campaign. Her visit is seen as a key political development as the Congress steps up preparations to consolidate its position in local body elections across the district.

Acting on the directions of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Minister Surekha reached Khammam and first held a detailed meeting with senior local leaders and party functionaries. During the interaction, she reviewed the prevailing political situation in the district and took stock of the preparedness for the municipal elections. Party leaders briefed her on constituency-level dynamics, organisational strengths, and areas that require focused attention.

Addressing party



leaders, Minister Surekha said the primary objective of her tour was to ensure the victory of Congress candidates in all municipalities of the district. Expressing confidence, she recalled that the Congress had secured victory in all Assembly constituencies in Khammam district except one in the recent Assembly elections. Building on that momentum, she asserted that the party was well-positioned to achieve a

clean sweep in the municipal polls as well.

As part of her campaign strategy, the minister will hold a series of meetings with party leaders, elected representatives, and grassroots-level workers. She is expected to provide clear direction on campaign planning, booth-level coordination, and voter outreach. Emphasis will be laid on highlighting the welfare schemes and development initiatives being imple-

mented by the Congress government and effectively communicating them to the public.

Minister Surekha stated that the Congress government is committed to taking welfare programmes directly to the people and ensuring inclusive development. She underlined the importance of local body elections in strengthening democratic governance and called upon party workers to work

with unity and discipline to secure a decisive mandate.

During her district tour, the minister is scheduled to campaign extensively in municipalities including Edulapuram, Wyra, Madhira, Sathupalli, Aswaraopeta, Kothagudem, and Yellandu. In these areas, she will canvass support for Congress candidates, interact with residents, and listen to public grievances.

Interacting with the public, Minister Surekha said that genuine public welfare and comprehensive development are possible only under Congress rule. She urged party leaders and cadres to remain closely connected with the people, understand their problems, and present the Congress as a responsive and people-centric alternative. Calling for collective effort, she expressed confidence that united work by all party ranks would ensure a resounding victory in the municipal elections.

Budget 2026 and Telangana: Stability for the Centre, Stagnation for the State

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Union Finance Minister's claim that Budget 2026 prioritises "stability, discipline, growth and people over populism" may sound reassuring in Parliament, but for Telangana, the budget tells a very different story. Behind the lofty slogan lies a familiar pattern of neglect, where promises remain on paper and allocations fail to reach the ground. For the twelfth consecutive year, denial has been repackaged as fiscal discipline.

What Telangana received in Budget 2026 is not merely inadequate support—it is virtually nothing. Key sectors that define growth, employment, and urban quality of life have been ignored. Urban India, particularly fast-growing states like Telangana, has been sidelined with municipal and urban development funds effectively stalled. At a time when cities are engines of economic growth, this neglect threatens long-term sustainability.

Infrastructure projects critical to Telangana's future remain frozen. The Regional Ring Road (RRR), estimated at 34,367 crore, continues to wait, along with national highways, radial roads, and airport-linked connectivity projects. Rail infrastructure paints an equally bleak picture, with new railway lines stuck at the clearance stage and no meaningful progress reflected in budgetary support. Education, a sector repeatedly described as a national priority, has also been shortchanged. Telangana's long-pending demands for institutions such as IIM Hyderabad, 16 Navodaya Vidyalayas, and nine Kendriya Vidyalayas were once again ignored. The denial of these institutions directly impacts access to quality education and regional equity.

Employment generation has suffered a major setback with the shelving of the Warangal Coach Factory, a project that once prom-



ised large-scale jobs and industrial growth in the region. Similarly, irrigation, housing, and broader economic growth initiatives have been reduced to announcements without allocations—headline promises without financial backing. The continued non-implementation of commitments under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act remains a glaring failure. Adding to this is the missing 50 per cent Central share for Hyderabad Metro Phase-2 under the proposed joint venture model, effectively stalling a crucial urban mobility project. Energy support has been halted, and industrial incentives denied, further constraining the state's growth potential. Telangana has sent eight BJP Members of Parliament to the Lok Sabha, expecting that its voice would be heard at the national level. Instead, Parliament has sent back zero funds and endless files. This is not cooperative federalism; it is selective governance. Telangana has been pushed to the back of the queue, asked to wait indefinitely while others move ahead.

Budget 2026 may speak the language of stability and discipline, but for Telangana, it represents stagnation and silence—another year where expectations were ignored and aspirations deferred.

Ponnam Prabhakar Defends Phone Tapping Probe, Slams BRS for Undemocratic Rule



Mahabubabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

State Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Saturday strongly defended the ongoing investigation into alleged phone tapping during the previous BRS regime, stating that the law would take its own course and that no individual, irrespective of position, was above accountability. He rejected allegations of political vendetta and accused the former government of indulging in large-scale un-

democratic practices.

Addressing a media conference at the Mahabubabad MLA camp office, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar spoke alongside MLAs Murali Naik and Koram Kanakiah, and District Congress Committee (DCC) Presidents Uma Murali Naik and Devi Prasanna. He said the Congress party, as a national party with a long democratic legacy, firmly believes in the need for a responsible and effective opposition, but not at the cost of democratic values.

The minister said he was speaking from the land that fought against forces opposed to Telangana. He alleged that after the formation of Telangana, the then BRS government failed to uphold democratic principles and instead functioned in an authoritarian manner. "There was a time when phones were tapped to even listen to what family members, including relatives, were speaking. This is not democracy," he remarked.

He alleged that during the ten-year rule of the BRS, phone tapping was used as a weapon against opposition leaders, government employees, public representatives, officials, journalists, and even businesspersons. He further claimed that phones of judges, IAS and IPS officers were also tapped to protect illegal activities. "Is it possible to procure phone tapping equipment and conduct surveillance on such a massive scale without the Chief Minister's

approval?" he questioned. Minister Prabhakar alleged that during by-elections held under the previous regime, opposition leaders' phones were monitored to manipulate outcomes. He claimed that after losing power, evidence related to phone tapping was destroyed to erase traces of wrongdoing.

Dismissing claims that notices issued as part of the probe amounted to harassment, he said police investigations are a legal process and apply equally to everyone. "When mistakes are committed, investigations are inevitable and punishment cannot be avoided," he said. He also alleged that many leaders now threatening protests and shutdowns over questioning of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao may themselves have been subjected to phone tapping earlier. The minister stressed that Telangana was formed after a struggle against authoritarianism and

that misuse of laws meant to safeguard national security for political surveillance was unacceptable. "The Telegraph Act is meant to monitor threats like terrorism, not to spy on intellectuals, elected representatives, or even family members," he said. Minister Prabhakar asserted that the BRS was attempting to gain sympathy by portraying investigations as harassment. He pointed to the party's repeated electoral defeats, including parliamentary, bypoll, MLC, and recent local body elections, stating that the people had already rejected its governance. Concluding his remarks, he said the alleged economic mismanagement and authoritarian rule of the previous decade would not be forgotten. He expressed confidence that just as rural voters delivered a decisive verdict earlier, urban voters would give a similar response in the upcoming municipal elections.

Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy Slams BRS Over Phone Tapping, Questions Moral Stand

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Bhongir Member of Parliament Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Saturday strongly criticised the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) for what he described as "double standards" in the alleged phone tapping case, questioning the party's protests against the Special Investigation Team (SIT) notices issued to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR). He said invoking Telangana self-respect in this context was misleading and unacceptable. Addressing the media, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said BRS leaders were creating an emotional narrative around Telangana self-respect to divert attention from serious allegations. He questioned whether it was possible

to procure sophisticated phone tapping equipment from Israel without the knowledge or approval of the Chief Minister when KCR was in office. "Large-scale phone tapping cannot happen without the consent of the top leadership," he asserted. The MP alleged that after the BRS lost power, attempts were made to destroy crucial evidence related to the phone tapping issue. He claimed that CCTV cameras in the Special Intelligence Branch office were switched off and that tapping equipment and files were destroyed and disposed of in locations such as the Musi river and the forests of Vikarabad. "If there was nothing to hide, why was evidence allegedly destroyed?" he asked. Chamala Kiran Ku-

mar Reddy further alleged that phone tapping was misused to suppress opposition voices and prevent political rivals from growing. He claimed that civil rights in Telangana were severely curtailed during the BRS regime, with phones of opposition leaders, bureaucrats, journalists, public intellectuals, businesspersons, and even family members being tapped. He alleged that surveillance extended to KCR's own relatives as well.

Questioning the BRS's commitment to Telangana identity, the MP asked where Telangana self-respect went when the party changed its name from Telangana Rashtra Samithi to Bharat Rashtra Samithi, removing the word "Telangana." He also recalled several in-



cidents from the previous regime, including the alleged disrespect shown to revolutionary poet Gaddar, the midnight detention of Telangana Joint Action Committee chairman Prof. Kodandaram, and the alleged harassment and removal of Etela Rajender from the Cabinet. He criticised remarks allegedly made by BRS leaders on women-centric welfare schemes and accused the party of arrogance during its time in pow-

er. He said promises such as making a Dalit the Chief Minister and providing one job per household were never fulfilled, amounting to a betrayal of public trust. Stating that the people of Telangana had already rejected the BRS in parliamentary, bypoll, MLC, and local body elections, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said the party's decade-long "authoritarian and destructive rule" was well known. He questioned why senior police officials allegedly fled after the Congress came to power if there was no wrongdoing. Concluding, he urged BRS leaders to stop "dramas" in the name of self-respect and cooperate with the SIT probe, stating that anyone found guilty must face the law.

'Is Improving the State a Crime?': Dr Methuku Anand Slams Congress

Vikarabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Strongly condemning the issuance of notices to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, Vikarabad district BRS president and former MLA Dr Methuku Anand alleged that the Congress government is resorting to conspiracies as it is unable to confront KCR politically. He termed the move as a deliberate attempt to harass and humiliate the BRS supreme under the pretext of investigations. As per the directions of the BRS party, Dr Methuku Anand led a protest in Vikarabad town on Saturday by wearing black scarves. He began a rally from his residence along with former BC Commission member Shubprad Patel and several BRS leaders from the Vikarabad Assembly constituency. The rally proceeded up to BJR Chaurasta, where the leaders staged a sit-in protest on the road, raising slogans against the Congress government and condemning what they described as political vendetta. Addressing the gathering, Dr Methuku Anand said it was highly objectionable to insult KCR, who played a pivotal role in achieving Telangana statehood and served as Chief Minister twice, in the name of inquiries. "KCR is the architect of Telangana and a leader who transformed the state in every sector. Targeting him repeatedly with notices is not-



ing but a political conspiracy born out of frustration," he alleged. He accused the Congress party of failing to counter KCR on political and governance issues and instead indulging in diversionary tactics. "Is it a crime to develop the state? Is it wrong to work for farmers, the poor, and weaker sections? Instead of conspiring against KCR, the Congress government should focus on fulfilling the promises it made to the people of Telangana," he said.

Dr Methuku Anand warned the Congress leadership to stop what he called "drama politics" every time elections approach. "Whenever elections near, the Congress government tries to divert public attention by creating controversies and targeting opposition leaders. This will not help them escape accountability," he remarked.

He further stated that the people of Telangana are closely watching the actions of the present government and would respond appropriately at the right time. "The people have already seen KCR's governance and the progress Telangana achieved

under his leadership. No amount of conspiracies or false cases can erase that legacy," he asserted.

The former MLA said that BRS would continue to fight democratically against what it considers misuse of power and would stand firmly with KCR. He cautioned the government against undermining democratic values and institutions for political gains. "If the Congress believes that harassing KCR will weaken BRS, it is mistaken. Such actions will only strengthen our resolve," he said.

The protest concluded peacefully with BRS leaders reiterating their demand that the Congress government abandon vendetta politics and work sincerely for the welfare and development of Telangana and its people.



Mahesh Kumar Goud Defends SIT Probe, Says Law Is Equal for All

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau
 Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud on Saturday strongly defended the ongoing Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the alleged phone tapping during the previous BRS regime, asserting that there was no political vendetta behind the questioning of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR). Addressing a media conference at Gandhi Bhavan, he said the law must be allowed to take its own course. Mahesh Kumar Goud accused the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) of resorting to emotional narratives to escape

accountability. He remarked that "BRS has effectively become a 'Blackmail Rashtra Samithi,'" alleging that phone tapping was misused during its ten-year rule to intimidate and blackmail political opponents and influential individuals. He said investigations were being conducted into the alleged lawlessness that prevailed under the BRS government and stressed that leaders involved in phone tapping would be questioned, irrespective of their stature. Describing phone tapping as a "grave and unforgivable crime," he said it violated constitutional rights and democratic values. The TPCC chief said



SIT notices had been issued not only to KCR but also to other senior leaders such as K.T. Rama Rao, Harish Rao, and Santosh Kumar,

and questioned why KCR's questioning was being projected as extraordinary. "Projecting KCR's inquiry as an attack on Telangana self-respect is laughable," he remarked, adding that portraying KCR as a victim was misleading. Mahesh Kumar Goud said KCR was still under the illusion of royal rule and needed to understand that everyone is equal before the law. "When the law is doing its duty, making allegations and crying conspiracy is unfortunate. The law is not related to anyone," he said. Drawing parallels, he pointed out that several former chief ministers across the country, including Shibu Soren,

Mayawati, Jayalalitha, Lalu Prasad Yadav, and B.S. Yediyurappa, had faced investigations while in or out of power. "KCR is no exception," he asserted. Referring to the Telegraph Act, Mahesh Kumar Goud said phone tapping is permitted only in exceptional circumstances such as threats to national security. He alleged that in Telangana, phones of industrialists, film personalities, journalists, and even private citizens were tapped and misused for blackmail. "Even the privacy of married couples was intruded upon," he alleged. He dismissed the BRS protests as "sentimental dramas," stating

that people were no longer willing to believe such tactics. He recalled incidents involving revolutionary poet Gaddar and Telangana JAC chairman Prof. Kodandaram, questioning the BRS's claims of respecting democratic values. Mahesh Kumar Goud clarified that issuing notices to permanent addresses was standard procedure and said the SIT probe was essential to bring out the truth. He concluded by stating that there was no comparison between Sonia Gandhi's questioning in the past and KCR's present inquiry, reiterating that the investigation was purely legal and devoid of political motives.

Union Budget Violates Federal Principles, Says Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau
 Telangana Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu on Sunday strongly criticised the Union Budget 2026-27, calling it contrary to the spirit of the Constitution and a violation of cooperative federalism. He said the Budget ignored the principle that national development depends on the financial self-reliance of states and singled out Telangana for discriminatory treatment. In a statement, Sridhar Babu expressed disappointment that Telangana was not mentioned even once in the Budget speech, despite contributing over 5% to the country's Gross Domestic Product. "The slogan of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' has once again failed to ensure equitable treatment for Telangana," he said, adding that political considerations seemed

to have taken precedence over economic rationale. The Minister accused the Centre of adopting a biased approach in financial allocations, terming it "fiscal suppression." He pointed out that while the Union Government projected grants of 22,782 crore for Telangana for the current financial year, the State had received only about 4,000 crore even after ten months, which is less than 20% of the allocated amount. Sridhar Babu highlighted that the Constitution mandates equitable distribution of resources between the Union and the States, and he alleged that the latest Budget undermined this principle. "Cooperative federalism cannot survive when States are denied the resources due to them. Telangana is being treated unfairly despite repeated representations to the



Centre," he said. The Minister also criticised the Union Government for ignoring key infrastructure and development projects proposed by Telangana. These included the Regional Ring Road, Metro Rail Phase-2, Godavari-Musi river linkage, the greenfield highway between Bandar Port and Hyderabad Dry Port, new airports, enhanced rail connectivity, and funds for pending assurances under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. Sridhar Babu urged BJP MPs from Telangana to explain the Centre's treatment of the State to the people and called on the Union Government to respect the constitutional principle of equality. "The Budget should reflect fairness and equitable growth for all States. Telangana's contributions and needs cannot continue to be ignored," he said. The Minister's statement has added to the growing criticism from Telangana leaders and stakeholders who argue that the latest Union Budget fails to consider the State's developmental priorities and undermines the very principles of cooperative governance enshrined in the Constitution.

Centre Plans Three High Speed Trains for Telangana: Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau
 Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday announced that the Union Budget 2026-27 includes provisions for three high speed train corridors connecting Hyderabad with major southern cities, a development he said will significantly enhance connectivity and support economic growth in Telangana. Addressing the media in New Delhi, Kishan Reddy highlighted key infrastructure commitments made by the Centre in the recently presented Budget, emphasising that improving transport links for Telangana is part of the government's broader agenda for regional development and integrated national growth. Kishan Reddy said the high speed train corridors will link Hyderabad with Pune, Bengaluru, and Chennai, bringing these major commercial and industrial hubs closer to the state capital. He de-



scribed the plan as a game changer for travel and commerce, expecting it to substantially reduce journey times and boost economic activity along the routes. According to the minister, the introduction of these high speed services reflects the government's commitment to modernising rail infrastructure and expanding connectivity networks across India, with a special focus on strategic nodes such as Hyderabad that serve as regional engines of growth. He also underscored that while the Budget prioritises these flagship rail projects, support will also be extended for other long term infrastructure requirements, including metro and urban transit investments, once detailed project reports are approved by the relevant ministries. Kishan Reddy said the Budget's emphasis on high speed rail corridors aligns with the vision for faster, more reliable transportation systems that can spur regional development, create jobs, and attract investments. He maintained that these rail links are not only about faster travel but also about enabling stronger economic integration between Telangana and neighbouring states. The announcement

has drawn attention across the state, with stakeholders noting that high speed connectivity could transform logistics, trade, tourism, and education links, especially between Hyderabad and some of the country's fastest growing cities. In reaction to the developments, several local leaders and business groups welcomed the move, calling for swift action on planning and implementation phases so that tangible progress can begin soon. They emphasised the importance of collaboration between the Centre and the Telangana government to ensure land acquisition, clearances, and funding pathways are efficiently managed. With the Budget prioritising connectivity and infrastructure expansion, proponents say the planned high speed rail corridors could become a hallmark of Telangana's growth trajectory in the coming decade.

Tension at Hyderabad Minister Quarters During BRS Protests

Hyderabad, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau
 Tensions escalated at the Minister Quarters area in Hyderabad on Sunday as BRS student wing leaders (BRSV) intensified protests against the Special Investigation Team (SIT) summons issued to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) in the alleged phone tapping case. The situation turned volatile when student leaders attempted to march towards the Minister Quarters, prompting police intervention and several arrests. The protests were part of a larger statewide agitation called by the BRS leadership, accusing the Congress government of politically targeting senior leaders. BRSV activists, waving black flags and raising slogans,

tried to approach the Minister Quarters to express their dissent. Police stopped them, resulting in scuffles and the detention of key BRSV leaders, including the state student wing president and vice-president. Demonstrators shouted slogans such as "CM Down Down" and "Stop political vendetta," reflecting widespread frustration over the SIT notices issued to KCR. The protest highlighted growing unrest among party supporters, who view the investigation as a politically motivated move rather than a neutral legal process. Authorities responded by deploying additional police personnel and installing barricades around sensitive areas, including the residence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, to



prevent escalation. Traffic restrictions were also imposed in parts of the area to maintain public safety and order. BRS leaders have mobilised supporters across Telangana following the SIT notices, insisting that the demonstrations are a legitimate expression of dissent against perceived political harassment. Party officials emphasised that while protests are meant to convey public sentiment, they do not intend to disrupt civic peace. During the initial hours of the agitation, police urged citizens to remain calm and respect law and order. They clarified that attempts to breach secured areas or threaten safety would be handled strictly. The developments at the Minister Quarters re-

BRS Terms SIT Notice to KCR a 'Black Day' in Telangana

Sangareddy, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau
 BRS district president and Sangareddy MLA Chintha Prabhakar on Sunday strongly condemned the Special Investigation Team (SIT) notice issued to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), calling it a "black day in Telangana history." He described the notice as a politically motivated move by the ruling government, aimed at harassing the former Chief Minister rather than conducting an impartial investigation. Speaking at a protest rally in Sangareddy, Prabhakar said KCR, who played a pivotal role in the Telangana statehood movement and subsequent governance, was being unfairly targeted. He alleged that the SIT action was orchestrated under the influence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and was an attempt to intimidate both KCR and his party. Prabhakar emphasised that such politically motivated actions undermine democratic norms and set a dangerous precedent for the state. As part of the protest,



BRS supporters wore black badges and scarves and marched to the town's new bus station, holding placards denouncing the state government's actions. They also burnt an effigy of the Chief Minister to symbolise their anger and dissatisfaction. Minor scuffles occurred when police tried to prevent the effigy burning, but order was restored after intervention by law enforcement officials. Prabhakar praised KCR's leadership and highlighted his role in implementing major welfare schemes and infrastructure projects in Telangana. He said that

instead of focusing on governance and development, the present state administration was misusing investigative agencies for political gains. "KCR has the support of millions of Telangana citizens, but the government is bent on cheap political tactics," he said. Several local BRS leaders and party activists joined Prabhakar in the protest, urging supporters to remain vigilant and resist what they described as unjust action by the state government. They warned that targeting the former Chief Minister through legal means would only strengthen public resolve and solidarity with KCR. The demonstration in Sangareddy reflects a broader trend of statewide mobilisations by the BRS following the SIT notices to KCR and other party leaders. Protests, rallies, and effigy burnings have been reported in multiple districts as the party continues to challenge what it calls political harassment. Police maintained a strong presence at the protest sites to manage crowds and ensure that law and order were maintained, despite heightened tensions.

BRS Leaders Stage Protest Alleging Political Harassment of KCR

Adilabad District, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Leaders and activists of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) staged a road blockade and protest at Ichoda mandal in Adilabad district on Saturday, alleging political harassment of party president and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) by the Congress-led State Government. The agitation was organised condemning the issuance of notices to KCR and what the party described as “targeted political vendetta.”

Raising slogans against the Congress government, BRS leaders said that serving notices to KCR amounts to an insult to Telangana’s self-respect. They alleged that the present government, having failed to effectively govern and implement the promises made to the people, was resorting to deliberate political harassment of KCR to divert public attention from its shortcomings.



Addressing the gathering, BRS leaders accused the Congress government of being unable to fulfil its electoral assurances and instead focusing on settling political scores. They warned Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy that any attempt to harass KCR would be met with strong resistance and could lead to serious repercussions across the state. “If KCR is targeted unjustly, Tel-

angana will rise in protest,” they cautioned. The speakers recalled KCR’s role as the architect of the Telangana movement and the leader who played a pivotal role in achieving a separate state. They said that as the first Chief Minister of Telangana, KCR had steered the state on a path of development and welfare. Issuing notices and initiating cases against such a leader, they argued, was unjustified and politically motivated.

BRS leaders further stated that during the Telangana movement, party cadres had faced numerous cases, arrests, and restrictions, but never backed down. They asserted that the party would not be intimidated by cases or investigations and would continue to fight on behalf of the people of Telangana, regardless of pressure from the ruling

dispensation.

The protestors demanded an immediate halt to what they termed harassment under the pretext of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe against KCR. They said the dharna was organised as per the directions of Boath MLA Anil Jadhav, reflecting the party’s resolve to oppose what it sees as misuse of power.

Several senior and local BRS leaders participated in the agitation, including Mandal President Krishna Reddy, former MPSC Gadge Subhash, former Sarpanch Pandurang, along with leaders Narwade Ramesh, Shabbir, Maateen, Ganesh, Praveen, Ganapathi, and a large number of party workers.

The protest concluded with BRS leaders reiterating their demand that the Congress government stop political harassment and focus instead on governance and fulfilling promises made to the people.

Ponnam Prabhakar Reviews Congress Strategy for Municipal Polls in Dornakal

Mahabubabad District, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

As part of preparations for the upcoming municipal elections, In-charge Minister for Mahabubabad Parliament and senior Congress leader Ponnam Prabhakar toured the Dornakal Assembly constituency in Mahabubabad district on Saturday. During his visit, the minister held extensive meetings with key Congress leaders from Maripeda and Dornakal municipalities, stressing the need for unity and coordinated efforts to secure a clean sweep in the local body polls.

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, along with Dornakal MLA Ramachandra Naik and District Congress Committee (DCC) President Uma Murali Naik, interacted ward-wise with Congress candidates contesting the municipal elections. They reviewed ground-level preparations and urged candidates and party cadres to work in close coordination to ensure 100 per cent victory in both municipalities within the constituency.

Addressing party leaders, the minister made it clear that even aspirants who did not receive tickets must actively campaign for the officially nominated candidates. He assured them that the party would stand by committed workers and that those who had worked sincerely for the party would be given due recognition. Leaders who withdrew from the race in the interest of the par-



ty would be considered for nominated posts in the future, he said.

Later, speaking at a media conference held at the Maripeda MLA camp office, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said he had been appointed as the Congress Party’s Mahabubabad Parliament coordinator for the municipal elections. He noted that there are seven municipalities under the parliamentary constituency — Yellandu, Dornakal, Maripeda, Mahabubabad, Kesamudram, Narsampet, and Mulugu—and asserted that the party’s goal was to win all of them.

He called upon party leaders and workers to put in sustained efforts over the next ten days to achieve total victory. Highlighting the Congress government’s

performance, the minister said the previous government had failed to fulfil its promises over a decade, which led to public dissatisfaction. In contrast, he said, the present government had provided 3,500 Indiramma houses in the constituency, distributed ration cards to all eligible beneficiaries, and implemented schemes such as free power up to 200 units, subsidised LPG

cylinders, and free bus travel for women. He added that welfare schemes like Shaadi Mubarak and Kalyana Lakshmi were being continued, while farmers were benefiting from Rythu Bharosa, loan waivers, bonuses for fine paddy, and assured minimum prices. Women’s self-help groups were being supported through interest-free loans, with a long-term goal of making one crore women financially empowered.

The minister also highlighted large-scale recruitment, stating that over 70,000 jobs had been filled across departments. Calling on voters to question the opposition, he urged people to reject what he termed as misinformation by BRS and BJP.

Reiterating party discipline, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said the party’s decision would be final and appealed to leaders who filed nominations independently to withdraw them by February 3. He concluded by urging Congress leaders to work unitedly to ensure victory in all seven municipalities under the Mahabubabad parliamentary constituency.

Ponnam Prabhakar Calls for United Congress Push in Mahabubabad Municipal Polls



Mahabubabad District, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Saturday toured Mahabubabad district and held a crucial meeting with senior Congress leaders and party candidates as part of preparations for the upcoming municipal elections. The meeting, held at the Mahabubabad district headquarters, focused on strengthening coordination among party ranks to ensure a comprehensive victory for the Congress across municipalities in the region.

The minister interact-

ed with key Congress leaders from Mahabubabad, Yellandu, and Kesamudram municipalities. The meeting was attended by MLAs Murali Naik and Koram Kanakaiah, District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents Uma Murali Naik and Devi Prasanna, along with other senior leaders. Minister Ponnam Prabhakar stressed that all leaders must work in unison to ensure that the Congress flag flies high in every municipality.

Addressing concerns over ward-level differences, the minister said candidates had been selected based on surveys

and the “select-elect” principle, which prioritises winnability. He urged leaders and cadres to hold face-to-face discussions in wards where consensus was lacking and resolve differences in the interest of the party. He made it clear that party discipline must be maintained and that all leaders should support officially announced candidates.

Referring to alliance dynamics, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said the Congress and CPI should work together in seats where the CPI is contesting as part of the alliance. He later handed over B-Forms to Con-

gress candidates contesting in Mahabubabad, Yellandu, and Kesamudram municipalities through the respective DCC presidents.

The minister said the Mahabubabad Parliamentary constituency comprises seven municipalities with a total of 156 seats. He noted that five MLAs, four DCC presidents, and several senior leaders, including heads of corporations and institutions, were actively working to ensure success in the municipal elections. He set clear targets, stating that Congress must secure all 36 seats in Mahabubabad municipality and all 16 seats in Kesamudram.

Highlighting the government’s welfare initiatives, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar criticised the previous government for failing to deliver on promises such as double-bedroom houses. In contrast, he said the present Congress government had sanctioned

3,500 Indiramma houses per constituency, distributed ration cards, supplied fine rice, implemented Rythu Bharosa and farm loan waivers, and provided interest-free loans to women’s self-help groups. He also highlighted free bus travel for women and free electricity up to 200 units.

Calling for unity, the minister said candidates would be finalised based on social justice, party loyalty, and winning potential, with due representation to SCs, STs, BCs, and minorities, including 42 per cent reservations. He assured party workers that those who work sincerely for the party would be rewarded with opportunities in the future and urged everyone to collectively work towards ensuring a clean sweep for the Congress in all seven municipalities under the Mahabubabad Parliamentary constituency.

Tensions Rise in Khammam Over BRS Protests

Khammam, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Political tensions escalated in Khammam district on Sunday as Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) supporters intensified protests against the Special Investigation Team (SIT) summons issued to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) in the alleged phone tapping case. The demonstrations, part of a state-wide agitation, saw clashes with police, road blockades, and widespread public disruption in several areas of the district.

BRS leaders and activists took to the streets early in the day, demanding an end to what they described as politically motivated action against their party president. Protesters staged dharnas at key junctions, organized bike rallies, and burned effigies of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, shouting slogans against the Congress-led state government and expressing solidarity with KCR.

Tensions further

escalated when police deployed barricades to control the crowds. In some areas, scuffles broke out, leading to arrests of demonstrators for obstructing public pathways and resisting police directives. Authorities maintained heightened vigil around sensitive locations to prevent the situation from worsening.

Local BRS leaders accused the SIT action of being an attempt to harass the party and silence its leadership ahead of upcoming elections. They claimed the move reflected political vendetta rather than impartial investigation and warned that the public would not tolerate misuse of investigative agencies for political purposes. Activists asserted that the protests were a demonstration of genuine public sentiment against perceived injustice.

Party workers expressed frustration at what they described as a pattern of targeting senior BRS leaders not only in Khammam but across

Telangana. They stated that protests would continue until the state government ensured that legal processes were conducted transparently and without bias. BRS leaders said they were committed to peaceful demonstrations but warned that rallies, effigy burnings, and road blockades would escalate if necessary.

The unrest in Khammam mirrored similar protests in other districts of Telangana, where BRS supporters have mobilized throughout the week following the SIT’s notices and scrutiny of leaders linked to the phone tapping controversy. Police urged all groups to maintain peace and adhere to law and order while registering dissent.

The protests in Khammam have become a significant political flashpoint, highlighting the growing tension between the BRS and the state government over the handling of legal and political matters concerning KCR and his leadership.

Operation Smile Yields Major Success in Adilabad District

Adilabad District, February 1, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The month-long Operation Smile initiative launched to eradicate child labour in Adilabad district has achieved significant success, with authorities rescuing 85 child labourers and registering multiple cases against violators. District Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan, IPS, announced the results through a press release, describing the operation as a major step towards completely eliminating the child labour system in the district.

The special drive was conducted from January 1 to January 31 with the objective of identifying, rescuing, and rehabilitating children engaged in labour and ensuring their return to education. As part of the operation, the district po-

lice, in coordination with multiple government departments, rescued 85 children from hazardous and illegal working conditions. Of these, 79 were boys and six were girls.

According to the SP, 72 rescued children were reunited with their parents after proper counselling, while 13 children were shifted to residential hostels to ensure their safety, education, and overall welfare. Notably, 24 of the rescued children belonged to other states. Authorities ensured that these children were repatriated in a phased manner and safely handed over to their parents or family members in their native places.

As part of strict enforcement, 35 cases were registered across the district against individuals and establishments found employing child

labour. Additionally, 81 FIRs were recorded under relevant legal provisions. SP Akhil Mahajan warned that stringent action would be taken against anyone violating child labour laws, reiterating that no leniency would be shown to offenders.

The operation was carried out with the collective efforts of the District Child Welfare Committee, Labour Department, Education Department, Child Protection Unit, Medical Department, and several non-governmental organisations. Joint teams conducted inspections at hotels, construction sites, brick kilns, and other workplaces where children were found working under unsafe conditions. The rescued children and their parents were counselled, and awareness was created on the importance



of education and the legal consequences of child labour.

Emphasising the long-term vision of the initiative, the SP stated that Operation Smile would not end with this month-long drive. Continuous monitoring would be carried out throughout the year, and immediate action would be taken wherever child labour is detected. He appealed to the public to report any instances of child labour by dialling 100, assuring that the identity of in-

formants would be kept strictly confidential.

Calling upon society to collectively protect children’s rights, SP Akhil Mahajan said that only sustained community participation, along with firm enforcement of the law, could ensure that children remain in schools and not at workplaces. He reaffirmed the police department’s commitment to making Adilabad a child-labour-free district and ensuring a safer, brighter future for every child.



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

However, the Budget's caution is equally visible in its treatment of taxation. There are no sweeping changes to personal income tax structures or dramatic reductions aimed at boosting consumption. Instead, the government appears to be relying on the tax reforms introduced in recent years to do the heavy lifting. The assumption seems to be that stability and predictability in the tax regime are more valuable at this stage than frequent tinkering. For taxpayers hoping for immediate relief, this may feel underwhelming, but from a policy perspective, it reinforces the message that fiscal consolidation takes precedence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mamata Banerjee's response has been forceful. She has framed the ED's actions as politically motivated and an example of institutional overreach engineered by the rival party. Banerjee and her supporters have held protests, rallied public sentiment and criticised the central agencies for allegedly targeting political opponents with the aim of influencing the electoral environment. These events have



given the TMC a potent rallying cry: that Bengal must defend its democratic rights against what she portrays as a concerted attempt to stifle dissent.

This narrative resonates with many in the state, particularly among communities wary of central power. Banerjee has successfully tapped into deep-seated concerns about federalism and autonomy, arguing that the actions against her party represent not just political rivalry, but a broader assault on Bengal's identity and electoral freedom. In doing so, she has strength-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

sion greater capacity to manage these responsibilities effectively.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Immigration officials have stressed that no legitimate government official will ever ask for extra money, promise guaranteed approvals, or offer faster processing in exchange for unofficial fees. De-

spite this, many students fall victim to scams through social media, messaging apps and unofficial websites that claim to provide “guaranteed visas” or “special immigration packages.” These offers often involve forged admission letters, fake financial documents or incorrect personal information — all of

which can trigger misrepresentation charges.

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

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

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

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

The increased vigilance has

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



has been active in the province for decades. The BLA has long campaigned for greater autonomy and control over Balochistan’s substantial natural resources, and its fighters have regularly clashed with Pakistani forces in an enduring conflict marked by periodic escalations. In this latest assault, the group reportedly initiated operations across several districts at nearly the same time, demonstrating a high degree of coordination and planning.

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

concerns about wider unrest.

In response to the attacks, Pakistan’s leadership condemned the violence and praised the bravery of its security personnel, while emphasising a firm resolve to counter insurgent threats. High-level officials underscored that the coordinated nature of the attacks would not succeed in weakening state authority, and vowed sustained pressure against militant networks. In strategic locations where clashes occurred, including urban centres and remote districts, security forces launched extensive clearance operations to flush out residual fighters and re-establish order.

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

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

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

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

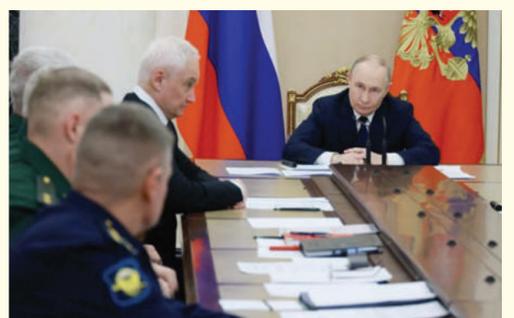
Why Donetsk Remains Central to Russia-Ukraine Peace Talks and Putin’s Negotiating Strategy

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

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

For Russian President Vladimir Putin, full control over Donetsk is viewed as a core objective of the war. Moscow has repeatedly indicated that any peace agreement must recognise Russia’s claims over territories it says are now part of the Russian Federation. From the Kremlin’s perspective, resolving the Donetsk issue is essential to legitimising its military campaign and presenting a tangible outcome to domestic audiences. Ceding this demand would weaken Russia’s negotiating position and undercut the narrative of success that has been built around the conflict.

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



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

The dispute over Donetsk encapsulates the broader deadlock in peace talks. While negotiators may find common ground on humanitarian issues, prisoner exchanges or temporary cease-fires, territorial sovereignty remains a red line for both sides. Efforts to explore compromise solutions — such as freezing current frontlines or deferring territorial decisions — have so far failed to bridge the gap.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Immediate Market Reaction: Nervous Sentiment and Sell Off

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

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



sified selling, particularly in financial and cyclical sectors.

Positives: Fiscal Discipline and Long Term Growth Themes

Not all reactions have been negative. Several analysts highlighted aspects of the Budget that are supportive of long term economic growth — and, by extension, stock markets. One key positive is the government's continued emphasis on capital expenditure, especially in infrastructure, defence, and manufacturing. A sustained push on physical investment has the potential to generate broad economic activity, strengthen industrial capacity, and boost corporate earnings over time. Markets generally respond well to visible commitments to infrastructure outlays, as these can enhance growth prospects for sectors ranging from capital goods to logistics and engineering.

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

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

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

Key Concerns: Trading Costs, Liquidity and Near Term Pain

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

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

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

Looking Ahead: Markets Will Adjust Over Time

Analysts stress that while the initial reaction has been negative, broader market trends will depend on how corporates adapt to the new fiscal landscape and how key budget measures are implemented. Short term volatility may persist as traders digest the implications of higher transaction costs and adjust positions accordingly. However, longer term trends could be shaped by the underlying growth narrative — especially if capital spending delivers tangible economic results and investor confidence gradually returns.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tiny Hole in Nail Clippers Triggers Online Curiosity and Debate



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The presentation of the Union Budget 2026-27 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 may have been a crucial economic event, but on social media, it quickly turned into a full-blown meme festival. As the Finance Minister delivered her budget speech in Parliament, netizens across platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and Facebook responded in real time with humour, satire and creativity,

transforming policy talk into viral entertainment.

Almost immediately after the speech began, memes flooded timelines, capturing the collective mood of taxpayers, especially the middle class. From jokes about shrinking savings to playful digs at budget jargon, users found inventive ways to express their expectations, disappointments and cautious optimism. One popular theme revolved around the annual

hope for tax relief, with memes humorously depicting salaried individuals waiting anxiously for announcements that would make a difference to their monthly budgets.

Several memes poked fun at how budget speeches are perceived as lengthy and complex. Internet users joked about struggling to stay attentive while figures and fiscal terms were discussed, while others humorously claimed that the real highlight of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The exchange began when an anonymous user on a popular social platform posted a critical comment suggesting that Indian professionals tend to exaggerate the urgency of their tasks and labelled them as generally incompetent. In response, the tech employee — a software engineer working in the United States — took the unusual step of publicly refuting these claims and offering a very different perspective based on his first-hand experience.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

According to the man, who is originally from Lucknow, the incident occurred after he completed a cab journey in Dubai. Unaware that his wallet had slipped out of his pocket, he only realised it was missing sometime later. What could have turned into a stressful situation instead unfolded in an astonishingly smooth manner.

Unbeknownst to him, the taxi driver found the wallet soon after the passenger had exited the vehicle. Instead of ignoring it or keeping it, the driver promptly handed the wallet over to the authorities. Thanks to the well-coordinated system in place, officials were able to trace the wallet's owner quickly and contact him without any hassle.

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

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

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

trace.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



ling chatter among fans and pundits alike.

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

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

action.

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

Fans have taken to so-

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Samson's inconsistency has raised questions about his ability to anchor India's batting in tournament conditions, despite his proven T20 pedigree and elegant stroke play. Gavaskar's blunt assessment reflects a broader trend in cricket selection, where recent form increasingly influences decisions. He noted that unless Samson rediscovers his scoring touch, it is difficult to see him being included in the World Cup XI.

For Kishan, this situation underscores how consistent performance at the international level can shift selection narratives. His explosive batting and ability to provide quick starts make him a strong candidate for the opening spot, especially with other all-rounders and key players returning from injury. Gavaskar stressed that, with the margin for error small in World Cup matches, players in form are likely to be favored to maximize team chances of success.

As the tournament approaches, the final XI will depend on fitness updates, strategic balance, and the performances of key players in the lead-up series. Gavaskar's comments signal that Kishan's recent performances make him the probable choice, leaving Samson to prove his form and regain confidence if he hopes to secure a spot in India's T20 World Cup lineup.

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



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

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

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

In a message widely shared through social me-

dia and cricket platforms, Ganguly highlighted the importance of form and readiness during the competition itself. He stressed that past successes carry little weight once the tournament begins, and that teams must deliver their best cricket at each stage to stay competitive and fulfill their potential.

Ganguly also expressed confidence in the overall strength of the current Indian squad. He pointed out that India boasts quality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Observers noted that skipping the handshake is



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

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

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

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

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

Despite the missed handshake, focus quickly shifted back to the match itself. India had been unbeaten in the tournament leading up to this clash, while Pakistan had delivered mixed results in the Super Six stage. This encounter was therefore pivotal in determining which team would advance to the semifinals.

The moment adds another chapter to the storied cricketing rivalry between India and Pakistan, demonstrating that even at the youth level, encounters between the two nations carry heightened significance and attention from fans and media alike.



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

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

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

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

seconds, turning the delivery into a social media sensation.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

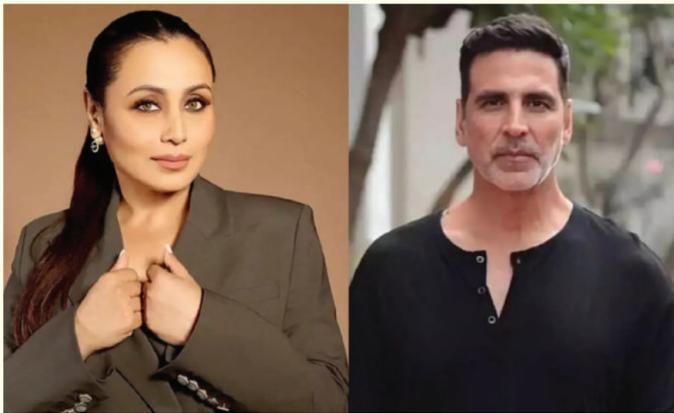
The technical crew brings together several talented names. Priyesh GuruSwamy serves as the Director of Photography, promising visually compelling storytelling, while Sakthi Pranesh handles editing duties. Music is composed by Vi-

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

On its first day, Mardaani 3 collected an impressive ₹4 crore, marking a sensational start for a female-led film in India. The strong numbers underline the audience's continued trust in Rani Mukerji's ability to shoulder intense, performance-driven cinema.

Trade analysts attribute the film's excellent

opening to a combination of strong franchise recall, glowing reviews, and powerful word of mouth. Audiences and critics alike have praised the film for its gripping narrative, social relevance, and Rani's commanding screen presence.

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

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

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

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

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

The film is helmed by debu-



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

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

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

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

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

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

"Devagudi" Emerges as Audience-Backed Success



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

at a grand success meet held in Hyderabad.

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

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

Speaking at the event, Bellam Ramakrishna Reddy expressed gratitude to the media and audiences for standing by the film. He said the response has been overwhelmingly positive, with viewers praising the gripping screenplay, ab-

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

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

backdrop has been especially well received.

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

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

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

'Honey' Promises a Hauntingly Different Theatre Experience

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

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

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

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



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

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

Actor Raja Ravindra said he was initially curious about how such a complex story would be executed but was shocked by the final output. He described his role as one of the most

memorable characters of his career and expressed hope that the film would help some viewers break free from superstitions.

Actresses Divi and Divya Pillai echoed similar sentiments, calling Honey a unique, haunting, and performance-driven film. They urged audiences to watch it in theatres on February 6, promising a truly new and unsettling cinematic experience.