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# Telangana Phone Tapping Controversy: KTR Calls Allegations Fictional

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN

Bureau

**B**harat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has strongly dismissed allegations in the ongoing phone-tapping case in Telangana, calling them completely baseless and politically motivated. The controversy, which involves claims of unlawful interception of communications during the previous BRS government's tenure, has been at the center of political debates for months. KTR, who was recently questioned by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) for several hours, described the entire narrative as a "fictional story" aimed at diverting public attention from pressing governance issues.

Emerging after the prolonged session, KTR emphasized that he fully cooperated with the authorities and answered all questions. However, he argued that the investigation lacks substantial evidence linking him or other BRS leaders to any wrongdoing. He accused the ruling party of using the case as a diversionary tactic rather than focusing on governance and development matters. KTR stressed that repeated questioning without



clear proof appears designed to tarnish the reputation of party leaders rather than uncover any facts.

The phone-tapping controversy first surfaced amid allegations that communications of opposition leaders, journalists, businessmen, and other individuals were illegally intercepted. KTR and other BRS leaders have maintained that the issue is being exploited for political purposes and that the SIT's actions are part of a broader strategy to distract the public from pressing issues in the state. KTR argued that, under his leadership, the party's government had always adhered to legal procedures and that the narrative of il-

legal surveillance is being artificially constructed.

BRS officials have repeatedly pointed out that the focus on the phone-tapping case is overshadowing real governance concerns, including economic development, employment generation, and social welfare programs. KTR highlighted that the state government has been proactive in implementing public welfare initiatives and providing transparency in administrative actions, while the opposition is using sensational allegations to gain political mileage. The SIT, meanwhile, continues its inquiry into the allegations, examining possible misuse of sur-

veillance tools by some officials during the BRS administration. KTR insisted that while the party respects legal processes, the baseless nature of the accusations has created unnecessary political tension. He urged citizens to view the case objectively and not be misled by sensational claims.

KTR's statements have intensified the political debate in Telangana, with both sides holding firm positions. While the SIT continues its probe, the BRS leadership remains steadfast in calling the allegations a politically engineered attempt to divert attention from governance and development issues in the state.



# Mahabubabad Gurukula Student Injured by Snake Bite, Exposes Telangana School Neglect

Mahabubabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

A shocking incident at the Inugurthi Gurukula in Mahabubabad district has raised serious concerns about the safety and living conditions in Telangana's government-run residential schools. Ashmitha, an intermediate student at the gurukula, was rushed to a hospital after being bitten by a snake while on campus, leaving her fighting for her life. Former Minister and Deputy Floor Leader Harish Rao criticized the state government, holding Chief Minister Revanth Reddy fully accountable for the safety and welfare of gurukula students.

"Under CM Revanth Reddy's administration, are these gurukulas meant to be educational institutions or snake dens?" Harish Rao questioned, highlighting what he called a grave administrative failure. He added that while the government has been touting Integrated Schools with an investment of 20,000 crore, the condition of existing gurukulas has

been left to deteriorate.

Harish Rao pointed out that the schools are plagued with overgrown plants, insufficient lighting, and unsanitary conditions, creating an environment where snake and dog bites have become common occurrences. "Students are deprived of basic nutrition and protection, and yet the government continues to focus on photo opportunities abroad rather than addressing these urgent local issues," he said.

Parents of the gurukula students expressed anguish, questioning whether their children are sent to schools to study or to risk their lives. Harish Rao urged the state government to immediately intervene, provide proper medical care for Ashmitha, and ensure that all gurukula students are protected from such hazards in the future.

"This administration must prioritize the safety and welfare of these children over political ambitions," he said. He also criticized the government for neglecting day-to-day operational and

safety standards in residential schools, despite the high-profile promotion of Integrated Schools.

Harish Rao further emphasized that the incident exposes systemic negligence, urging the government to take immediate steps to clean and secure the gurukula campuses, provide proper lighting, remove hazardous plants, and ensure access to basic amenities for all students.

He concluded by warning that political efforts or high-profile appearances cannot replace the government's responsibility to safeguard the lives of children. "Chief Minister Revanth Reddy must acknowledge this failure and put the welfare of underprivileged students at the forefront of his administration," Harish Rao said, calling for urgent action to prevent similar incidents in the future. This incident has reignited public debate on the conditions of Telangana's residential schools, highlighting the need for comprehensive reforms and accountability from the state government.

# Kishan Reddy Highlights Development, Budget Gains for Telangana in Press Meet



Hyderabad, February 3,

2026 | TPN Bureau:

**U**nion Minister G. Kishan Reddy addressed the media in Hyderabad on Tuesday, outlining key development initiatives and financial gains for Telangana following the presentation of the Union Budget 2026-27. In a detailed interaction with reporters, the senior BJP leader emphasized the benefits that the state is set to receive from central allocations and infrastructure projects, while also highlighting new opportunities aimed at boosting growth and connectivity.

Kishan Reddy explained that Telangana's share in central tax devolution has increased sig-

nificantly, providing a larger financial boost to the state's development agenda. He noted that the enhanced allocation will support infrastructure projects, social welfare schemes, and economic expansion across sectors. Highlighting rail connectivity enhancements, he said several high-speed rail corridors announced in the latest budget will have Hyderabad as a focal point, linking it directly with major cities like Pune, Bengaluru and Chennai. According to the minister, these corridors are expected to accelerate economic activity, improve travel connectivity, and generate employment opportunities for locals.

In addition to high-speed rail plans, Kishan Reddy said work on over 30 railway stations in Tel-

angana is underway and will be completed this year, bringing modern facilities and improved services to commuters. He also spoke about the establishment of a research centre for the Kavach automatic train protection system in Hyderabad, positioning the city as a future railway hub.

Pointing to the broader benefits of the national budget, he conveyed that initiatives like rural employment schemes, MSME growth funds, and incentives for municipal infrastructure will have a positive impact on Telangana's economy. Kishan Reddy highlighted that programmes aimed at supporting industries, increasing funding for fertiliser subsidies and facilitating girls' hostels across all districts will contrib-

ute to social development.

During the press interaction, he reiterated that these central investments reflect a long-term commitment to strengthening Telangana's economic and structural foundations. He appealed to local stakeholders and citizens to view these allocations as opportunities to enhance job creation, improve connectivity, and support regional development.

Kishan Reddy's remarks underscored the alignment between central policy initiatives and Telangana's development goals, as well as the government's efforts to leverage budget measures for inclusive growth and improved public services in the state.

# iBomma Ravi Bail Hearing Postponed

Hyderabad, February 3,

2026 | TPN Bureau:

**T**he Telangana High Court has postponed the bail hearing of iBomma administrator Immadi "Ravi" in connection with multiple piracy cases. Ravi, currently in judicial custody at Chanchalguda Jail, had filed a petition seeking bail following allegations of operating an online platform that hosted and distributed pirated movies, causing significant losses to the Telugu film industry.

The hearing, scheduled for Tuesday, was ad-

journed to Friday to allow the court to review additional legal arguments and documentation from both the prosecution and defense. The court did not reject the bail petition but indicated that further scrutiny is required before reaching a decision. Ravi's legal team argued that continued detention without judicial relief warranted consideration under constitutional safeguards and procedural fairness. Prosecutors opposed the bail request, emphasizing the seriousness of the charges and the potential impact of alleged



digital piracy on the film industry. They stated that ongoing investigation and continued detention were necessary to prevent further unlawful activity and secure evidence.

Since his arrest, Ravi has remained in judicial custody amid multiple

cases linked to online piracy offenses. The case has drawn attention from both the entertainment sector and legal observers, highlighting concerns about intellectual property violations and cybercrime enforcement.

# Senior AIMIM Leader Ahmed Pasha Quadri Passes Away

Hyderabad, February 3,

2026 | TPN Bureau:

**S**enior All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader and former MLA Syed Ahmed Pasha Quadri passed away on Tuesday evening in Hyderabad, triggering widespread grief across political and public circles. He was 72. Quadri had been suffering from a prolonged illness and was undergoing treatment at Owaisi Hospital, where he breathed his last.

A towering figure in Telangana politics, Ahmed Pasha Quadri devoted several decades to public service and party organisation. Beginning his

political journey at the grassroots level, he steadily rose through the ranks of AIMIM to become one of its senior-most leaders and later served as the party's General Secretary. His commitment, discipline, and strong connect with the masses earned him respect far beyond party lines. Quadri entered the Telangana Legislative Assembly in 2004 from the Charminar constituency and went on to win consecutive elections in 2009 and 2014. In the 2018 Assembly elections, he successfully contested from Yakutpura constituency, reaffirming his enduring popularity among voters in Hyderabad's Old City. His legislative career

spanned nearly two decades, from 2004 to 2023. Even after stepping away from electoral politics due to health issues, he continued to guide the party in an advisory role.

Known for his close association with three generations of the Owaisi family, including the late Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, Quadri was widely regarded as a vital link between AIMIM's leadership and grassroots cadre. His organisational skills and unwavering loyalty significantly strengthened the party's base in Telangana. Condolences poured in from leaders across the political spectrum. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy expressed deep sorrow

over Quadri's demise, describing him as a committed public servant who worked tirelessly for the welfare of minorities. The Chief Minister noted that Quadri's journey from a municipal corporator to a four-time MLA reflected his dedication to public life and service. He prayed for peace to the departed soul and conveyed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

Born and brought up in Hyderabad, Ahmed Pasha Quadri was admired for his accessibility and ability to connect with people from all walks of life. His contribution to politics and public welfare has left a lasting imprint on the city's political landscape.

# Congress MP Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy Urges Voters to Reject BRS in Municipal Polls

Delhi, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Congress MP Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy has appealed to Telangana voters to reject the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in the upcoming municipal elections, as the nomination process concludes today. Speaking from Delhi, Reddy accused BRS of attempting to win elections through manipulative tactics rather than genuine public support.

Reddy criticized BRS leadership for organizing state-wide protests in response to SIT notices served to K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), Telangana's former chief minister. He also alleged that K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) had made exaggerated claims, calling KCR the "father of the state," while attempting to spread misinformation against the Congress party.

The MP further highlighted the controversial political career of Harish Rao, pointing out that he became a minister in the Rajasekhara Reddy government despite not being an elected legislator. "Harish Rao



assumed a ministerial post without winning elections and has since relied on political favoritism," he said, adding that internal reports

suggested Harish Rao depended on others to retain positions of power. Reddy defended Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, saying he rose to his position without external support. He criticized Harish Rao for spreading false narratives, describing them as "petty and baseless," and asserted that Revanth Reddy had never used foreign influence or shortcuts to achieve political success. The Congress MP also condemned KCR's earlier tenure, alleging that he concentrated power within his family and

failed to provide jobs or opportunities to deserving citizens despite promises of employment. He reminded voters of BRS's past electoral failures, including zero wins in parliamentary elections and defeats in the Jubilee Hills constituency, and questioned the party's record on governance and public welfare. Reddy expressed concern over the Union Budget, claiming Telangana received inadequate allocations, and criticized BJP MPs for not advocating effectively for the state. He em-

phasized that the Congress government has successfully conducted Group 1 and Group 3 exams without leaks and has created 65,000 jobs since coming to power, with plans to fulfill promises in the job calendar. Urging voters to carefully consider past performance and governance records, Chamal Kiran Kumar Reddy called on Telangana residents to support Congress candidates in the municipal elections, reinforcing the party's commitment to fairness, employment generation,

## Minister Tummala Engages with Farmers at Rythu Nestham Program

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Telangana Agriculture Minister Tummala Nagewara Rao actively participated in today's Rythu Nestham program, engaging directly with farmers to understand their needs and experiences. Farmers from various districts shared their agricultural challenges, innovative practices, and the benefits they are receiving from government schemes.



During the event, Rangareddy district farmer Shiva provided insights on integrated and natural farming practices, highlighting sustainable agricultural techniques. Meanwhile, IFFCO State Marketing Manager Krupa Shankar gave a detailed explanation of nano-urea usage, its benefits, and proper application methods. Agricultural scientists from PJTSAU, Dr. Kiran Babu and Dr. Arunasri, educated farmers on pest and disease management in Yasana

gi paddy, providing scientific guidance for effective crop protection. Minister Tummala personally inquired about the implementation of the Urea App, and farmers expressed satisfaction, noting that the app has made fertilizer supply transparent, timely, and convenient. Farmers emphasized that easy access to urea and prompt delivery has been highly beneficial for their crop productivity. The minister also recognized farmers achieving higher incomes through innovative practices. He lauded

ed Ramakrishna from Pudur village in Jagtial district for excelling in beekeeping, and Shiva from Rangareddy for successfully implementing natural farming methods. Officials were advised to encourage more farmers to adopt these progressive practices. Farmers expressed gratitude for the recent launch of kandi procurement centers, which provide fair prices and reduce dependency on middlemen, ensuring better returns for their produce. Highlighting the importance of

planning, Minister Tummala instructed officials to finalize discussion topics in advance for every Tuesday's Rythu Nestham sessions. Farmers' experiences and success stories should be showcased directly at field sites, allowing other farmers to learn practically. He stressed that the program should continue efficiently, with officials and scientists actively reaching out to farmers. Special attention must be given to ensure maximum participation through prior awareness campaigns and coordination. Minister Tummala reaffirmed that Rythu Nestham serves as a critical platform to strengthen government initiatives and empower farmers, aligning programs with their real-time needs. The event was attended by Agriculture Department Director Gopi and other senior officials, who participated in discussions and facilitated interactive sessions, underscoring the government's commitment to farmer welfare and sustainable agricultural development.

## Minister Ponnampaluri Launches Road Safety Pledge Website in Telangana

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Telangana's Transport and BC Welfare Minister, Ponnampaluri, inaugurated a dedicated Road Safety Pledge website at the Secretariat today, marking a significant step toward fostering a culture of responsible road behavior across the state. The initiative aims to sensitize citizens and parents alike about the importance of road safety, emphasizing that safeguarding lives is a shared responsibility that begins at home and extends to every street and highway.



Addressing the gathering, Minister Ponnampaluri highlighted the need for discipline, awareness, and responsible conduct among road users. "Road safety is not merely about enforcement—it is about building a culture where every citizen respects traffic rules and every life on the road," he said. The website encourages individuals to take a citizen's pledge to follow traffic regulations diligently, while parents are urged to set examples for children by adopting safe road practices.

The program also reflects the government's institutional commitment to road safety, integrating technology and citizen engagement to ensure long-term impact. Through the website, citizens can actively

ly participate in the pledge, track safety campaigns, and contribute to building safer roads statewide. Several senior officials attended the launch, including Special Chief Secretary Vikas Raj, Transport Department Commissioner Ilambarti, Joint Transport Commissioners Chandrashekar Goud and Shiv Lingayya, and State Transport Authority member Naveen Petteem. Their presence highlighted the government's multi-departmental approach to promoting road safety and public participation. Minister Ponnampaluri urged citizens to em-

brace the pledge sincerely, noting that fostering a culture of safe driving and responsible behavior is essential not only for individual safety but for the well-being of entire communities. He stressed that initiatives like the Road Safety Pledge website serve as both a practical tool and a symbolic commitment to protecting lives on Telangana roads. This launch is expected to significantly enhance public engagement in road safety awareness and strengthen the state's efforts to reduce traffic-related accidents through proactive citizen participation.

## Jagtial Congress Rift Over Municipal Ticket Allocation



Jagtial, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Tensions within the Congress party in Jagtial district have intensified ahead of the municipal elections, with senior leader T. Jeevan Reddy expressing strong displeasure over the distribution of party tickets. The disagreement highlights factional rivalry between Jeevan Reddy's camp and the supporters of MLA M. Sanjay Kumar, who joined Congress after leaving the BRS in 2024.

Jeevan Reddy publicly criticized the party leadership, alleging an imbalance in the allocation of tickets for the upcoming municipal polls. According to his camp, 30 tickets were allotted to candidates backed by Sanjay Kumar, while only 20 tickets were given to aspirants aligned with Jeevan Reddy. The senior leader described the decision as unfair and expressed frustration, saying it felt like a personal blow after years of loyalty to the

party. The disagreement has sparked unrest among Congress workers and supporters. A large number of party cadres gathered at Jeevan Reddy's residence on Tuesday to discuss the way forward. The event has also prompted heightened political tension in the district, with party officials monitoring the situation closely. The rift has been attributed to longstanding internal rivalries between the two leaders.

Jeevan Reddy, who lost to Sanjay Kumar in the 2023 Assembly elections, has been vocal about his dissatisfaction with the party's approach since Sanjay's induction. Their differences previously led to Jeevan Reddy walking out of a party meeting in January, objecting to Sanjay Kumar's presence at internal discussions. The ticket distribution row has added a new layer to these ongoing tensions. Aspirants from both camps have filed nominations, but party insiders say a majority of party forms have been issued to candidates supported by Sanjay Kumar's group, deepening the divide. With the municipal elections around the corner, party officials are reportedly making efforts to convince both sides to resolve differences and focus on electoral strategy. However, Jeevan Reddy's public expression of discontent and the large turnout of supporters at his residence underscore the internal challenges Congress faces in presenting a united front in Jagtial. The situation remains delicate, and how the party reconciles these differences could play a crucial role in its performance in the upcoming municipal polls.

## Supreme Court Clarifies Governor's Quota MLC Selection in Telangana

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 The Supreme Court of India has provided fresh legal clarity on the selection process for Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs) under the Governor's quota in Telangana, an issue that has been mired in litigation and political contention for more than a year. The matter revolves around the nomination of individuals as MLCs under the Governor's quota—a constitutional provision that allows the Governor to nominate members with special knowledge or practical experience in fields such as literature, science, art, cooperative movement or social service. Disputes over several nominations have ended up before the apex court after conflicting orders from the Telangana High Court and subsequent nominations by state governments. Previously, two prominent nominees—Prof. M. Kodandaram and Amer Ali Khan—were sworn in as MLCs under the Governor's quota. However, their appointments were challenged in court by party leaders who argued that the process violated previous



High Court directions and constitutional norms. The Supreme Court had earlier annulled those nominations, stating that they could not stand given the pending legal proceedings and the circumstances under which they were made. In its latest clarification, the Supreme Court said that its interim orders do not block the selection process for Governor's quota MLCs outright. Instead, it emphasized that nominations can go forward subject to the ultimate outcome of the ongoing legal proceedings. The court underscored that

its orders were procedural and interim in nature, and were not meant to permanently bar the nomination mechanism. Political leaders from various parties reacted strongly to the clarification. Some welcomed the decision as providing greater certainty to the process, while others reiterated their intention to pursue legal avenues if they believe constitutional principles are not observed. With this clarification, the process for selecting Governor's quota MLCs is expected to move forward, albeit with continued judicial oversight until final adjudication.

respecting judicial process and avoiding a complete halt of the nomination mechanism. Political leaders from various parties reacted strongly to the clarification. Some welcomed the decision as providing greater certainty to the process, while others reiterated their intention to pursue legal avenues if they believe constitutional principles are not observed. With this clarification, the process for selecting Governor's quota MLCs is expected to move forward, albeit with continued judicial oversight until final adjudication.

# Ponnam Prabhakar Highlights Development, Urges Support in Husnabad

Husnabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 As the Husnabad municipality elections draw near, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, in charge of Transport and BC Welfare, held a detailed press conference highlighting the Congress party's development initiatives and urging voters to support its candidates across all wards.

The minister noted that the party's screening committee, chaired by Tummala Nageshwar Rao, had finalized candidates for 20 wards and called on the public to ensure their victory. He emphasized that winning these seats would enable the government to maintain the momentum of progress achieved over the past two years, particu-

larly in education, healthcare, employment, and urban infrastructure.

Minister Ponnam outlined several key projects aimed at transforming Husnabad into a model town. These include the establishment of Sathyavahana University Engineering College on a 35-acre campus, a 250-bed hospital, and industrial corridors to boost local employment. Major road projects, including the Foreline Road connecting Husnabad to Karimnagar, are underway, along with urban development initiatives such as the beautification of Elamma and Mattadi tanks, drainage improvements, and irrigation work across surrounding villages.



Highlighting welfare programs, the minister underscored the government's commitment to housing and social support. Over 500 Indiramma houses have already been approved in Husnabad, new ration cards are being distributed, 200 units of free electricity are provided to households, and women enjoy free bus travel. Skill

development programs through SETWIN aim to enhance employment opportunities for women, while parks, sports facilities, yoga spaces, and an urban forest park improve the quality of life in the municipality.

Minister Ponnam also described initiatives to boost commerce and tourism, including shopping

complexes near Devalthala Bavi and vegetable markets, as well as infrastructure upgrades around temples and trekking routes. Flood mitigation measures and pest management programs have been implemented to protect farmers and ensure urban safety.

The minister criticized past administrations for neglecting

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PARTY (INC)					
HUSNABAD MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS CONTESTING CANDIDATES LIST					
S.No.	Ward number	Contestant	BC Status	Serial Number	
1	1st Ward	Gen - W	Chennammani Anusha Vithayagar	BC - D (Yadav)	9010571262
2	2nd Ward	Gen - W	Kista Swamy	SC - (Mala)	999266250
3	3rd Ward	Gen - W	Konda Rajitha Sathyanarayana	BC - B (Padmarathi)	9989153637
4	4th Ward	BC - Gen	Pilli Thirupathi (Munmurkapu)	BC - D	9848393967
5	5th Ward	BC - Gen	Bolishetty Raju	BC - D	9849181322
6	6th Ward	ST - Gen	Bhukya Sampath Nayak	ST - (Lambadi)	9848171521
7	7th Ward	BC - W	Chithari Padma Ravinder (Munmurkapu)	BC - D	9494358944
8	8th Ward	Gen - W	Keshaveni Saritha Sambharaju	BC - D (Yadav)	9866101566
9	9th Ward	SC - Gen	Savula Rajalah	SC - (Mala)	9440995359
10	10th Ward	SC - W	Savula Manjula Ramakrishna	SC - (Mala)	9100734191
11	11th Ward	General	Pudari Varaprasad	BC - B (Goud)	9948865881
12	12th Ward	General	Keshaveni Ramesh	BC - D (Mudiraj)	9000190866
13	13th Ward	General	Pachimatta Srikanth	BC - B (Goud)	9948657797
14	14th Ward	SC - W	Dandi Laxmi Komuriah	SC - (Mala)	9443120515
15	15th Ward	BC - W	Akula Rajitha Venkat	BC - D (Munmurkapu)	9440242312
16	16th Ward	General	Vaidhyam Kiran Kumar	BC - D (Munmurkapu)	9912048244
17	17th Ward	SC - Gen	Kedam Lingamurthy	SC - (Mala)	9440560988
18	18th Ward	Gen - W	Ailen Anitha Srinivas Reddy	OC - Reddy	9948784511
19	19th Ward	Gen - W	Bathula Swaroopa Ravinder	SC - (Madiga)	8886303128
20	20th Ward	BC - Gen	Gopagoni Shoban Babu	BC - B (Goud)	9440560789

Husnabad, pointing out that previous governments had failed to provide housing or implement key development projects. In contrast, he emphasized the Congress government's consistent focus on citizen welfare and tangible progress.

He concluded by appealing to voters to support the party candidates in all 20 wards, stating that a strong mandate would bring more funds, accelerate ongoing projects, and elevate Husnabad's profile across Telangana. Minister Ponnam Prabhakar's campaign reflects a clear strategy of combining infrastructure, welfare, and employment initiatives to demonstrate effective governance at the grassroots level.

## Opposition Leader Madusudhana Chari Slams CM Revanth Reddy Over Remarks on KCR

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Telangana Legislative Council opposition leader Sirikonda Madusudhana Chari strongly criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for his recent remarks about former Chief Minister and TRS founder K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), saying they were inappropriate and could influence ongoing investigations. Speaking at Telangana Bhavan, Chari accused Reddy of attempting to politicize a sensitive matter related to the SIT inquiry.

"Revanth Reddy's comments risk influencing the investigation," Chari said, emphasizing that KCR has never avoided facing any inquiries and has consistently cooperated with due process. He noted that during the municipal election season, Revanth had requested time for the first notice hearing, underscoring his willingness to engage with legal processes.

Chari defended KCR's historical role, stating that he alone brought Telangana statehood to fruition and has earned a permanent place in the hearts of the people. He criticized Revanth Reddy for making what he called "petty and baseless" attacks, arguing that the opposition leader had no role in the Telangana movement. Chari said that despite Justice Sudarshan Reddy's instructions to avoid hate-filled statements, Revanth made derogatory comments about KCR. The opposition leader went further, alleging that Revanth Reddy's administration had failed in governance, citing the recent mismanagement of the Sammakka Saralamma Jatara. Chari said that the 15-hour traffic jam and lack of proper arrangements highlighted the government's inefficiency, contrasting it with the successful conduct of the festival



under KCR's tenure. Chari also criticized Revanth's leadership style, claiming that his policies focus on "personal gain" rather than public welfare, and pointed to historical examples of KCR's sacrifices, such as resigning from positions and taking strategic steps to establish a separate Telangana party against powerful political rivals. He questioned Reddy's credibility in criticizing KCR, asserting that Telanga-

na society recognizes KCR's contributions. The press conference also included former corporation chairman Allipuram Venkateshwar Reddy. Chari concluded by warning that if the current government continues its current approach, public dissatisfaction could grow. He urged Telangana society to remain vigilant and highlighted KCR's legacy of governance, strategic foresight, and dedication to the state's welfare.

## Jagga Reddy Directs Party Workers to Ensure Congress Wins in All Wards

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Congress leader Jagga Reddy has issued strong instructions to party workers and local leaders, urging them to secure victories for Congress candidates in the upcoming municipal elections. Addressing supporters in a recent meeting, Reddy emphasized a hands-on, results-driven approach, leaving no room for excuses.

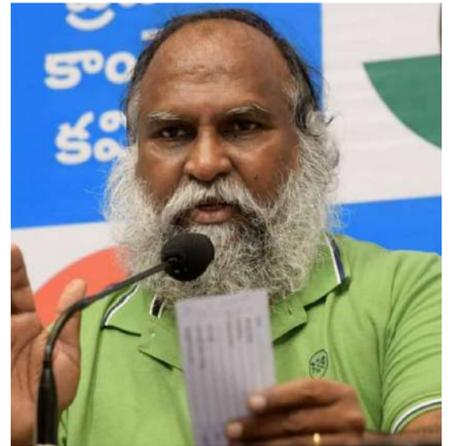
Reddy's guidance focused on Ward 38, where he promised that successful candidates would receive direct attention from Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for development projects in their constituencies. "If Congress candidates win in all wards, I will personally coordinate with the Chief Minister to ensure roads, drainage systems, and civic infrastructure are completed," he stated.

He outlined specific arrangements for candidates in Ramnagar and other key areas. For instance, he designated

Srikant Goud and Shiva as co-option members in Ramnagar and clarified that the next five-year plan would officially recognize the ward's Congress representatives. Similarly, Amir Beg from Ward 5 was offered a co-option member position, with clear instructions to ensure the victory of the ward's Congress candidate.

Jagga Reddy also instructed workers to extend their campaigning beyond their own wards. "While focusing on your own areas, ensure that acquaintances and allies in other wards also support Congress candidates. Work collectively and do not give excuses after the elections. Your responsibility is to bring candidates to victory," he said.

The Congress leader stressed unity and strategic coordination among workers, reinforcing that systematic campaigning across all wards is crucial. He called for full commitment and vigilance, ensuring every voter is



reached and persuaded in favor of Congress candidates. Party workers expressed determination to follow Jagga Reddy's instructions, recognizing the emphasis on both grassroots mobilization and post-election development guarantees. His directive demonstrates a results-oriented approach that ties electoral success directly to tangible local improvements, aiming to

consolidate Congress's position in municipal governance. With elections approaching, Jagga Reddy's active involvement and strategic planning are expected to energize supporters and strengthen the party's campaign across Hyderabad's wards, setting the stage for a coordinated effort to secure maximum wins for Congress candidates.

## Dr. Balmoor Venkat Defends Government's Employment Record, Criticizes KTR

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Telangana MLC Dr. Balmoor Venkat has strongly defended the state government's employment initiatives, taking aim at IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) over his comments on unemployment. Speaking at Gandhi Bhavan, Dr. Venkat questioned KTR's credibility, noting that during his tenure, unemployed individuals were often denied even the basic courtesy of an appointment.

"Now he talks about unemployed youth, but when he was in power, he never provided them a platform. It's as if he has returned only to offer condolences for his own failures," Dr. Venkat remarked. He contrasted this with the current administration's efforts, emphasizing that the public government is delivering justice to the unemployed.

Dr. Venkat highlighted that in the last two years, the government has already filled 70,000 positions and issued appointment letters. Additional notifications for new recruitments have been initiated, and the Telangana Government Public Service Commission (TGpsc) has begun processing candidate



registrations. More recruitment notifications are expected shortly. Responding to claims that KTR's previous administration provided 160,000 jobs over ten years, Dr. Venkat argued that the truth about those appointments was known to all, pointing out instances of leaked examination papers and mismanagement that affected students and unemployed candidates. "We have, in just two years, provided employment to 70,000 individuals and are continuing efforts to issue more recruitments. The false accusations against the

public government cannot be tolerated," he added. Dr. Venkat urged job seekers not to be misled by opposition narratives. He called on KTR to acknowledge the shortcomings of his tenure, highlighting that many youth were left disadvantaged during the previous administration. He emphasized that the current government is committed to transparent recruitment processes and equitable opportunities for unemployed candidates. He concluded by reiterating that those who

truly understand public governance recognize that the government's efforts are ongoing and targeted at delivering real results. "Talking about the unemployed without action is meaningless. The current government is working with sincerity and determination to ensure justice for all job seekers in Telangana," Dr. Venkat said. The MLC also provided detailed updates on recruitment progress, urging youth to rely on official channels and remain cautious of misleading statements from political opponents.

## "Medaram Jatara Concludes Successfully Amid Smooth Arrangements"

Secretariat, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 The annual Medaram Jatara concluded successfully with large-scale participation and seamless arrangements, officials and organizers said. Telangana Minister Seetakka, speaking informally about the festival, confirmed that all temple-related and logistical preparations were executed efficiently, ensuring a safe and orderly event for devotees.

Despite some attempts by certain groups to spread misinformation about the Jatara and its arrangements, the festival concluded without any untoward incidents. A minor theft incident was reported, but authorities clarified that it was exaggerated by false claims circulated on social media. Preparations are already underway for the return procession, scheduled within the next one or two days, which is expected to proceed smoothly. Minister Seetakka noted that leaders from opposition parties also acknowledged the effective



planning and smooth management of the event, praising the organization for ensuring a safe environment for the devotees. The festival drew massive crowds, including people from all social classes, from grassroots visitors to high-profile attendees, reflecting the Jatara's widespread cultural and religious significance. Officials estimate that around 2.5 crore devotees participated in the festivities this year. In anticipation of the heavy influx of pilgrims, au-

thorities widened surrounding roads to facilitate smoother movement and minimize traffic jams. Strategic measures were implemented to manage crowd flow, parking, and emergency services, ensuring that devotees could participate in rituals and temple activities without hindrance. Minister Seetakka also mentioned that she will review preparations for the Godavari Pushkaralu in Mulugu district, emphasizing proactive planning and supervision to ensure

similar efficiency and safety for large-scale religious events in the region. The Medaram Jatara this year stands out as a model of successful festival management, with coordinated efforts from state authorities, police, and temple administration. By combining logistical efficiency, crowd control measures, and proactive communication, the organizers were able to safeguard the spiritual experience of millions of devotees while addressing potential security and traffic challenges.

# Action Before Votes: Isnapur Candidate Wins Hearts with Unique Campaign

Isnapur, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Elections usually bring candidates door-to-door, promising voters that if elected, they will solve local problems, improve infrastructure, and bring development to their wards. However, in Isnapur Municipality's 13th ward, the campaign strategy is taking a completely different route.

Councillor candidate Laxmi Narasimhareddy has flipped the script. Instead of asking for votes first and promising change later, he has cho-

sen to "show results before asking for support," engaging in hands-on problem-solving as part of his campaign.

During his ward visits, Narasimhareddy personally inspected neighborhoods and listened to residents' grievances. Issues such as blocked drainage systems, overflowing garbage, and unclean streets were brought to his attention. Unlike typical candidates who promise action after winning, Narasimhareddy immediately took steps to address the



problems. He coordinated with municipal staff

on the spot to clean up accumulated trash and

resolve sanitation concerns, leaving residents

pleasantly surprised.

Local citizens have responded with admiration. "Many politicians come only during elections, but he addresses problems as soon as he sees them," said one resident, praising Narasimhareddy's proactive approach. His campaign philosophy—words are less important than action—has resonated strongly in the community.

The campaign has quickly become a hot topic in the ward. Laxmi Narasimhareddy's hands-on initiative, fo-

cus on cleanliness and visible improvement, has captured voters' attention more effectively than speeches or rallies. The direct involvement in transforming the neighborhoods has not only strengthened his public image but also sparked discussions on what true leadership entails.

Social media buzz around Narasimhareddy's campaign has been overwhelming, highlighting his dedication and responsibility even before officially assuming office. Many see his

actions as a demonstration of genuine leadership, proving that political figures can maintain a constant presence among constituents and prioritize public welfare over mere electioneering. Whether this innovative "action-first" approach will translate into electoral success remains to be seen. However, in the 13th ward of Isnapur, Laxmi Narasimhareddy has already made a lasting impression by putting work before words, raising the bar for local political campaigns.

## Deputy Mayor Pushes for Permanent Solution to Nine Slums at Osmania University

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Greater Hyderabad Deputy Mayor, Mote Srilatha Sobhan Reddy, met with Osmania University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Kumar Malugaram, on Monday to discuss the long-standing issues faced by residents of nine slums within the university campus. The meeting also included representatives from the Telangana TUC, with the aim of finding permanent solutions to decades-old problems.

Residents of these slums, spanning approximately 72 to 80 acres, have struggled for years with inadequate water supply, damaged roads, frequent electricity interruptions, and a lack of proper housing. While several governments have attempted temporary measures, no lasting solution has been implemented, adversely affecting both the residents and the university's campus environment.

During the discus-

sion, Deputy Mayor Srilatha emphasized the historic importance of Osmania University and its contributions to the nation's educational landscape. She highlighted that unresolved slum issues hinder campus development, security, and the provision of essential infrastructure, and stressed the need for a permanent resolution rather than temporary fixes.

As a proposed solution, the Deputy Mayor suggested constructing double-bedroom houses on around five acres of nearby land for slum residents. This would allow the remaining 70 acres to be fully integrated into the university's campus for expansion and development while ensuring fair rehabilitation for the residents who have lived there for decades. She urged coordination among the state government, Osmania University administration, and GHMC for immediate action. The meeting also acknowledged the human aspect of the

issue. "Osmania University is a pride of Hyderabad. The problems hindering its growth must be addressed beyond political considerations, ensuring justice for slum residents while safeguarding the university's future needs," said the Deputy Mayor.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Kumar Malugaram welcomed the proposals and assured that the university would consult with the relevant government departments, prepare a comprehensive report, and forward it to the state government for prompt action.

Residents of the nine slums expressed hope that this initiative marks a significant step toward a permanent resolution, balancing community welfare with the university's development and campus security. The meeting reflects renewed commitment from local authorities and university officials to resolve long-standing issues in a fair and sustainable manner.



## Fake Doctor Arrested in Mallapur, Nizamabad for Practicing Without Qualifications

Nacharam, February 3, 2026 | Point News

Authorities in Nizamabad district have arrested a man for allegedly running a medical clinic without proper qualifications, putting the lives of innocent patients at risk. The incident came to light in Mallapur, under the Nacharam Police Station limits, where the individual was operating as a doctor despite having no valid medical credentials.

The accused, identified as Surya Venkatakrishna, was running a medical shop and clinic under the name First Aid & Clinic. Police said he was allegedly providing medicines and injections to patients without any formal medical training or authorization. During a raid conducted by the Special Operations Team (SOT), officials seized multiple items used for medical practice, including pre-

scription books, a stethoscope, BP check machine, syringes, various

ter treatments despite lacking the required professional

launched a full-scale investigation into the matter. Authorities empha-

community to verify the credentials of medical professionals before seeking treatment.

This incident highlights ongoing concerns about fake doctors operating in rural and semi-urban areas, endangering lives and undermining trust in healthcare services. The Nacharam police have assured residents that strict measures will be taken against individuals found practicing medicine illegally and that regular monitoring will continue to prevent similar occurrences.

Residents have been urged to report any suspicious medical practices immediately and to rely only on certified medical professionals for treatment. The police action against Surya Venkatakrishna serves as a warning to others attempting to exploit public trust and endanger lives.



tablets, and antibiotic injections. These materials were being used by the accused to adminis-

qualifications. Police have registered a case against Surya Venkatakrishna and

sized the serious public health risks posed by unqualified practitioners and warned the com-

## ABVP Students Arrested During Protest at Osmania University Land Dispute

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | Point News

Hyderabad police arrested several ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad) students after they staged a protest against alleged irregularities involving Osmania University land in the Habsiguda area. The demonstration was organized to oppose the university administration allegedly leasing or giving land to outsiders.

During the protest, ABVP leaders, including OU ABVP President Gellu Shekhar and Secretary Mokshit, questioned the fairness of handing over university land to private parties. They highlighted that hundreds of acres of university property had already been encroached upon and expressed concerns that the land being

leased now could eventually be claimed outright by outsiders.

The students demanded that the university administration immediately revoke any decisions regarding the allocation of land to outsiders and warned that failure to comply would trigger large-scale protests organized by ABVP.

The protest escalated, prompting police intervention, and the student leaders were taken into custody and later shifted to Osmania University campus authorities.

Several ABVP office-bearers and activists participated in the protest, including Hyderabad City Secretary Prudviteja, Vidyannagar Division Convener Hari Prasad, City Joint Secretary Dinesh, and State Executive members Ajay, Veerababu,



and Vijay Singh. The incident underscores ongoing tensions

around university land management and the vigilance of student or-

ganizations in safeguarding institutional property.

## New Building Proposed for Uppal Press Club, Congress Leaders Assure Support

Uppal, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Representatives of the newly formed Uppal Press Club committee have formally requested the construction of a dedicated building to host media activities and meetings. On Tuesday, the committee members met with Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, the Congress Party in-charge for the Uppal constituency, to present their proposal. During the meeting, the club representatives highlighted the need for a proper facility to conduct press confer-

ences, workshops, and other media-related events efficiently. They emphasized that a well-equipped building would not only provide a permanent venue for journalists in the area but also strengthen the local media infrastructure and community engagement.

Parameshwar Reddy warmly welcomed the representatives and assured them that their request would receive serious consideration. "I will coordinate with the relevant authorities to explore the feasibility of constructing a



building for the Uppal Press Club," he said. He further added that supporting journalists and ensuring they have appropriate facilities is

crucial for promoting transparency, communication, and awareness in the constituency. The meeting also provided an opportunity

for the club's new committee members to introduce themselves and outline their vision for the organization. They stressed that an official

building would serve as a hub for training sessions, professional development, and community-oriented media initiatives. The club committee believes that such a facility would enhance the credibility and effectiveness of local journalism in Uppal. The discussion concluded with a mutual understanding that the Congress party leadership would assist in liaising with government departments and relevant agencies to facilitate the construction process. Committee members expressed their gratitude

to Parameshwar Reddy for his prompt attention and commitment to supporting their cause. The Uppal Press Club has been actively working to organize events, workshops, and press briefings, but the lack of a permanent venue has posed challenges. With the new building, the committee aims to provide journalists with a professional and functional environment to perform their duties while also accommodating community outreach programs. The initiative underscores the growing

importance of media organizations in fostering civic awareness and public discourse. The committee and local leaders expressed optimism that the project will move forward smoothly, ensuring that journalists in Uppal have a safe and well-equipped facility to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This meeting marks a significant step toward strengthening local media infrastructure in Uppal, with the support of both the Congress party and civic representatives.

# Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Leads Active Campaign Across Husnabad Municipality

Husnabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
As the Husnabad municipality elections draw near, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar has been actively campaigning for Congress candidates across multiple wards, including Anita Reddy in the 18th ward (Budaga Jangala Colony), Kasaveni Sarita Sambaraju in the 8th ward, and Rajayya in the 9th ward. The minister has been going door-to-door, engaging directly with residents of all ages—from women and children to senior citizens. During these visits, he has highlighted the welfare schemes and development initiatives implemented by the government, emphasizing tangible benefits such as housing, ration distribution, infrastructure improvements, and women's empowerment programs.

At Trishool Junction, Ponnam Prabhakar addressed a corner meeting, urging residents to vote for Congress candidates. He reminded voters of Sarita Sambaraju's previous attempts to win the 8th ward and encouraged support to ensure the ward's development. He praised Rajayya for his longstanding support to local communities and emphasized the continuity of development programs under the current government. The minister highlighted several key projects, including the construction of a new 8.5 crore-rupee tank for village irrigation, road networks connecting Husnabad to Potlapalli via Arepalli, and the beautification of Ellamma and Siddipet tanks. He also assured that longstanding issues such as crematorium maintenance



would be resolved within 100 days. Residents were briefed on other government initiatives, such as the distribution of Indiramma houses, ration cards, and free or subsidized essentials like rice and electricity. Women-focused schemes like interest-free loans, free bus travel, training programs, and Indiramma sarees were also highlighted.

Healthcare infrastructure, including a 250-bed hospital and plans for a medical PG college, and educational developments like a residential school and engineering college, were emphasized as evidence of sustained local progress. Ponnam Prabhakar stressed that electing Congress candidates across the municipality's 20 wards would help

bring additional funds and accelerate development, ensuring Husnabad becomes one of the most advanced towns in the state. His direct engagement, detailed explanation of welfare programs, and promise of actionable results have created significant buzz among residents and reinforced the party's commitment to grassroots governance.

# Speaker Issues Fresh Notice to MLA Kadiyam Srihari in Defection Case

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a key development in the ongoing defection controversy involving Telangana legislators, Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar has issued a fresh notice to former Deputy Chief Minister and MLA Kadiyam Srihari, directing him to appear for a hearing on Wednesday regarding a disqualification petition filed against him.



The move comes as part of the Assembly's effort to resolve multiple disqualification petitions against lawmakers accused of defecting from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) to the ruling Congress party after the 2023 Assembly polls. Srihari, the legislator from Station Ghanpur constituency, is among ten MLAs named in the petitions alleging that they shifted loyalty from the BRS to Congress over the last two years. The Speaker has scheduled the hearing on the disqualification plea for February 4 at 11 a.m., asking both Srihari and BRS MLA K.P. Vivekanand—who filed the petition—to appear in person. During the proceedings, the Speaker plans to first hear arguments from the petitioner and then record Srihari's

response to the charges. Kadiyam Srihari had earlier sought additional time to submit his reply to the Speaker's notices; the Assembly Secretariat had granted extensions after initial delays in responding. With the renewed notice, the process is now expected to move forward at a decisive stage. The disqualification proceedings stem from complaints that several BRS legislators actively aligned with the Congress, undermining party discipline and contravening anti-defection provisions under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution. In late 2025, the Speaker wrapped up hearings and cross-examinations for eight of the ten legislators facing similar petitions, with rulings issued in

respect of all but two. In some cases, the Speaker ruled that the petitioners had failed to provide sufficient evidence of defection, maintaining that certain MLAs remained technically part of the BRS despite allegations. However, the cases against Srihari and Danam Nagender have remained pending due to lack of timely responses to earlier notices. The Speaker's renewed action to formally summon Kadiyam Srihari signals intent to conclude the remaining defection matters and uphold procedural fairness. The outcome of the hearing on Wednesday could pave the way for a final decision in his case, bringing the long-running defection dispute closer to resolution.

# From Neglect to Action: Minister Ponguleti's Bold Campaign in Edulapuram

Edulapuram, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau

As the Edulapuram municipality elections approach, Telangana Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has launched a vigorous campaign, sharply criticizing the opposition for years of neglect toward the poor. Speaking at roadshows across the 7th, 8th, 9th, 12th, and 13th wards, the minister accused previous administrations of failing to provide housing plots to the underprivileged, leaving eligible residents without their rightful homes.

Minister Ponguleti highlighted that those who once ignored the housing needs of the poor are now scrambling to win votes through promises. "For ten years, the previous rulers behaved recklessly, showing no concern for the housing needs of the poor. Today, with elections around the

corner, they are rushing for votes," he said, raising the issue forcefully. Assuring residents, the minister pledged that under his leadership, every eligible underprivileged citizen would receive a housing plot and an Indiramma house immediately after the election code period ends. He emphasized that the responsibility to deliver homes lies with him, and his administration is committed to fulfilling this promise without pause. Minister Ponguleti also noted that the first phase has already delivered 450,000 Indiramma houses across the state and assured that subsequent phases will continue until every eligible citizen has a proper home. Beyond housing, the minister highlighted various welfare initiatives implemented by the current government under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, including free electricity for 200 units and distribu-



tion of fine rice to support economically weaker sections. He promised that Edulapuram municipality would be developed as a model township, with pending road and drainage projects completed during the summer. Appealing to voters, Minister Ponguleti requested the public to

support Congress candidates contesting in the municipality, urging them to continue the development momentum established by the present administration. "Just as you supported me in the Assembly elections, I ask you to elect Congress candidates in the municipality to ensure continued

progress," he stated. His campaign, blending a sharp critique of past neglect with clear promises of tangible welfare and development, has struck a chord with residents, reinforcing Congress' commitment to grassroots governance and the empowerment of the underprivileged.

# Woman Found Dead in Hussain Sagar, Suicide Suspected



Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau

A young woman was found dead in Hussain Sagar lake on Monday evening, triggering shock and concern across the city. Police suspect the woman died by suicide, reportedly due to personal and emotional distress, though a detailed investigation is currently underway.

The deceased has been identified as a 26-year-old woman, a resident of Kukatpally area in Hyderabad. According to police officials, she had been living with her ailing mother and was the sole caregiver in the family. Her father had passed away several years ago, and since then, she had been managing both professional and personal responsibilities on her own. Preliminary investigation suggests that the woman was under severe mental stress related to personal issues, including family responsibilities and marriage-related concerns. Police sources indicated that she was reportedly worried about her future and was emotionally disturbed in recent days. Family members and acquaintances told investigators that she appeared withdrawn and anxious prior to the incident. On Saturday evening, the woman reportedly left her residence and did not return. When repeated attempts to contact her failed, her relatives approached the police and lodged a missing complaint. Following a search operation, her body was spotted floating in Hussain Sagar on Monday evening. The police, with the help of rescue teams, retrieved the body and shifted it to a government hospital for post-mortem examination. Authorities stated that no suicide note was found at the spot. However, based on initial evidence and statements from family

members, police are treating the case as a suspected suicide. Officials have ruled out foul play at this stage but clarified that all angles are being thoroughly examined as part of the investigation. The incident has once again brought focus on the increasing mental health challenges faced by young individuals, especially those bearing significant family and social pressures. Residents of the area expressed grief over the tragic loss and urged the authorities and society to strengthen emotional support systems for vulnerable individuals. Police have registered a case and are continuing further investigation to establish the exact circumstances that led to the woman's death. Authorities also appealed to people facing emotional distress to seek timely help and counselling support rather than suffering in silence.

# Bandi Sanjay Alleges Congress Plans House Tax Hike After Municipal Polls

Hyderabad, February 3, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar has claimed that the ruling Congress party in Telangana is planning to increase house tax immediately after the conclusion of the municipal elections, sparking fresh controversy in the state's ongoing local body poll campaign.

Addressing a campaign event for the BJP's municipal election drive in Karimnagar Municipal Corporation, Bandi Sanjay urged residents not to vote for Congress, accusing the party of failing to fulfil its pre-election guarantees and of preparing to burden citizens with higher taxes once elections are over. He alleged that Congress has "not given a single paisa to municipal corporations and local bodies" in the past two years despite being in power, questioning the party's right to seek votes while withholding funds from urban bodies.

According to Bandi Sanjay, the alleged plan



to hike house tax is part of a broader strategy by Congress to extract additional revenue from ordinary citizens after securing electoral victory. He claimed that once municipalities and corporations are formed following the polls, the Congress government will swiftly implement

the increased tax, which he described as a "burden on taxpayers." The Union minister linked the proposed tax hike with broader criticisms of the Congress' performance in government, claiming that the party had failed to deliver on its six pre-poll guarantees and had neglected funding for local

bodies. He also targeted the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), accusing its leaders of corruption and mismanagement during their decade in power, and warned voters that supporting either of the rival parties could lead to further governance failures. The Congress party has yet to formally respond to Bandi Sanjay's allegations regarding the proposed house tax hike, but the BJP leader's comments are likely to feature prominently in election discourse as voters head to the polls later this month.

Bandi Sanjay's remarks reflect the intensifying nature of the municipal election campaign, as parties make strong allegations and counter-allegations to sway voters across Telangana. The BJP, which has fielded candidates across multiple urban local bodies, is seeking to capitalise on discontent over issues such as taxation, development funding, and civic services.

The municipal elections, scheduled for February 11, include polls for nearly 3,000 wards across 123 urban local bodies, including corporations and municipalities. With campaigning in full swing, tax policy and fiscal concerns are emerging as key points of debate among political rivals.

The Congress party has yet to formally respond to Bandi Sanjay's allegations regarding the proposed house tax hike, but the BJP leader's comments are likely to feature prominently in election discourse as voters head to the polls later this month.

# Trump's Trade U-Turn: Is Fear of Missing Out Driving the New U.S.–India Deal After the India-EU Pact?

India's position in global trade diplomacy is undergoing a profound transformation. Once seen as a cautious and slow-moving negotiator, India today stands at the centre of major economic realignments. Two back-to-back developments — the landmark free trade agreement between India and the European Union, followed by a sudden softening of the United States' trade stance towards India — have sparked an intense debate in global economic circles.

At the heart of this debate lies a key question: did Washington's renewed interest in striking a trade deal with India stem from strategic foresight, or was it driven by fear of being left out after New Delhi sealed a historic pact with Europe?

## A Sudden Shift in the U.S. Trade Narrative

For a long time, trade relations between India and the United States were strained. The U.S. administration had imposed steep tariffs on Indian exports, in some cases touching 50 per cent, affecting crucial sectors such as steel, aluminium, textiles and other labour-intensive industries. These measures were accompanied by persistent pressure on India over its energy imports and strategic autonomy.

Then came a dramatic change in tone. The U.S. announced a bilateral trade arrangement that significantly lowered tariffs on Indian goods to around 18 per cent. The announcement was accompanied by bold claims that India would expand its imports of American goods, particularly energy, and align more closely with U.S. strategic interests.

This abrupt reversal raised eyebrows. What had changed so suddenly to prompt Washington to retreat from its hardline approach?

## Separating Claims From Ground Reality



Public statements from the U.S. leadership portrayed the deal as a sweeping victory — suggesting that India had agreed to zero tariffs on American products, reduced dependence on other energy suppliers, and committed to massive future purchases from the U.S. However, a closer look reveals a more measured and nuanced reality.

The tariff reduction, while welcome, still leaves Indian exporters facing notable barriers compared to the near-zero access offered by some of India's other trade partners. The promise of zero tariffs appears selective rather than universal, focusing on specific industrial or strategic goods rather than across-the-board liberalisation.

Similarly, claims about India's energy commitments remain ambiguous. India has consistently maintained that

its energy policy is driven by affordability, diversification and long-term security. It has shown little inclination to bind itself exclusively to any one supplier, regardless of political pressure.

In essence, the deal appears less like a dramatic surrender by India and more like a recalibration by the U.S. — a recognition that excessive pressure may have been counterproductive.

## The India–EU Trade Agreement: A Game Changer

The timing of the U.S. pivot is critical. Just weeks earlier, India and the European Union concluded one of the most ambitious trade agreements in recent history. The pact aims to eliminate tariffs on nearly all goods traded between the two economies over

time, offering Indian exporters unprecedented access to one of the world's largest markets.

Key sectors such as textiles, leather, gems and jewellery stand to benefit enormously. Beyond goods, the agreement also strengthens cooperation in services, technology, sustainability and supply chain resilience.

More importantly, the India–EU negotiations were marked by mutual respect and pragmatism. Sensitive areas like agriculture and dairy were handled carefully, ensuring that political and social realities on both sides were acknowledged rather than overridden.

This cooperative approach stood in sharp contrast to the confrontational tactics previously adopted by Washington.

## Was Washington Afraid of Losing Ground?

The success of the India–EU pact may have sent a clear signal to the U.S.: India is no longer dependent on any single market. By securing deep access to Europe, India demonstrated its ability to diversify its trade partnerships and reduce vulnerability to unilateral pressure.

For the U.S., this posed a strategic risk. Europe gaining preferential access to the Indian market could tilt investment flows, supply chains and long-term economic influence away from American firms. In that context, Washington's sudden willingness to compromise begins to look less like generosity and more like urgency.

Fear of missing out — on market access, influence and

strategic relevance — may well have played a role in pushing the U.S. back to the negotiating table.

## Two Contrasting Trade Philosophies

The developments highlight a deeper contrast in trade philosophies.

The U.S. approach has often relied on tariff threats and economic coercion, using market access as a bargaining chip. While this can yield short-term concessions, it also encourages countries to seek alternatives and diversify away from dependence.

The EU, by contrast, pursued a model based on gradual liberalisation, predictability and mutual benefit. By offering tangible incentives rather than threats, it created a framework where both sides saw long-term value.

India's response suggests a clear preference for the latter approach.

## India's Growing Confidence on the Global Stage

What these developments ultimately reveal is India's rising confidence and bargaining power. By engaging multiple partners — from Europe and Australia to West Asia and beyond — India has built a diversified trade portfolio that strengthens its negotiating position.

This diversification allows India to push back against unreasonable demands, protect sensitive sectors, and pursue economic growth on its own terms. It also signals to global powers that access to the Indian market cannot be taken for granted. The U.S. trade reset appears to be an acknowledgment of this new reality.

## What Lies Ahead

While the revised U.S.–India trade understanding is a positive step, it remains incomplete. Many details — including sector-specific concessions, services trade, and future tariff pathways — are yet to be finalised. Further negotiations are inevitable, and friction may resurface in sensitive areas.

However, one conclusion is already clear: India has emerged as a central player in the evolving global trade order. Its ability to balance relationships, resist pressure, and secure mutually beneficial agreements marks a significant shift from the past.

If the U.S. hopes to deepen economic ties with India, it may need to adopt a more collaborative and less coercive approach — one that recognises India not as a junior partner, but as an equal stakeholder in shaping the global economic future.

In that sense, the recent U.S. trade move may not just reflect fear of missing out, but also a reluctant acceptance of India's growing economic clout.

# Pakistan's India Match Boycott: A Self-Inflicted Blow Dressed as a Statement



In the world of cricket, few rivalries have gripped global attention like India versus Pakistan. It has been more than just a game — it is history, politics, emotion and identity all wrapped into one. Fans across continents stop, advertisers reposition, broadcasters gear up and millions tune in whenever these two nations meet on the field. Yet now, against that backdrop, Pakistan's decision to boycott their India fixture at the upcoming T20 World Cup represents something starkly different — not a sporting protest, but a self-destructive gesture with more to lose than gain.

This is not just another scheduling controversy. It is an action that threatens Pakistan's own cricketing future, strains international relations within the sport and risks undermining the very objectives that the boycott claims to champion. What Pakistan may see as a bold political statement could well end up being remembered as an avoidable misstep with

long-lasting consequences.

## A Rift That Began Long Ago

The seeds of this boycott go back years. India and Pakistan have not played bilateral cricket since 2013. The decision to halt series between the two nations left them facing off only in multi-nation events governed by the International Cricket Council (ICC) or the Asian Cricket Council. The historic agreement that once ensured both teams would face each other only on neutral grounds reflected this new reality.

What was once merely logistical — neutral venues instead of home-and-away series — has since taken on political undertones. Security concerns, diplomatic tensions and national narratives about honour and pride began creeping into what used to be purely sporting arrangements. Over time, even gestures of sportsmanship that once seemed small — like a handshake after a match — became points of contention

and public debate.

In recent tournaments, the absence of cordial gestures on the field signalled how far relations had deteriorated. What may have once been ignored as expected rivalry began to be seen as actively hostile. The mood on both sides hardened, and cricket — the sport — started to feel the strain.

## Why the Boycott Now?

Officially, Pakistan's government announced that its team would participate in the T20 World Cup overall, but would not take the field against India in their scheduled group match. The stated reasons are rooted in claims of unequal treatment. Pakistani officials have argued that India receives preferential accommodation in the sport, that their own concerns about playing conditions and scheduling are not given equal weight, and that the larger cricketing institutions do not treat both nations symmetrically.

Beyond procedural grievances, there are political dynamics at play. Historical tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad spill into every arena where the two countries interact — including sports. Events outside cricket, such as security incidents or diplomatic standoffs, often echo into the sporting world, influencing public sentiment and political decisions alike.

In quarterly matchups like World Cups, the India–Pakistan game is always the highest-profile fixture. For some in Pakistan's political establishment, refusing to play against India on principle

may seem like a way to make a strong statement of resistance — a refusal to normalise relations or accept what they see as symbolic dominance.

## The Irony of Intent vs. Impact

This boycott is positioned by some in Pakistan as a bold stand. But, paradoxically, the real harm is likely to be felt by Pakistan itself.

First, cricketing relations are governed by agreements and commitments that extend beyond the teams' bilateral tie-ups. International tournaments like the T20 World Cup are organised with the understanding that all qualified teams will play the matches scheduled for them. By refusing to honour that basic premise, Pakistan risks violating membership obligations to the global cricketing body.

Second, skipping a fixture against India does not just affect Pakistan; it has ripple effects across the entire ecosystem. Broadcasters, sponsors and tournament hosts invest heavily based on expectations of marquee matchups. India–Pakistan games generate enormous viewership, command premium advertising rates, and are central to the financial calculus of global cricketing events. Removing such a fixture shakes that model and could lead to legal actions or financial penalties that fall squarely on Pakistan's cricket board.

Third, this decision could jeopardise Pakistan's standing in international cricket. Teams that defy tournament commitments risk sanctions, fines and even suspension. Far from sending a message of strength, Pakistan's leader-

ship may be seen as prioritising short-term political signalling over the long-term health of the game in their own country.

Ultimately, cricket in Pakistan — already struggling with issues of governance, funding and administration — may suffer more than any external opponent.

## Political Motivations or Sporting Miscalculation?

Some supporters of the boycott frame it as a necessary step to assert national dignity against perceived slights. But this approach conflates national sentiment with sporting conduct in a way that could be counterproductive.

Sport and politics have always had overlaps, but the healthiest sporting rivalry thrives on competition, mutual respect and the thrill of the contest. A protest that removes one side from the match does not resolve underlying political issues. Instead, it turns the field into a battlefield where no one wins.

By opting out, Pakistan risks alienating itself from fans around the world, including those within its own borders who love the sport and long for moments of triumph and unity rather than division.

Moreover, refusing to play does not silence critics; it amplifies them. Former players, commentators and cricket lovers from multiple countries have already questioned the wisdom of forfeiting such a high-value fixture, pointing out that it is the young players — not the institutions — who pay the price for decisions taken far beyond the

boundary ropes.

## Cricket Loses, Fans Lose, Pakistan Loses

Let's be clear: cricket loses first and foremost. The sport thrives on competition, fair play and the ability of athletes to test their skills against the best. Removing a fixture between two of the most passionate teams for reasons that are not directly related to player safety or security robs fans of a defining moment in the tournament.

Fans in both nations have emotional stakes in these matches. Thousands prepare to watch, celebrate, lament or cheer. Millions more plan gatherings, discussions and debates around what is invariably a cultural event as much as a sporting one. To deny them that experience is to tamper with the fabric of cricket fandom.

Pakistan, for its part, risks losing credibility and influence within the cricketing community. Administrative bodies, sponsors and international partners may view this boycott as unpredictable or disruptive, making future negotiations and collaborations harder to navigate.

## A Path Back? Yes, But Not Without Costs

The situation is far from irreparable. Pakistan could still reverse its stance, re-engage with the global cricketing community and reaffirm its commitment to the sport's core values. Doing so would send a message of growth, resilience and respect for the game.

However, any such turnaround would require a recal-

ibration of priorities. It would mean acknowledging that cricket cannot be used as a pawn in wider political tussles and that the welfare of the sport and its followers must come before symbolic gestures.

For now, the boycott serves as a cautionary tale. When a country takes an action intended to make a point but ends up harming its own interests, the price is paid in lost opportunities, fractured relationships and diminished respect. What Pakistan may have hoped would showcase defiance could, in reality, mark a setback in its sporting journey.

## Conclusion — A Lose-Lose Proposition

In the grand theatre of international cricket, few spectacles are as eagerly awaited as India vs Pakistan. It represents rivalry, history and an extraordinary level of global interest. To forfeit that encounter, especially in a World Cup setting, is to remove one of the tournament's pillars.

What Pakistan's boycott really risks doing is not just harming cricket's economics and international harmony but deeply injuring its own cricketing future. When a nation inflicts loss upon itself in the name of making a point, it must ask whether the point was worth making in the first place.

At the end of the day, the decision to boycott does not elevate Pakistan's standing. Instead, it raises questions about priorities, impacts the very fans whose emotions are bound to the sport and could leave lasting scars on a cricketing legacy built over decades.

## Inside Story: What PM Modi Told NDA MPs About the India-US Trade Deal



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed members of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) parliamentarian party about the recently announced India-US trade deal, describing it as a significant milestone for the country's global economic engagement. In a closed door meeting held amid routine parliamentary business, Mr. Modi shared his perspective on how the agreement came about, why it matters and what it means for India's future.

Mr. Modi began by emphasising the importance of active parliamentary participation. He urged all NDA MPs to maintain full attendance in the Lok Sabha and engage constructively in debates, particularly on key government achievements such as the Un-

ion Budget and major policy outcomes like this trade pact. He stressed that MPs should communicate these successes effectively to their constituents, reinforcing the government's development narrative at the grassroots level.

Turning to the trade agreement with the United States, the Prime Minister described it as a "milestone" in bilateral relations, reflecting a more favourable environment for economic cooperation between the two countries. He acknowledged that negotiations had been challenging and had attracted criticism at various stages. Yet, he said, the government had remained steadfast and patient, navigating through complexities with resolve and strategic foresight.

"People were criticising, but

we kept courage," Mr. Modi told the party members, underscoring that patience had paid off and resulted in a positive outcome that could benefit the nation. He framed the deal as evidence that India's stature on the global stage is rising, and said that the world order is increasingly tilting towards India, reflecting its growing influence in global economic and strategic affairs.

In his remarks, Mr. Modi also referenced the role of sustained diplomacy and leadership. He noted that the trade agreement was anchored in respect and longstanding ties between the two largest democracies. The pact, announced following a phone call between him and the U.S. President, includes a significant

reduction in U.S. tariffs on Indian goods, which Mr. Modi has welcomed as a step that will help Indian exporters.

While not delving into all technical details, Mr. Modi expressed confidence that the deal would unleash opportunities for Indian manufacturers and exporters, strengthen economic ties and boost investor sentiment. He reiterated that such agreements are part of a broader strategy to integrate India more deeply into the global economy.

The Prime Minister's message to his party was clear: despite criticism and tough negotiations, steadfast diplomacy and strategic patience have yielded a deal that he believes will benefit the country and demonstrate India's rising global standing.

## India Secures 'Best Deal in Region' With US, Says Piyush Goyal



India has clinched what its government describes as the "best trade deal in the neighbourhood" with the United States, according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. Speaking publicly about the recently announced agreement, Goyal emphasised that the pact represents a significant opportunity for India's economy, highlighting the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and strategic negotiation efforts.

Goyal said the India-US trade agreement came after extensive discussions and reflects terms that are more favourable than deals secured by neighbouring countries or other competing economies. He framed the agreement as both a strategic win and economic boost for India, attributing its success to effective diplomacy and strong bilateral ties.

The minister noted that the deal has been structured to protect key domestic interests, particularly in sensitive areas like agriculture

and dairy, which are crucial for millions of farmers and rural workers. He stressed that these sectors were safeguarded during negotiations, meaning that Indian producers will not be disadvantaged as trade opens up. Goyal also highlighted that the pact will open up new opportunities for fishermen, farmers, youth and small businesses, positioning it as a "good omen" for India's future growth.

A central theme of his remarks was credit to Prime Minister Modi's relationship with the U.S. leadership. According to Goyal, Modi's personal rapport with the U.S. President played a crucial role in bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion. The minister described this dynamic as having helped India secure terms that are advantageous and strategically balanced.

Goyal also criticised opposition reactions to the deal, accusing critics of spreading misleading information about its terms and implications. He reiterated that de-

tails will be disclosed through proper channels soon, suggesting that the government plans to share official documentation and descriptions once they are finalised.

The minister reiterated that the agreement will present major opportunities for exporters, especially in sectors that had previously faced high U.S. tariffs. By lowering trade barriers, Indian manufacturers and service providers may find access to the American market significantly improved. Goyal's comments underlined expectations that the pact can stimulate economic activity and enhance India's export competitiveness.

Overall, Goyal characterised the agreement as a milestone in India's trade diplomacy, one that promises to deepen economic ties while advancing India's broader goal of becoming a more prominent player in global commerce. He urged stakeholders to view the deal as a positive development that balances economic openness with national priorities.

## Trinamool Congress Says It Is Consulting Parties on Possible Impeachment of Poll Body Chief Over Voter Roll Controversy

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) has announced that it is in talks with other political parties about the possibility of moving an impeachment motion against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, amid a bitter political clash over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The party's move comes after a tense standoff between West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the top officials of the Election Commission in Delhi. The conflict centres on the SIR exercise, a nationwide effort to update and clean the electoral list, and has become especially heated in West Bengal, which is scheduled to hold assembly elections later this year.

TMC leaders have been highly critical of how the Election Commission, led by CEC Gyanesh Kumar, has conducted the SIR process. They allege that the voter roll revision is being unfairly targeted and that large numbers of names



have been removed from draft lists in constituencies represented by TMC lawmakers compared to those held by rival parties. Party figures argue that the way the exercise is being carried out could disenfranchise voters and affect election outcomes, particularly in opposition ruled states.

In response to these concerns, a senior TMC MP, Kalyan Banerjee, said the party is consulting with other political groups to explore whether an

impeachment motion against the CEC is justified. According to him, the issue goes beyond West Bengal and has "implications for the voting rights of every citizen in the country." He characterised the current approach to SIR as incorrect and requiring accountability at the highest level of electoral administration.

The TMC's announcement has added a new dimension to an already heated political debate. Mamata Banerjee herself

has been vocal about her displeasure with the Election Commission's actions, alleging that the SIR exercise is being applied selectively and questioning why it has not been conducted in some states governed by other parties. She has also publicly criticised the leadership of the poll body, describing their conduct as dismissive and unfair.

The row has drawn reactions from various quarters, with opposition figures backing the TMC's concerns about the timing and implementation of the voter roll revision, while ruling party leaders and the Election Commission maintain that the process is being executed in accordance with legal norms and rules.

As consultations continue, the potential pursuit of impeachment proceedings signifies the depth of political mistrust surrounding the electoral roll revision and highlights how contentious electoral preparations have become ahead of a key election year.

## DGCA Orders Special Audit of VSR Ventures After Fatal Plane Crash That Killed Ajit Pawar

India's aviation regulator has ordered a special audit of VSR Ventures, the private jet company whose aircraft crashed recently, killing Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others. This move marks a significant step in the investigation as authorities work to understand the circumstances that led to the tragic accident and ensure aviation safety compliance.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) directed the audit as part of a deeper probe into the operations, maintenance practices and safety protocols of VSR Ventures. The audit is expected to be completed by mid February and will examine whether the company adhered to regulatory standards, maintained proper aircraft records and followed correct procedures for aircraft upkeep and flight documentation. The findings of the audit could have wide ranging implications for the company and for aviation oversight in India's non scheduled operator sector.



The Learjet 45XR aircraft carrying Ajit Pawar was on a charter flight from Mumbai to Baramati in Pune district when it crashed while attempting to land. The crash occurred in poor visibility conditions, and all five people on board — including Pawar, his personal security officer, flight crew and a flight attendant — died instantly. The aircraft was attempting a second landing approach at the airstrip at the time of the accident.

Alongside the DGCA audit,

the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is conducting a formal investigation into the sequence of events that led to the crash, including weather conditions, pilot actions and possible mechanical factors. Investigators have recovered the aircraft's flight data and voice recorders and are analysing them as part of the ongoing examination.

The audit comes amid broader scrutiny of VSR Ventures' safety record. Aviation authorities have noted that the same

company had previously operated an aircraft that was involved in an accident during landing at another airport a few years earlier. There have been regulatory actions in the past, including the European aviation regulator withholding authorisation for the company to operate in certain territories because of incomplete responses to safety queries.

The DGCA's decision aims to ensure that all aspects of operations by private charter operators meet the highest safety benchmarks, especially after a high profile fatal crash. Officials undertaking the audit will focus on maintenance logs, pilot training and compliance with civil aviation norms.

The development reflects the seriousness with which Indian aviation authorities are approaching the investigation. As the probe unfolds, both the audit findings and AAIB's technical inquiry will play crucial roles in understanding what went wrong and how similar tragedies can be prevented in the future.

## Parliament in Turmoil as Opposition Protests, Demands Clarification on US Trade Deal



The Budget Session of Parliament witnessed dramatic disruptions as the Lok Sabha was thrown into chaos by opposition protests. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attempted to raise sensitive issues during the debate on the President's address, touching on both national security and the recently announced India-US trade deal.

The confrontation intensified when Gandhi tried to quote from an unpublished memoir by former Army Chief General MM Naravane about the 2020 military stand off with China. The Speaker refused permission, citing parliamentary rules on unpublished material. This led to loud protests, adjournments, and the suspension of several Congress MPs for disorderly conduct.

Rahul Gandhi accused

the government of trying to silence dissent and block discussion on critical issues, including border security. He also questioned how the India-US trade deal could be finalised so quickly after months of negotiations, alleging that key interests — particularly those of farmers and small producers — were compromised.

Ruling party leaders defended the Speaker's decision, arguing that parliamentary procedures were correctly enforced and accusing the opposition of disrespecting House norms. Government MPs also emphasised that the trade agreement offers strategic and economic benefits and that discussions on the deal are welcome on the floor of Parliament.

Amid the chaos, the Union government indicated it

would make a formal statement on the India-US trade agreement, providing clarity on its terms and implications. Party leaders stressed the deal's potential to strengthen bilateral economic ties and boost India's global trade presence.

Beyond the trade row, the session is set to address key issues such as the Union Budget, external affairs, and national security. However, repeated adjournments, opposition demands for transparency, and heightened rhetoric suggest further clashes are likely in the coming days.

Overall, the Budget Session has highlighted how policy debate, parliamentary procedure, and political strategy intersect, reflecting deep divides in Parliament over both domestic and international matters.

## How India's New Trade Deals With the US and EU Could Reshape Its Economy

India is at the centre of a major shift in global trade dynamics, with two landmark agreements announced in quick succession — a recent trade deal with the United States and a historic free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union. Together, these pacts have sparked optimism about India's export potential, enhanced market access, and integration into global supply chains, even as questions remain about implementation and long term impact.

### The India-US Trade Deal: Immediate Tariff Relief and Renewed Engagement

The most high profile development has been the announcement of a trade understanding between India and the United States. Under this deal, the United States has agreed to reduce its tariffs on Indian exports to around 18 per cent, a significant cut from previous levels that had reached as high as 50 per cent due to punitive levies tied to issues such as Russia related energy purchases.

This tariff rollback is aimed at boosting India's competitiveness in one of the world's largest consumer markets, especially for sectors such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, seafood, steel, chemicals and labour intensive manufacturing. Indian exporters had long faced high duties in the U.S., which sharply reduced shipments in certain segments and strained trade relations. The reduction in duties is expected to revive export flows, improve profit margins, and help Indian products regain lost market share.

In return, India is expected to expand its imports of American goods, including energy products, defence equipment, aircraft, telecommunications equipment and agricultural goods. Discussions have also pointed to commitments on reducing purchases of Russian crude oil, although Indian leaders have yet to publicly confirm concrete changes to their energy strategy. The broadened imports from the U.S. market — potentially reaching substantial volumes — are seen as a way to deepen economic integration and balance trade flows.

The immediate reaction from markets has been positive. Indian stock indices rallied strongly following the announcement, supported by expectations that tariff relief and clearer trade ties will benefit corporate earnings and encourage foreign investment. The Indian rupee also strengthened as sentiment improved across financial markets, reflecting a renewed appetite for risk assets tied to export driven growth.

### Beyond Tariffs: Regulatory Certainty and Trade Facilitation

While the headline of the India-US deal is the tariff reduction, analysts emphasise that the broader significance lies in regulatory certainty and cooperation frameworks. The deal reflects a thawing of trade tensions that had built up over the



past few years, especially around tariff disputes and market access barriers. By agreeing to revise tariff structures and engage on trade facilitation issues, both sides are signalling a willingness to collaborate more systematically on trade policy, standards alignment and dispute resolution.

For Indian manufacturers and exporters, this clarity could spur long term planning and investment in capacity expansion, especially in sectors where India has a natural cost and scale advantage. It also sends a political message: that the world's two largest democracies are committed to strengthening economic ties even against the backdrop of broader geopolitical competition.

### The India-EU Free Trade Agreement: A "Mother of All Deals"

Just before the India-US announcement, New Delhi and the European Union concluded negotiations on what is being touted as one of India's most important trade pacts to date. After nearly two decades of talks, the FTA is expected to usher in a new era of trade cooperation between India and one of its largest economic partners.

Under this agreement, the EU will eliminate or sharply reduce tariffs on the vast majority of Indian exports, with estimates suggesting that over 99 per cent of Indian goods by value will eventually enjoy zero duty access into European markets. The tariff elimination covers traditional strengths of the Indian economy such as textiles, apparel, leather products, jewellery, gems, marine products and engineering goods. Labour intensive sectors, which employ millions, stand to benefit particularly from this preferential access to one of the world's largest consumer markets.

On the flip side, India has agreed to lower tariffs on a wide range of European imports, including automobiles, machinery, pharmaceuticals and premium goods like wine and spirits, over a phased period. This level of market

opening — in a uniform customs union rather than a country by country arrangement — means that European firms will gain relatively predictable, long term access to the Indian market.

The FTA also goes beyond traditional goods trade, covering services, digital trade, customs cooperation, and facilitation of business mobility. This broad scope makes it one of India's most comprehensive trade agreements ever negotiated.

### Comparing the Two Deals: Complementary, Not Contradictory

While the India-US deal focuses on immediate tariff relief and bilateral market access, the India-EU FTA represents a structural realignment of India's trade relations with a key global bloc. Together, they offer a two pronged strategy:

- Short Term Boost Through Tariff Cuts:** The U.S. deal provides immediate relief on tariff barriers that had crimped exports, particularly where duties were punitive. Lower tariffs improve price competitiveness and can help restore market share quickly.
- Long Term Market Expansion:** The EU FTA creates a massive preferential trade zone with a large, diverse consumer base and integrated services and goods markets. By eventually eliminating duties on most Indian exports, the agreement helps diversify India's export destinations and reduce reliance on any single market.

The combined effect is expected to boost Indian exports, attract new investment, and integrate India more deeply into global value chains. Labour intensive sectors, in particular, are likely to see heightened opportunities, given preferential access and lower cost barriers.

### Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

Despite the promise, several

implementation issues remain. The India-US deal still requires detailed negotiations on specific sectors, services, and regulatory alignment. Questions around commitments on energy and agricultural imports are yet to be fully clarified, and both sides will need to work through complex technical and political hurdles to complete a full treaty.

The India-EU FTA also requires ratification and finalisation of implementation schedules. Phased tariff reductions, services commitments and non tariff measures will need careful coordination to ensure that the benefits are realised over time without undermining sensitive domestic sectors.

There are also concerns about maintaining a balance between opening markets and protecting key domestic industries such as agriculture, dairy and small scale manufacturing. Indian negotiators appear to have safeguarded some sensitive areas, but ongoing dialogue and policy support will be essential to ensure that trade liberalisation does not produce uneven outcomes.

### Strategic Implications: A New Trade Posture for India

Taken together, these deals signal a shift in India's approach to global commerce — from reactive trade management to proactive engagement and diversification of market access. In a world where protectionism and geopolitical tensions often complicate trade flows, India's ability to secure significant agreements with both the United States and the European Union underscores its growing economic clout and diplomatic leverage.

For Indian exporters, manufacturers, investors and workers, the key will lie in leveraging these new openings to scale capacity, enhance competitiveness and build deeper integration with global supply chains. If implemented effectively, these trade deals could mark a defining moment in India's economic trajectory — expanding opportunities for growth, jobs and international engagement in the decade ahead.

## Explained: Trump's Claim That India Agreed to 'Zero Tariff Barriers' in Trade Deal



In a recent announcement about a new trade deal between the United States and India, U.S. President Donald Trump stated that India has agreed to reduce tariffs and non tariff barriers on American goods to "zero." This comment has sparked a mix of excitement and confusion, because New Delhi has not publicly confirmed such a commitment, and key details of the agreement are still unclear.

At the heart of the issue is what "zero tariff barriers" really means. Tariff barriers are straightforward taxes on imported goods that make them more expensive, while non tariff barriers include indirect restrictions such as quotas, licensing rules, standards, and certification requirements. Together, these can significantly affect how easily foreign products enter a market. Trump's speech suggested that India is willing to eliminate both types of obstacles for U.S. products, but how, when and un-

der what conditions remains undefined.

India's response so far has focused on the tariff reduction for Indian exports to the U.S., which Trump said would fall to around 18 per cent from much higher levels. The Indian leadership welcomed this development without mentioning any promise to make U.S. imports tariff free. Officials have emphasised that trade discussions are ongoing and that any deal must be mutually beneficial and workable for both sides. There has been no official announcement detailing specific products or timelines for cutting tariffs to zero.

Critics and analysts highlight that Trump's description may be more aspirational than contractual, signalling a broad intention to improve market access rather than an immediate elimination of all trade barriers. In other words, the phrase "zero tariffs" might refer to a future direction of

negotiations rather than a binding, finalised commitment. Some observers believe the claim could relate to a future phase of negotiations tied to a bigger free trade agreement that both countries have been discussing for some time.

There are also unanswered questions about other elements mentioned alongside the zero tariff statement, such as a large scale purchase of U.S. goods and changes to India's energy import practices. Until a joint formal text or detailed implementation plan is released by both governments, many aspects of the deal — including the zero tariff claim — remain subject to interpretation.

In essence, while the "zero tariff barriers" statement has drawn headlines, it reflects a political signal of intent rather than a confirmed, immediate policy change. The real impact will only become clear once formal details are agreed and published.

## 426 kg Gandhi Statue Stolen in Melbourne, Police Launch Investigation



A 426 kg bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi has been stolen from outside the Australian Indian Community Centre in Rowville, a suburb of Melbourne, sparking a police investigation and concern among the local community.

The theft is believed to have occurred in the early hours of January 12, 2026, when three unidentified offenders allegedly used an angle grinder to cut the statue from its foundation before loading it into a vehicle and fleeing the scene. Only the statue's feet were left behind.

The sculpture, a gift from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, symbolised peace, non violence, and the strong cultural ties between India and Australia. It was unveiled in November 2021 and has since been a prominent landmark for Melbourne's Indian Australian

community. Local authorities, including the Victoria Police Knox Crime Investigation Unit, are investigating the incident. Police have urged scrap metal dealers and the public to remain vigilant and report any attempts to sell bronze pieces that could be linked to the stolen statue. They are also appealing for CCTV footage, eyewitness accounts, or any information that could help identify the perpetrators.

The theft has drawn strong reactions from community and political leaders. Members of the Indian Australian community expressed shock and distress, calling the act a violation of a culturally significant landmark. Local politicians condemned the theft as deeply upsetting and emphasised the need to ensure multicultural communities feel safe and respected.

This incident has revived memories of an earlier attack on the same statue shortly after its unveiling in 2021, when it was vandalised in a separate act. At that time, officials condemned the disrespectful act and encouraged community cohesion.

In India, government representatives also condemned the theft and urged Australian authorities to act promptly to recover the statue and hold those responsible accountable, describing the act as deeply troubling and an affront to shared values of peace and cultural respect.

Authorities are now focused on tracking down leads and ensuring that culturally significant monuments are better protected, while community members hope that the Gandhi statue will be recovered and restored soon.

## Moscow Says It Has Heard Nothing From India on Ending Russian Oil Imports

Russia has officially stated that it has not received any communication from India about stopping purchases of Russian oil, despite claims by the United States that such a commitment was part of a recent trade agreement between the two countries.

According to a Kremlin spokesperson, Moscow has heard no statements from New Delhi indicating that India plans to halt or significantly alter its energy purchases from Russia. The Russian government emphasised that it continues to value its strategic partnership with India and intends to further develop bilateral ties, including in the energy sector, regardless of external developments.

The clarification comes after the U.S. President spoke about a trade understanding with India that reportedly involved lowering U.S. tariffs on



Indian exports in exchange for India stopping its purchases of Russian crude. Indian leaders welcomed the tariff cuts and broader trade discussion, but have not publicly confirmed any change in their approach to Russian oil purchases.

The uncertainty over India's

stance on Russian oil comes amid broader global efforts to reduce revenue flowing to Moscow from energy exports following Russia's military actions in Ukraine. Western nations have pushed for countries to diversify their sources of energy and reduce reliance on Russian crude, but India —

as one of the world's largest oil importers — has historically sourced significant volumes of discounted Russian oil, which has helped manage fuel prices domestically.

In India, reactions to the trade deal and its implications for crude imports have been mixed. Some political leaders welcomed the tariff reductions, while analysts note that any abrupt change to long-standing energy relationships could have economic repercussions and complicate India's energy security strategy.

For now, Moscow's statement indicates that there is no official confirmation from India regarding halting purchases of Russian oil, even as global geopolitical and trade dynamics continue to evolve. Whether formal discussions or decisions on energy imports follow in the coming weeks remains uncertain.

## US-EU Trade Pacts Signal a New Era for the Indian Economy; Markets, Rupee See Boost



Major international trade developments involving the United States and the European Union are being seen as catalysts for a transformational shift in the Indian economy, with positive implications for both financial markets and the currency.

Investors and analysts alike view the recent trade agreements — including a landmark deal between India and the US that significantly lowers tariffs on Indian exports — as marking a strategic turning point. The sharp reduction in reciprocal levies is expected not only to improve export competitiveness but also to reinforce confidence in India's growth story. Markets have responded with strong rallies in equities, particularly in export-oriented sectors, while the Indian rupee has strengthened noticeably. This newfound momentum is widely interpreted as signalling greater global integration for India's economy.

Observers note that

these trade pacts come at a time when India's macroeconomic fundamentals remain robust. The combined effects of lower trade barriers, expanding market access and renewed investor optimism could help accelerate capital inflows, shore up the currency, and support long-term economic expansion. Financial markets have already shown strong reactions, with broad equity gains across diverse sectors and a notable uptick in currency valuation.

Industry experts and corporate leaders describe the agreements as more than just tariff changes — they represent a confidence anchor for businesses and global investors. By reducing regulatory uncertainty and enhancing export prospects, these deals are expected to attract fresh foreign investments, encourage supply-chain integration and stimulate job creation. For companies aligned with global trade networks, the lowered tariff environment

could translate into improved margins and higher utilisation of production capacity.

At the same time, the timing of these pacts — coming soon after India's trade agreement with the EU — reinforces a broader narrative of strategic alignment with major global partners. Together, they underscore India's ambition to become a manufacturing and export powerhouse while strengthening its presence in global value chains. Many market watchers believe this dual momentum will help sustain investor interest and provide a more supportive backdrop for economic growth going forward.

In summary, the combination of new trade agreements involving the US and the EU is being viewed as a structural positive for India — one that can drive stronger markets, bolster the currency and elevate the country's position in global commerce.

## Indian Markets Rally Most in Nine Months After India-US Trade Deal; Key Trading Levels to Watch



Indian equity markets delivered one of their strongest single-day performances in about nine months after an announced trade agreement between India and the United States. The major stock indices rallied sharply on optimism that lowered tariffs and renewed trade cooperation will ease market overhang and spur investor confidence.

The Sensex and Nifty benchmarks climbed more than 2.5% in the session, logging one of the most impressive single-day gains in recent memory. A broad market uptrend was seen, with most sectors participating and both large and mid-cap stocks posting solid gains. The rupee also strengthened, reflecting improved sentiment on expectations of renewed foreign fund inflows and stronger export prospects.

Technical indicators have begun to shift in favour of bulls following the sharp price ad-

vance. The domestic benchmark index has reclaimed key moving averages that had acted as resistance in recent weeks, suggesting that investor appetite is returning after a period of volatility.

Analysts highlight several near-term support and resistance levels that traders are watching closely:

- On the upside, breaks above the 25,600-25,700 zone could open the door to further gains toward higher levels such as 25,800 to 26,000, where earlier supply pressures were noted. A sustained move past these zones could signal deeper bullish momentum.
- On the downside, immediate support is seen near the 25,000 psychological level, followed by a lower range around 24,900-24,800, which could cushion any pullbacks if profit-taking occurs. These zones may act as floors if volatility returns or if the initial enthusiasm fades.

The strong rally appears driven by both short-covering and fresh buying, as investors reassessed valuations and positioned for improved export competitiveness amid lowered tariff barriers. Export-linked sectors such as IT services, pharmaceuticals, auto ancillaries, textiles, gems and jewellery, and engineering goods are expected to remain in focus as markets digest the implications of the trade deal for corporate earnings and competitiveness.

Technically, analysts suggest that while the immediate move higher reflects strong relief sentiment, follow-through buying and confirmation above key resistance levels will be critical for validating a more sustainable uptrend. The evolving price action around the mentioned support and resistance zones will be closely monitored by traders as a barometer of market strength in the near term.

## Markets Rally Sharply as India-US Trade Deal Sparks Strong Gap-Up Opening

Indian equity markets witnessed a powerful rally after news of a trade agreement between India and the United States that significantly cuts tariffs on Indian exports to 18 percent. The positive development triggered a sharp gap-up opening, with benchmark indices posting one of their strongest single-day moves in recent weeks.

The Sensex surged by over 2,000 points in early trade, while the Nifty 50 jumped past key resistance levels, reflecting a broad-based surge in investor confidence. Buying interest remained strong throughout the session, supported by optimism over improved export prospects and easing global trade concerns.

Market sentiment was buoyed by expectations that lower tariffs would enhance the competitiveness of Indian goods in the US market, improve earnings visibility for exporters and revive foreign investor interest. Analysts said the announcement removed a major uncertainty that had weighed on markets for months.

Export-oriented sec-



tors led the rally. Textiles, gems and jewellery, chemicals and specialty manufacturing stocks saw strong gains as investors priced in potential demand recovery and margin expansion. Banking and financial stocks also advanced sharply, supported by improved risk appetite and expectations of stronger economic activity.

The rally was further fuelled by short covering,

as traders who had positioned for downside were forced to unwind bearish bets following the unexpected positive trigger. Broader market indices also performed well, with mid-cap and small-cap stocks participating in the uptrend.

Market experts noted that while the sharp move reflects immediate enthusiasm, sustainability of the rally will depend on follow-through

buying, clarity on implementation of the trade agreement and upcoming global economic cues. However, the trade deal has clearly shifted near-term sentiment in favour of bulls.

Overall market breadth remained firmly positive, with advancing stocks far outnumbering decliners across exchanges. Volumes were higher than average, indicating strong participation from

both institutional and retail investors.

The sharp rally highlights how major policy and trade developments can swiftly alter market direction. With tariff concerns easing and export visibility improving, investors are expected to closely track sector-specific opportunities arising from the India-US trade agreement in the coming sessions.

## Gems & Jewellery Shares Jump Up to 20% After India US Trade Deal Boosts Export Outlook



Indian gems and jewellery stocks surged strongly in trading after a landmark trade agreement between India and the United States pushed markets higher. The rally was driven by optimism that lower U.S. tariffs will make Indian exports more

competitive and help revive demand in the world's largest consumer market.

Several leading companies in the sector saw their share prices climb sharply. Goldiam International led the gains, with its stock rising about 20% in a single session, hit-

ting circuit limits on heavy trading. Other exporters also saw significant gains, with Rajesh Exports rising around 5% and other jewellery makers posting rallies of varying strength.

Stocks of well known names such as Tribhovan-

das Bhimji Zaveri and counterparts in the certification and retail segment also climbed in double digits before moderating. Even organised jewellery retailers and associated firms recorded notable upticks, reflecting renewed investor interest in businesses with strong export exposure.

The sharp rise in valuations came as traders priced in the expected benefits of the tariff reduction, which cut reciprocal duties from high levels to a more competitive rate. This shift is expected to ease the cost burden on Indian producers exporting to the U.S., potentially restoring order flows that had slowed amid tariff pressures.

Investors also pointed out that the U.S. remains one of India's largest export destinations for gems and jewellery, making any improvement in trade

terms particularly impactful for the segment. With tariffs lowered, companies that rely on diamond, gold and gemstone shipments may find it easier to win contracts and sustain volumes.

The broader market reaction to the trade deal lifted sentiment across other export linked sectors such as textiles and engineering goods, but the gems and jewellery pack stood out due to its sharp intraday percentage moves. Traders said the moves reflected a combination of short covering and fresh long positions as investors repositioned for what they see as a multi session recovery.

Market participants will be watching closely in coming sessions to see if the jewellery sector can maintain its gains once the initial reaction fades and attention turns to fundamentals and actual export data.

## Rupee Hits Highest Level in Weeks After India US Trade Deal Boosts Sentiment



The Indian rupee strengthened sharply against the U.S. dollar, rising to its highest level in about three weeks following the recent India United States trade agreement. The currency's strong performance marked one of its most significant single day gains in years, as market sentiment improved after news of tariff reductions and renewed trade cooperation.

On the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee climbed by more than one percent in a single session, settling near levels not seen in several weeks. The move represented a notable rebound after recent pressures on the currency due to macroeconomic uncertainties and previous trade tensions. Forex traders said the positive shift in sentiment came as investors reacted to the trade deal, which includes a major cut in U.S. tariffs on Indian exports. This development helped ease risk perceptions that had weighed on the rupee and other Indian assets. The improved outlook also came alongside a rally in Indian equity markets, which bolstered overall confidence across financial markets.

The rupee's performance outpaced many of its Asian peers, making it one of the best performing regional currencies during the session. Analysts noted that although the currency's gains reflect renewed optimism, the pace and extent of further appreciation will depend on broader global conditions, central bank actions and ongoing investor appetite for emerging market assets.

Market participants also pointed out that the currency rebound has been supported by expectations of renewed foreign investment flows and improved economic prospects tied to the trade agreement. While details of the pact's implementation are still being digested, the immediate reaction underscores the importance of trade policy in influencing currency markets.

Overall, the rupee's rise to three week highs highlighted a strong risk on sentiment among investors, with financial markets responding positively to the expectation that lowered trade barriers and enhanced cooperation with the U.S. could boost India's export competitiveness and economic growth.

## SPARC Earns Valuable FDA Priority Review Voucher After Sezaby Approval

Sun Pharma Advanced Research Company Ltd (SPARC) has been granted a Priority Review Voucher (PRV) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), marking a strategic milestone for the Indian drug developer and boosting optimism around its future pipeline.

The voucher was issued in connection with the FDA's approval of Sezaby, SPARC's therapy for neonatal seizures, a serious condition affecting newborn infants. A Priority Review Voucher is a special incentive given by the FDA to companies that develop treatments for rare pediatric diseases. The programme aims to encourage investment in areas with high unmet medical needs by rewarding developers with a tangible asset that can enhance their regulatory and commercial strategy.

What makes the voucher particularly valuable is its flexibility. It can be redeemed to secure an accelerated review for a future drug application, shortening the FDA's standard review timeline by several months. In a business where time to market can make a significant difference in revenue and competitive positioning, this faster pathway can be a powerful tool. Alternatively, companies can sell the voucher to other drug developers — often for substan-



tial sums — turning it into a potential revenue source that can support R&D or strengthen the balance sheet.

SPARC has indicated that it intends to use the voucher to accelerate its broader pipeline, though it has not yet specified whether it will apply it internally to a forthcoming drug filing or monetise it through a sale.

In a statement, SPARC's leadership described the award as a recognition of their commitment to addressing unmet needs and as providing added strategic flexibility. The recognition comes as the company expands its research focus in niche areas where regulatory incentives like priority vouchers can significantly impact development timelines.

The news was well received in the market, with SPARC's shares trading higher as investors welcomed the regulatory win. The voucher adds an important option for the company as it seeks to bring new therapies to patients faster and enhance its competitive edge in the complex global pharmaceutical landscape.

## Essay Claims Stanford Students Pretend to Be Jain to Avoid Expensive Mandatory Meal Plan



A student essay has triggered debate after alleging that some undergraduates at Stanford University are falsely identifying as followers of the Jain religion in order to bypass the university's costly mandatory meal plan. The annual dining plan, which reportedly costs close to ₹7 lakh, is required for most students living on campus, though exemptions are permitted for religious or medical dietary needs.

According to the essay, a small number of students are exploiting this exemption policy by claiming adherence to Jain dietary practices, which are among the most restrictive religious food guidelines. Jain diets are based on the principle of non-violence and prohibit foods such as root vegetables, onions, garlic and other items that may involve harm to living organisms. Because these requirements can be difficult for large dining halls to accommodate, students with documented Jain dietary needs may be allowed to opt out of the meal plan.

The author claims that some students, despite not practising Jainism, are using this provision to avoid paying for the campus dining programme. Instead, they allegedly use the funds to buy groceries or eat off campus, which they consider cheaper or better suited to their preferences.

The essay frames this behaviour as part of a broader culture of "optimisation" among students, where individu-

als exchange tips on navigating university systems in ways that maximise personal benefit. While the author does not present official data, the claim is based on conversations and observations within the student community.

The allegations have sparked mixed reactions online. Some argue that the issue highlights frustration with the high cost and inflexibility of university meal plans, especially when students feel they lack control over food quality and spending. Others caution that unverified claims could unfairly cast doubt on students who genuinely follow religious dietary practices and rely on exemptions in good faith.

Stanford University has not publicly commented on the essay's claims or clarified how religious dietary exemptions are verified and monitored. It remains unclear how widespread the alleged misuse may be, or whether the university has mechanisms in place to prevent abuse of the system.

The controversy has reignited a broader discussion about the balance universities must strike between respecting religious diversity, ensuring fairness in policy implementation, and addressing rising costs associated with campus living. It also raises questions about whether institutions should rethink rigid meal plan requirements to better reflect student needs and affordability concerns.

## Anupam Mittal Says Stop Shaming Gen Z for Job-Hopping, Shares a Smarter Career Strategy



Entrepreneur and "Shark Tank India" judge Anupam Mittal has spoken out against the criticism often directed at Generation Z professionals for frequently switching jobs, urging people to view early career movement as exploration rather than instability.

In a widely discussed social media post, Mittal said that job-hopping in the early years of a career should not be treated as a red flag. Instead, he compared it to dating — a phase where individuals try different roles, industries and work cultures to understand what suits them best. According to him, this experimentation helps young professionals gain clarity about their strengths, interests and long-term goals.

Mittal pointed out that many Gen Z workers prioritise factors such as meaningful work, mental well-being and work-life balance. When a role fails to meet these expectations, switching jobs becomes a rational choice rather than a sign of disloyalty or lack of commitment. He emphasised that labelling young professionals as unreliable for moving jobs too often ignores how the modern workplace has evolved.

However, Mittal also stressed that exploration should have a time limit. He advised that once individuals discover a role or organisation that aligns

with their ambitions, they should focus on building depth rather than constantly moving on. Drawing from his experience as a founder and recruiter, he said that long-term commitment demonstrates growth, reliability and leadership potential.

He suggested a simple framework: young professionals between the ages of 21 and 24 should feel free to experiment aggressively with different jobs and career paths. This phase allows them to learn quickly and avoid being locked into unsuitable roles. After the age of 25, he believes it is important to commit to a role or company for several years to develop expertise, credibility and a stronger professional identity.

Mittal noted that when evaluating experienced candidates, he often looks for at least one sustained stint of four to five years, as it reflects an individual's ability to grow within an organisation and see responsibilities through to completion.

His comments resonated with many young professionals who said the advice validated their career choices and eased the pressure to conform to outdated expectations. Others added that while career paths today are increasingly non-linear, finding a balance between exploration and stability remains key to long-term success.

## Bengaluru Tenant Shocked as Landlord Demands One Month's Rent Just to Show Flat



A Bengaluru resident searching for a rental home was left stunned after a landlord allegedly demanded one month's rent upfront merely to allow a viewing of the property. The unusual demand, which surfaced through a social media post, has sparked widespread discussion about unethical practices in the city's already challenging rental market.

The incident occurred when a young profession-

al, new to Bengaluru, was scouting for accommodation in a residential high-rise. While visiting the building, he approached the security guard to ask if any flats were available for rent. The guard confirmed that a unit was vacant and provided the contact number of the property owner.

After speaking with the owner over the phone, the prospective tenant was informed that the security guard would facilitate

the visit. There was no mention at this stage of any fee or advance payment to view the apartment. Believing the process to be straightforward, the individual returned to the building to inspect the flat.

However, upon approaching the security guard to proceed with the viewing, he was told that one month's rent must be paid in advance before the door would be opened. Taken aback by the unex-

pected demand, the man refused to pay and immediately walked away, sensing something was amiss.

Confused and frustrated, he later shared the experience online, asking whether such a practice was common or a potential scam. The post quickly gained attention, with many users strongly criticising the demand. Most responses advised renters never to pay any amount before physically viewing a property, particularly

when the owner or a verified agent is not present.

Several commenters suggested the demand was a clear red flag and warned that it could be an attempt to exploit desperate house-hunters in a competitive market. Others speculated that the security guard might have been acting independently or in coordination with intermediaries to extract money from unsuspecting tenants.

The incident highlights the difficulties faced by renters in Bengaluru, where soaring demand, limited supply and high deposits have already made house-hunting stressful. Unusual and questionable practices such as charging money simply to view a property add another layer of concern for tenants navigating the market.

Experts and experienced renters recommend dealing directly with verified owners or registered brokers, insisting on proper documentation and refusing any demand for money before a legitimate viewing. The episode serves as a cautionary tale for renters to stay vigilant and trust their instincts when something feels wrong.

## Viral Video Shows Delivery Agent Forced to Climb Six Floors With Heavy Parcel — Netizens Slam Housing Society

A video that has recently gone viral on social media shows a delivery agent struggling to climb up six flights of stairs while carrying an oversized and heavy parcel on his back, sparking widespread criticism of the housing society's treatment of service workers.

In the footage, the delivery worker is seen painstakingly making his way up the staircase of a residential building. What makes the situation particularly striking is that the society's lift was reportedly functional, yet the delivery agent was denied access to it, forcing him to carry the burden up the stairs. At one point, he nearly loses his balance due to the weight of the parcel, but continues his effort until he finally reaches the apartment on the sixth floor. Once there, he is heard being cautioned to be careful as he navigates the large parcel through the doorway.

The clip was shared by a social media user with a

caption explaining that society members did not allow packers, movers, or delivery staff to use the elevator, compelling the worker to climb the stairs with the heavy load.

As the video spread online, reactions poured in from people across various platforms, with many users expressing shock and anger at the incident. A common sentiment was that the housing society's actions were inhumane and discriminatory, reflecting a lack of respect and consideration for the physical strain placed on gig economy workers who already perform demanding tasks as part of their jobs.

Several commentators called out what they described as a broader problem: an attitude in some residential communities that prioritises convenience for residents over the dignity and well-being of service workers. A number of social media users argued that if elevators are operational, they



should be made accessible to delivery personnel, especially when they are carrying heavy goods that put them at risk of injury.

Some critics went further, suggesting that buildings with more than a few floors should be required to provide dedicated service elevators for movers and delivery workers, instead of im-

posing restrictions that force them to use tiring and potentially unsafe stairways.

The video reignited an ongoing discussion about how gig workers are treated in urban environments, highlighting the physical hardships they often face and raising questions about empathy, basic courtesy and

the responsibilities of residential housing societies.

Many people echoed the view that respect and humane treatment should be extended to everyone who contributes to everyday life, especially those who perform labour-intensive tasks under challenging conditions.

## Startup Founder Shares How a Cold Email to Narayana Murthy Led to a Meeting



A Bengaluru-based entrepreneur recently shared an inspiring story about how a simple, unsolicited email he sent to Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy in 2016 resulted in an unexpected and memorable meeting. What began as a bold outreach turned into a real demonstration of openness and

accessibility, underscoring how initiative and respect can sometimes open remarkable doors.

The founder, who leads a local travel startup, revealed the episode during a podcast interview. After returning to India from the UK, he wanted to meet one of India's most respected business leaders

to learn from his journey and insights. With no prior connection, he drafted an email to Murthy, expressing admiration for his work and a desire to meet in person. The message was essentially a "cold email" — an unsolicited outreach without expectation of a response.

To the entrepreneur's

surprise, Murthy replied within just a few hours. The reply was prompt and gracious, and it copied Murthy's secretary so that a meeting could be arranged. The speed of the response caught him completely off guard, especially given Murthy's stature and how busy he must have been at the time.

The meeting was eventually scheduled for a few weeks later at Murthy's office in Bengaluru. The entrepreneur described the experience as humbling and inspiring. Murthy arrived precisely on time, greeted him warmly, and engaged in a genuine conversation. What stood out most to the founder was not just the meeting itself, but Murthy's humility, punctuality and willingness to make time for someone he had never met before.

The startup founder said that the encounter left a lasting impression on him, reinforcing the belief that respected leaders can have a profound

impact by staying approachable. He also noted that Bengaluru's culture of openness and collaboration — what some have referred to as the city's special blend of accessibility and humility — played a role in making such an interaction possible.

The story has resonated with many aspiring entrepreneurs who see it as a reminder that boldness, paired with respect and thoughtful communication, can sometimes create opportunities that seem unlikely. It also highlights an important lesson in professional outreach: a sincere message can lead to meaningful connections, even with individuals who are hugely successful and highly sought after.

For the founder, the meeting wasn't just a personal milestone — it was a validation of his belief in taking the initiative to learn and connect, regardless of hierarchy or status.

## ICC Warns Pakistan of Legal and Financial Trouble Over T20 World Cup Boycott Row

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has issued a stern warning to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) over its controversial decision to boycott the high profile T20 World Cup match against India, raising the spectre of legal action, financial penalties and broader consequences for Pakistan's cricket authorities.

The warning comes amid mounting uncertainties surrounding Pakistan's participation in their scheduled Group A fixture against India on February 15 in Colombo, a match seen as one of the most watched and commercially valuable in any cricket tournament. While Pakistan's government has cleared the team to take part in the tournament, it has directed that the national side will not take the field against India, a move that has stunned the global cricket community and prompted widespread debate.

The ICC's message to the PCB is clear: backing out of a scheduled match purely on political or strategic grounds is inconsistent with the obligations of participating in a global sporting event. Officials have emphasised that the boycott jeopardises the tournament's integrity, disrupts commitments to broadcasters and sponsors, and under-



mines the principles of competitiveness and fairness that underpin ICC events.

Beyond strong words, the ICC has warned that Pakistan could face serious repercussions if it sticks to its boycott plan. Major broadcasters, including the official media partners for the T20 World Cup, stand to lose substantial revenue if the India-Pakistan fixture does not take place, and they may pursue legal action against the PCB and potentially the ICC itself for

breach of contract. The potential damages involved could be in the tens of millions of dollars, raising the stakes even higher for all parties.

In addition to possible lawsuits, Pakistan risks financial penalties such as withholding of its share of ICC distributions, which make up a significant portion of revenue for full member boards. The ICC has hinted that non-compliance with tournament terms could also open the door to other forms of discipli-

nary action, though it stopped short of announcing specific sanctions.

The warning has put the PCB and the government of Pakistan in a difficult position, prompting reports of legal consultations and internal debate over how best to respond. Officials in Lahore have reportedly prepared legal strategies to counter any ICC action, even sending legal advisers along with team representatives to Colombo in anticipation of further discussions. Cricket fans and admin-

istrators around the world are watching closely. With diplomatic, commercial and sporting considerations all in play, the unfolding episode could reshape how international cricket balances political realities with contractual and competitive obligations. The ICC has stressed that all member boards are expected to honour their commitments — and that ignoring them could lead to consequences that extend far beyond a single match.

## New Zealand Enter T20 World Cup as Strong, Balanced Contenders with Key Players in Form



As the ICC T20 World Cup 2026 gets underway, New Zealand has emerged as one of the tournament's most balanced and threatening teams, blending experience with in form talent and tactical flexibility. With several key players firing at the right time, the Black Caps arrive in strong contention for a deep run and potentially a title challenge.

One of New Zealand's biggest strengths lies in their well rounded squad composition. Unlike some teams that rely heavily on a few stars, New Zealand has dependable performers across batting, bowling and fielding departments. Their batting lineup boasts players capable of anchoring innings as well as those who can score rapidly in the

death overs. This balance gives the team the adaptability to adjust to different match situations, whether they are setting a target or chasing.

In recent months leading up to the World Cup, several Kiwi batsmen have shown excellent form in T20 cricket, consistently contributing big scores in domestic and international matches. Their per-

formances have lent confidence and added firepower to the top and middle order, helping the team build momentum heading into the tournament.

New Zealand's bowling attack is equally threatening. The pace battery includes bowlers with the ability to strike early with the new ball, as well as specialists who excel at containing runs and taking crucial wickets in the middle overs. Their spin options add another dimension, especially on surfaces that assist turn. Fielding, a traditional strength of New Zealand sides, remains a highlight, with sharp catchers and agile ground fielders ready to save valuable runs.

Leadership and experience are also key assets for the Black Caps. The team's captain and senior players bring strategic acumen and calm under pressure — qualities that have helped New Zealand perform consistently in ICC events over the years. Their familiarity with big

moments and high pressure games could prove decisive when the tournament reaches its knockout stages.

Cricket analysts have noted that while New Zealand may not boast the standout individual statistics of some other squads, their depth and team cohesion make them particularly dangerous in T20 cricket, where matchups and momentum swings can define outcomes.

Looking ahead, New Zealand's schedule offers a mix of challenging opponents and opportunities to build confidence. If they continue executing their plans effectively and key players maintain form, the Black Caps are well placed to finish among the top contenders and potentially surprise even the most favoured teams.

For fans and neutrals alike, New Zealand's blend of talent, balance and tactical intelligence makes them one of the most compelling teams to watch in this year's T20 World Cup.

## Pat Cummins Confirms When Josh Hazlewood Is Likely to Return in T20 World Cup 2026

Australia's pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood is expected to make a return to action during the T20 World Cup 2026, according to captain Pat Cummins. Hazlewood, who missed the early part of the tournament due to a nagging injury, has been progressing well in his recovery, and team management now anticipates his reintegration into the playing XI in the coming days.

Hazlewood's absence was felt by the Australian bowling unit in the opening matches, as the team looked to deploy other seam options to fill the void. Known for his metro-nomic accuracy and ability to bowl tight lines in all phases of the game, Hazlewood brings a disciplined edge to Australia's bowling attack — especially at the backend of innings, where batters often look to accelerate.

Speaking at a team update, Cummins highlighted that Hazlewood has been training on the sidelines and "responding posi-



tively" to conditioning sessions. The skipper noted that while the team remains cautious not to rush the pacer back too early, the goal is to have him available for what could be crucial middle matches in Australia's group stage schedule. Cummins also emphasised that Hazlewood's experience and calming presence in the bowling

group will be valuable as the tournament pressure escalates.

Australia's management has been balancing workload carefully, especially given the compressed nature of the World Cup schedule. With multiple fixtures in quick succession, fitness and freshness have become key talking points for all sides. Hazlewood's phased

return is part of a broader strategy to ensure that the team fields its best possible combination at the business end of the competition.

The news will be welcomed by fans and teammates alike, given Hazlewood's consistent performance in international T20 cricket and his role in Australia's success across formats. His ability

to execute yorkers at will, maintain consistency in challenging conditions and hold nerves under pressure adds depth and balance to the bowling unit.

Australia's pace attack has shouldered responsibility through the early phase of the World Cup, with Cummins himself leading from the front. However, the possible arrival of Hazlewood is seen as a timely boost — a development that could lift morale and further sharpen Australia's bowling resources ahead of tougher encounters.

As Australia eyes a deep run in the tournament, Hazlewood's return could provide the finishing touch that enhances their overall competitiveness. With each injury update, Cummins and the support staff have reiterated a cautious but optimistic outlook, suggesting that fans may soon see one of the most experienced campaigners back in action for the green and gold.

## What It Really Means If Pakistan Refuses to Play India at the T20 World Cup



The controversy around Pakistan's announced boycott of their T20 World Cup group match against India has thrown one of cricket's most anticipated fixtures into uncharted territory. With political tensions spilling onto the sport's biggest stage, the possibility that Pakistan may not take the field against India carries significant sporting, strategic and financial consequences for the tournament and the teams involved.

If Pakistan sticks to its stance and refuses to take the field on match day, the outcome is clear under the International Cricket Council's (ICC) playing conditions. In that scenario, the match will be officially forfeited, and India will be awarded two points, while Pakistan will receive none. For a World Cup group where net run rate can be crucial for advancing to the next stage, the defeat on paper could hurt Pakistan's chances of progressing beyond the first round. A loss like this not only costs points but also harms their net run rate — a tiebreaker that often plays a decisive role in closely packed groups.

There is a narrow alternative: if India were not to show up at the venue at the scheduled time, the game would be considered cancelled rather than forfeited, and the points would be shared. However, with the Indian team committed to travelling and preparing as per protocol, a no

show by Pakistan would count as a forfeit under tournament rules.

Pakistan's cricket board and government have hinted that they might argue a force majeure exemption — a legal clause typically invoked for unforeseen and unavoidable events. But sporting authorities view political objections alone as unlikely to qualify, since force majeure normally applies to genuine safety risks or natural disasters, not disagreements over policy or scheduling.

Beyond the immediate sporting fallout, there are broader implications. A forfeited match disrupts the competitive balance of the tournament and deprives fans of a marquee clash that draws massive global viewership. The historic India Pakistan fixture is among the most watched in cricket, generating significant economic activity through broadcasters, sponsors and advertising. Its absence will not only affect those revenues but could also lead to discussions about sanctions or penalties for non-compliance with tournament obligations.

In short, refusal to play would hand India an uncontested victory, dent Pakistan's campaign prospects and place the spotlight firmly on how politics and sport intersect at the highest levels of international cricket — with consequences that could resonate far beyond the points table.

## Report Links Pakistan's T20 World Cup Boycott Drama to Bangladesh Elections



With just days to go before the start of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, Pakistan's controversial stance on its scheduled match against India has taken an unexpected political twist in recent reports. What began as a sporting dispute now appears intertwined with broader regional political developments — particularly the impending general elections in Bangladesh.

Pakistan had announced that its team would boycott the high profile group match against India, scheduled for February 15 in Colombo. Although the team is set to participate in the rest of the tournament, the decision to skip only the India fixture has caused widespread debate and confusion among cricket fans and commentators. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has not formally explained its reasons to the International Cricket Council (ICC), leaving a gap filled by speculation in media and political circles.

A recent report suggests that the PCB's controversial decision may be influenced by the timing of the national elections in Bangladesh, slated to take place on February 12 — just three days before the India match. Sources quoted in the report believe that the PCB Chairman, who also holds a government portfolio, might be using the boycott announcement to score political points ahead of the Bangladesh election results. The idea is that a perceived show of solidarity with Bangladesh could

resonate with certain political factions once the elections conclude.

Under this theory, the PCB's current stance might not be final. If a new government comes into power in Dhaka following the elections, Islamabad could potentially reconsider its boycott decision in the days leading up to the India game. There are still two days between the Bangladesh poll and the scheduled match date — a window for possible diplomatic recalibration. This has led some observers to speculate that Pakistan could perform a dramatic reversal, especially if political imperatives shift after the election outcome.

Meanwhile, the ICC has weighed in on the situation, urging the PCB to seek a mutually acceptable resolution. The governing body warned that selective participation — picking only certain matches to play — runs counter to the spirit of a global sporting event, where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms.

The controversy has also reignited debates about the intersection of politics and sport. Critics argue that tying cricket decisions to political developments detracts from the integrity of competition and sets a troubling precedent for future international tournaments. With the Bangladesh elections just around the corner, all eyes will be on Islamabad to see whether political winds will influence Pakistan's final decision on its most anticipated cricket fixture.

## Telugu Action Drama "One by Four (One/4)" Celebrates Success Despite Promotional Setbacks



The recently released Telugu action crime drama One by Four (One/4), produced under the banners of Tejas Gunjal Films and Rohit Gunjal Films, has been embraced by audiences across all sections, emerging as a commercial success. The film, starring Venkatesh Peddapalem, Aparna Mallik, and Heena Soni in lead roles, was directed by Bahubali Palani K, who previously worked as an associate director on the blockbuster Baahubali.

A success meet was held at the Hyderabad Film Chamber, where the cast and crew reflected on the film's journey and its reception. Director Bahubali Palani K lauded the audience for the strong response, saying, "Collections are good in every theatre. Once again, viewers proved that if the content is strong, even a small film can achieve big success." He praised lead actor Venkatesh for his performance and action se-

quences and highlighted the dedication of producers Ranjana Rajesh Gunjal and Rohit Ramdas Gunjal, who ventured into Tollywood from Mumbai.

However, both the director and producers expressed disappointment over the absence of the heroines during promotional activities. Bahubali Palani K remarked, "Some actors who initially come seeking opportunities do not show up during promotions. They should at least promote the film with gratitude." Producer Ranjana Gunjal echoed these sentiments, adding, "Despite providing all facilities, their absence caused losses to the film. It is better to encourage and cast Telugu girls rather than relying on North Indian heroines."

Co-producer Rohit Gunjal emphasized that the strong content resonated with audiences and contributed to the film's success, but the promotional support from the cast could have amplified

its reach further. Lead actor Venkatesh Peddapalem also stressed the collective hard work that went into the project, noting that while release hurdles were overcome, promotional efforts were hampered by the heroines' absence.

The film, praised for its gripping storyline and thought-provoking portrayal of a woman facing blackmail, features a robust supporting cast including Temper Vamsi, RX100 Karan, Narendra Varma, Madhusudhan Rao, and Sunitha Manohar, among others. Technical contributions include music by Subhash Anand, cinematography by Guna Shekhar, choreography by Sagar Veluru, and stunt sequences led by Kung Fu Chandra and Joshua.

One by Four (One/4) stands as a testament to the power of strong content, proving that even small films can achieve big success when storytelling resonates with audiences.

## Telugu Film 'Winter' Launches with Grand Pooja Ceremony



The much-anticipated Telugu film Winter was officially launched with a grand traditional pooja ceremony, marking the commencement of its production. The project is a joint venture of Crescent Cinemas and TSR Makers and promises to be an engaging drama based on real-life incidents that took place in Kashmir.

The film features a talented ensemble cast including Ram, Aadhitya Suraj Singh, Kusuma Chandhaka, Shashikala, and Srijitaa Ghosh in lead roles. Adding to the excitement, Rizwan Ali will make his debut as the antagonist. The film is produced by Riyaz Ahmed and T. Srinivas Rao, who expressed confidence that Winter will captivate audiences with its gripping storyline and realistic portrayal of events.

Renowned filmmaker Suresh Lankalapalli, who received critical acclaim for his previous work Racharikam, is handling the story, screenplay, and direction for Winter. Speaking

about the film, sources close to the team stated that Lankalapalli aims to blend intense drama with authentic storytelling, creating a cinematic experience that resonates with viewers while remaining true to the real-life incidents that inspired the narrative.

The pooja ceremony was attended by the full team, with rituals conducted to seek blessings for the film's success and a smooth, obstacle-free production. Industry insiders noted that the event reflected both the grandeur and the cultural significance of such launches in Telugu cinema, with the team showing enthusiasm and commitment to bringing the project to life.

While the lead cast has been revealed, the makers confirmed that additional members of the cast and technical crew will be announced in the coming weeks. The production promises high-quality storytelling supported by a dedicated team, including professional oversight in direction, cinematography,

and production design, though specific technical details are yet to be disclosed.

Winter is already generating buzz in industry circles due to its strong storyline, real-life inspiration, and a promising cast. Both producers Riyaz Ahmed and T. Srinivas Rao emphasized that their focus is on delivering a film that combines entertainment with meaningful content, aiming to leave a lasting impact on audiences.

With its official launch complete, Winter is now set to move into full-scale production, promising viewers an intriguing and compelling cinematic experience when it eventually hits theatres.

**Cast:** Ram, Aadhitya Suraj Singh, Kusuma Chandhaka, Shashikala, Srijitaa Ghosh, Rizwan Ali, and others

**Technical Crew:** Banners - Crescent Cinemas, TSR Makers; Producers - Riyaz Ahmed, T. Srinivas Rao; Story, Screenplay & Direction - Suresh Lankalapalli; PRO - Sai Satish.

## Santosh Shobhan: 'Couple Friendly Will Be a Memorable Film in My Career'

The trailer of the upcoming bilingual romantic musical Couple Friendly was launched today in Hyderabad, setting the stage for its Valentine's Day release on February 14. Starring Santosh Shobhan and Manasa Varanasi in the lead roles, the film is presented by the reputed production house UV Creations and produced under UV Concepts, with co-production by Ajay Kumar Raju P. The film is directed by Ashwin Chandrasekhar and is being made on a grand scale in both Telugu and Tamil.

During the trailer launch, Santosh Shobhan expressed his excitement about the film, calling it one of the most memorable projects of his career. He shared, "UV Creations feels like family. Every film under this banner feels personal. 'Couple Friendly' is made with genuine intention and honesty. My character Shiva has a journey, and I appear in three different looks. These characters will make you laugh, move you emotionally, and even bring tears at times."

Manasa Varanasi, who plays Mithra, praised the depth of her character and the authenticity of the film's Chennai backdrop. "I connected deeply with Mithra on a personal level. The film is like a roller-coaster ride—a fresh, youthful love story shot guerrilla-style across Chennai. Santosh Shobhan's dedication inspired me throughout the



shoot," she said. The film's music, composed by Aditya Ravindran, has already delivered chartbuster songs, adding to the anticipation.

Director Ashwin Chandrasekhar emphasized the sincerity behind the project. "Santosh watched my short films and immediately agreed to do this project. The city of Chennai itself is treated as an important character in the story. I'm confident that audiences will feel the honesty behind this film," he remarked.

Producer and distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni, who is re-

leasing the film across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, praised the performances and storytelling. "Santosh Shobhan has delivered a mature performance, and Manasa Varanasi shines brilliantly. 'Couple Friendly' is a fresh take on love stories and will surely resonate with audiences," he said.

Co-producer Ajay Kumar added, "This is another beautiful love story from the UV banner. We trust Dheeraj garu completely for distributing the film across Telugu states."

Couple Friendly is set to entertain singles, couples, and family

audiences alike, promising a mix of laughter, emotion, and romance. The film's technical team includes DOP Dinesh Purushothaman, editor Ganesh Shiva, art director Michael BFA, and P R O GSK Media (Suresh-Sreenivas).

**Cast:** Santosh Shobhan, Manasa Varanasi, and others

**Technical Team:** Art Director - Michael BFA; Editor - Ganesh Shiva; DOP - Dinesh Purushothaman; Music Director - Aditya Ravindran; Executive Producer - S.S. Varma; Written & Directed - Ashwin Chandrasekhar.

## Attitude Star Chandra Hass Promises Thrills in 'Barabar Premistha'; Pre-Release Event Celebrates Film



With its theatrical release just days away on February 6, Barabar Premistha, starring Attitude Star Chandra Hass, held a grand pre-release event on Sunday. The film, directed by Sampath Rudra and produced by Geda Chandu, Gayatri Chinny, and AVR under CC Creations and AVR Movie Wonders, also features Miss India finalist Meghna Mukherjee as the female lead and Arjun Mahi in a pivotal

antagonist role. The event was graced by industry veterans including director Jayanth C Paranjee, Aadi Saikumar, and actor JD Chakravarthy, alongside the film's cast and crew.

Chandra Hass expressed his excitement about the film, saying, "This film will not bore the audience even for a second. With countless and unimaginable twists, it will keep viewers glued from start to finish. Di-

rector Sampath has made this film beautifully and presented me really well. I hope audiences watch and support Barabar Premistha on February 6." He also credited his father, Prabhakar, and the producers for supporting the project without compromises.

Aadi Saikumar, who has worked with Chandra Hass' father in the past, praised the lead actor's dedication. "I've seen how hard Chandra

Hass works with complete honesty. I sincerely wish him a big hit and hope Barabar Premistha becomes a major turning point in his career," he said.

Noted director Jayanth C Paranjee described the film as a perfect match for Chandra Hass' persona. "The title itself reflects attitude, confidence, and swagger, just like Chandra Hass. Sampath has directed the film wonderfully, and the songs by Dhruvan are excellent. I strongly believe this film will be a big hit," he added.

The pre-release event also featured remarks from Meghna Mukherjee, Arjun Mahi, music director RR Dhruvan, and producers Chandu, Chinny, and Venky, who thanked the cast, crew, and audience for their support. Director Sampath Rudra highlighted the unique Telangana backdrop and promised a shocking climax that will leave audiences talking.

Barabar Premistha boasts a talented techni-

cal team including cinematographer YR Shekhar, editor Bonthala Nageswara Reddy, dialogue writer Ramesh Roy, and screenplay co-written by Sampath Rudra and MA Tirupati. With its engaging storyline, strong performances, and thrilling twists, the film aims to captivate Telugu audiences across theaters.

**Cast:** Attitude Star Chandra Hass, Meghna Mukherjee, Arjun Mahi, Muralidhar Goud, Lakshman Meesala, Madhunanand, Abhay Naveen, and others

**Technical Crew:** Banner - CC Creations, AVR Movie Wonders; Producers - Geda Chandu, Gayatri Chinny, AVR; Director - Sampath Rudra; Screenplay - Sampath Rudra, MA Tirupati; Story - MA Tirupati; Dialogues - Ramesh Roy; Cinematography - YR Shekhar; Music - RR Dhruvan; Editor - Bonthala Nageswara Reddy; PRO - Sai Satish.

## Kayadu Lohar Returns to Malayalam Cinema; New Poster of 'Pallichattambi' Released

Malayalam cinema audiences are set to welcome back actress Kayadu Lohar with the upcoming film Pallichattambi, as the makers unveiled a striking new poster featuring her in a single-character look. The poster also confirms the film's worldwide theatrical release date of April 9. Pallichattambi is being launched in five languages, including Malayalam, and has already generated considerable buzz among South Indian cinema fans.

Kayadu Lohar's casting as the female lead was earlier announced through a video that drew significant attention online. Kayadu, who won hearts with her performance in the Tamil blockbuster Dragon, is expected to bring a strong presence to Pallichattambi. The film pairs her with Mollywood superstar Tovino Thomas, who reportedly appears in a

look unlike anything he has portrayed before.

Produced jointly by Noufal and Brijesh under the banner of Worldwide Films, along with Chanukya, Chaitanya, and Charan of C Qube Bros Entertainment, Pallichattambi is a period drama set in the 1950s-60s. The screenplay has been penned by S. Suresh Babu. Apart from Kayadu Lohar, the film features an ensemble cast including Vijay Raghavan, Sudheer Karamana, Baburaj, Vinod Kedamangalam, Prashanth Alex, and several other prominent actors, promising a layered and engaging narrative.

The technical team of Pallichattambi includes Tijo Tomy as cinematographer and Mollywood music sensation Jakes Bejoy composing the soundtrack. Megha Shyam and Thanseer serve as co-producers, while costume design is handled by Manjusha Rad-

hakrishnan and makeup by Rasheed Ahmed. Renith Raj and Kiran Raphael are chief associate directors, with Rajesh Menon overseeing both art direction and production control. Sound design is by Sync Cinema, casting by Binoy Nambala, digital marketing by Akhil Vishnu V.S., and PR by Akshay Prakash. Stills photography is by Rishlal Unnikrishnan, and the poster design is credited to Yellowtooths.

Set against a backdrop of mid-20th-century Kerala, Pallichattambi aims to combine historical authenticity with cinematic spectacle, highlighting the drama, struggles, and dynamics of the era. The latest poster, showcasing Kayadu Lohar's role, has already captivated fans and heightened anticipation for the film's release.

With a strong cast, experienced crew, and a period drama premise, Pal-



lichattambi is positioned to be one of the notable Malayalam releases of

2026, marking Kayadu Lohar's much-awaited return to the industry.