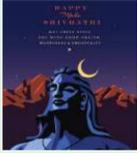




**BUZZ POINTS**

MONDAY is declared a Holiday on account of Maha Shivaratri



**BUZZ POINTS**

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# Green Signal for Prosecution in Formula E Case, ACB Moves Ahead

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a significant development in the alleged irregularities linked to the Formula E race, the Union government has granted sanction to prosecute senior IAS officer Arvind Kumar. The decision has been formally communicated to the state authorities, clearing a key procedural hurdle in the ongoing investigation.

The case, being probed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), relates to the organisation of the international racing event held in Hyderabad in 2023. Investigators have alleged financial irregularities and diversion of public funds linked to payments made to a foreign firm associated with the event. With the prosecution sanction now in place, officials indicated that the agency is preparing to file a chargesheet in the coming weeks.

Former minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president K. T. Rama Rao has already been named as the primary accused in the case. The Governor had earlier granted permission for his prosecution, enabling investigators to proceed with questioning and evidence collection. KTR has appeared



before the ACB multiple times for examination, and he was also questioned once by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the matter.

According to investigators, the ACB report flagged a suspected quid pro quo arrangement and alleged that around 54.88 crore was diverted in violation of established procedures. The agency registered a formal case on December 18, 2024, naming KTR as Accused No. 1, Arvind Kumar as Accused No. 2, and a senior engineering official as Accused No. 3. Officials familiar with the probe said the sanction to prosecute a serving or former public servant is a crucial legal requirement before initiating court proceedings. With approvals now secured for key individuals, the investigative process has moved into its final stage. The filing of the chargesheet is expected to lay out the alleged financial trail, administrative decisions, and documentary evidence collected during the probe.

Earlier, Arvind Kumar had reportedly stated in written communication to the government and during questioning that the release of funds was carried out following directions issued at the ministerial level at the time. Investigators are examining these claims alongside official files, approvals, and financial records to determine accountability.

The case has attracted considerable political attention, given the high-profile nature of the event and the senior officials involved. While the investigation continues, legal proceedings following the chargesheet are likely to determine the next course of action. Authorities maintain that further steps will be taken strictly in accordance with due process and applicable laws.



# CM Revanth Reddy Hails Ministers After Municipal Poll Success

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Saturday chaired a review meeting with state ministers, congratulating them on the party's strong performance in the recent municipal elections and urging continued coordination to sustain the political momentum. The Chief Minister praised the collective efforts of ministers, legislators, and grassroots workers, stating that the encouraging results were a reflection of teamwork and disciplined campaigning.

During the meeting, he acknowledged the role played by party cadres across districts, noting that their tireless outreach and engagement with voters had significantly contributed to the electoral success. According to him, the victory demonstrated growing public confidence in the government's policies and governance approach.

Highlighting the administration's record,

the Chief Minister said the government had delivered substantial progress in a short span, claiming that key initiatives implemented over the past two years achieved outcomes that had remained pending for nearly a decade earlier. He pointed to development programs, welfare schemes, and infrastructure expansion as major factors that resonated with urban voters and influenced the municipal results.

Revanth Reddy emphasized that sustaining public trust should remain the top priority. He called on ministers to maintain unity, accelerate implementation of projects, and ensure visible improvements in civic amenities. Stressing accountability, he asked departments to closely monitor progress and address local issues promptly so that citizens experience tangible benefits in their daily lives.

The Chief Minister also underscored the need for stronger public communication. He directed ministers to regularly engage with communities and

clearly explain government initiatives, welfare measures, and development plans. Effective outreach, he said, would deepen the connection between the administration and citizens while countering misinformation.

Focusing on urban governance, Revanth Reddy outlined his vision of transforming municipalities and municipal corporations into model urban bodies. He instructed ministers to prioritize better civic administration, improved sanitation, upgraded infrastructure, and efficient service delivery. The goal, he noted, is to position the state's urban local bodies as benchmarks for governance standards at the national level.

The meeting concluded with a renewed call for coordinated efforts across departments and party ranks. Revanth Reddy reiterated that the government's central objective remains inclusive urban growth, efficient governance, and strengthening public confidence as the state prepares for upcoming political and adminis-

# Uttam Kumar Reddy Urges Transparent Civic Governance



Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

Uttam Kumar Reddy, Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies, on Saturday called upon newly elected municipal representatives to uphold transparency and ensure corruption-free governance as they assume office in local bodies.

Congratulating councillors from municipalities in Suryapet district on their victory, the minister said civic administrations must function with accountability and public trust at their core. The elected members met him during a courtesy visit to thank him for his campaign support in the recent municipal elections, where the party

registered a strong performance.

Referring to the results, Uttam Kumar Reddy noted that the electoral mandate reflected people's expectations for clean administration and responsive governance. He cautioned that past instances of corruption and irregularities in municipal functioning should not be repeated and urged the new council to adopt strict oversight mechanisms, transparent procedures, and citizen-centric decision-making.

Highlighting the town's strategic location along a national highway, the minister observed that Suryapet possesses significant growth potential but still requires focused planning to fully leverage its advantages. He

described the voters' support as overwhelming and said it placed a responsibility on public representatives to deliver measurable improvements in civic services, infrastructure, and urban management. According to him, the trust shown by citizens must translate into visible progress on the ground.

Reaffirming his commitment to the town's development, Uttam Kumar Reddy said he would closely monitor key projects and extend support to expedite initiatives that enhance urban infrastructure. He emphasized the importance of periodic reviews, data-driven planning, and coordinated execution among departments to ensure timely completion of works. Adequate funding, he assured, would

be mobilized to strengthen essential services and improve the overall quality of life for residents.

The meeting was attended by several leaders, including Patel Ramesh Reddy, Ramreddy Sarvotham Reddy, Koppula Vena Reddy, and Chakilam Rajeshwar Rao, among others, who expressed confidence that the new municipal leadership would focus on development with integrity.

The minister's remarks underline the government's broader push to strengthen urban governance frameworks and ensure that the recent electoral mandate results in accountable administration, improved service delivery, and sustained development across municipalities.

# Independents Shift Loyalties After Telangana Civic Polls



Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

A significant political churn is underway across Telangana's urban local bodies as several independent candidates who secured victories in the recent municipal elections are now aligning themselves with major political parties. The post-poll realignments are being seen as an attempt by parties to consolidate power in municipal councils and ensure smoother governance in urban administrations.

The municipal elections, held across dozens of municipalities and thousands of wards, produced a notable number of independents who emerged victorious, reflecting strong local support bases and dissatis-

faction with traditional party structures in certain areas. However, with councils now moving toward formation of governing bodies, these independents are increasingly being courted by major parties eager to strengthen their numbers and influence decision-making.

Political observers say the trend is not unusual in local body politics, where independents often hold the balance of power in closely contested municipalities. By joining ruling or opposition parties, they gain better access to administrative support, development funds, and political backing for constituency needs. For parties, these inductions help secure majorities in councils and reduce the risk of instability.

In several municipali-

ties, independents have already announced their decision to extend support to ruling formations, while others are reportedly in discussions with different parties before making formal announcements. Party leaders have welcomed the moves, describing them as a reflection of confidence in their governance and development agenda. They argue that broader alliances at the local level will enable quicker implementation of civic projects and welfare initiatives. Critics, however, view the trend as a dilution of the independent mandate given by voters. They argue that frequent post-poll shifts undermine the spirit of electoral choice and raise questions about political ethics. Some civil society voices have called for clearer norms to en-

sure transparency in such decisions, suggesting that public declarations of support should be accompanied by clear development commitments.

Despite the debate, the immediate impact of these alignments is expected to be felt in the formation of municipal leadership positions such as chairpersons and standing committees. As negotiations continue, the political landscape in several towns remains fluid, with alliances likely to shape local governance priorities in the coming months. With urban development and service delivery high on the public agenda, the coming weeks will be crucial in determining how these shifting loyalties translate into administrative stability and performance at the grassroots level.

# Uttam Kumar Reddy Pledges Corruption-Free Development in Suryapet

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Telangana's Minister for Irrigation and Municipal Administration, Captain N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, on Saturday emphasized the need to transform Suryapet Municipal Council into a corruption-free governance body and accelerate the city's urban development.

Speaking to newly elected municipal representatives in Hyderabad, the minister urged the council to prevent the recurrence of past irregularities and implement

strict administrative measures to ensure transparency and efficiency. The officials, elected across 48 wards with victories in 31 seats, were personally congratulated by Uttam Kumar Reddy for their successful election. Highlighting Suryapet's strategic location on the national highway, the minister noted that the city had not achieved the expected level of development. He stressed that the public's overwhelming support for the Congress party carries a responsibility for the newly elect-



ed councilors to uphold citizens' trust through diligent governance. "The people have placed immense faith in us, and it is our duty to translate

this trust into tangible development for the city," he stated.

Uttam Kumar Reddy also assured continued oversight of Suryapet's urban planning and development. He announced that a structured action plan would be formulated to monitor progress, draft specialized projects, and secure sufficient funding to place the city firmly on a path of comprehensive growth.

The minister expressed his commitment to personally facilitating initiatives aimed at im-

proving municipal infrastructure, public services, and civic amenities. "As the representative of Suryapet at the state level, I will work relentlessly to ensure the city progresses sustainably and efficiently," he added.

The meeting saw participation from several key leaders, including Telangana Tourism Corporation Chairman Patel Ramesh Reddy, AICC member Ramreddy Sarvottam Reddy, Suryapet Market Committee Chairman Kopplu Venareddy, PCC Secretary Chakiram Rajeshwar

Rao, and the newly elected councilors. The interaction provided a platform for discussion on governance priorities and the steps needed to modernize civic administration in the city.

With this proactive approach, Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy aims to instill public confidence, ensure accountable governance, and set Suryapet on a consistent trajectory of urban development while reinforcing the message of transparency and integrity in municipal administration.

## Ministers Lead Dog Adoption Drive at KBR Park

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 A large-scale dog adoption program was held at KBR Park in the city on Saturday, promoting compassion and the message of non-violence toward animals. The event saw active participation from state ministers Konda Surekha and Seethakka, who set an example by personally adopting a puppy during the ceremony.

Minister Seethakka adopted a native puppy through the guidance of Minister Konda Surekha, while MP Renuka Chowdary also participated in adopting a dog. The initiative, organized under the supervision of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), aimed to encourage the adoption of stray dogs and raise awareness about their well-being.

Speaking at the event, Minister Konda Surekha highlighted the emotional sensitivity of dogs, noting that some dogs die of grief when their owners pass away. She cautioned against unnecessary aggression toward stray dogs, explaining that such actions can provoke retaliatory behavior. Sharing her personal experience, she said that more than ten dogs roam around her home daily, yet she has never requested their removal. Instead, she em-



phasized the importance of sterilization and responsible care. She further noted that a dog, when treated with trust and love, can serve as a protector for the household and develop a strong bond with humans. She urged everyone to adopt puppies wherever possible, setting an example of responsible pet ownership.

Minister Seethakka praised GHMC for organizing the event in a public space and stressed the broader societal benefits

of adopting stray dogs. She said that adoption not only gives dogs the right to live but also nurtures humanity and empathy within society. "Every living being has the right to life, and a dog is a true embodiment of trust," she said. She added that having a dog at home enhances the sense of security, and protecting them is a responsibility shared by all citizens. She reiterated that the Congress party has always adhered to the principle of non-violence.

The program was attended by several dignitaries, including MP Renuka Chowdary, MLC Balmuru Venkat, former corporator Vijaya Reddy, and GHMC Commissioner Karnan. The adoption drive received widespread appreciation for combining social awareness, animal welfare, and public engagement, inspiring many city residents to consider welcoming stray dogs into their homes.

## Municipal Polls Witness Steady Turnout in Telangana

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Voting in the Telangana municipal elections recorded a moderate turnout across several urban local bodies, reflecting steady voter participation despite scattered logistical challenges. Polling was conducted peacefully in most regions, with officials reporting smooth arrangements and only minor, isolated incidents.

According to election authorities, voter turnout varied significantly between municipalities, with some urban centers witnessing brisk participation during the morning hours, while others picked up pace later in the day. Officials attributed the variation to local weather conditions, voter awareness levels, and urban work schedules that typically influence turnout patterns.

In major municipal corporations, polling stations saw a steady stream of voters from early morning, including senior citizens and first-time voters. Election staff ensured that queues were regulated efficiently and that essential facilities such as drinking water and shade were available. Security personnel were deployed in sensitive locations to main-



tain law and order, and authorities confirmed that the polling process remained largely incident-free.

Across smaller municipalities and nagar panchayats, turnout trends indicated a gradual increase as the day progressed. Local officials noted that women voters participated actively, with several booths reporting nearly equal gender turnout. Youth participation was also visible, particularly in rapidly urbanizing towns where civic issues such as infrastructure, sanitation, and employment opportunities dominated public discourse.

Political parties expressed confidence in their prospects while urging voters to exercise their franchise re-

sponsibly. Party representatives monitored polling at booths and coordinated with election officials to address minor complaints related to voter lists and booth access. Election observers stationed in various districts reviewed the process and reported overall compliance with guidelines.

Election Commission officials stated that final turnout figures would be consolidated after polling concluded across all constituencies. Counting of votes is scheduled to take place in the coming days, with results expected to provide a clearer picture of the political landscape in urban Telangana.

The municipal elections are considered

significant as they serve as a barometer of public sentiment ahead of future state-level political contests. Analysts believe that urban voting trends often highlight citizens' priorities on governance, infrastructure development, and civic services, making the outcome closely watched by all major political stakeholders.

Overall, the polling exercise reinforced confidence in the electoral process, with authorities emphasizing their commitment to transparency and efficient management. The final turnout data and subsequent results are expected to shape political narratives in the state's urban governance space in the weeks ahead.

## Independents Weigh Options After Telangana Municipal Polls

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 A significant political churn is underway across Telangana's urban local bodies as several victorious independent candidates from the recent municipal elections explore the possibility of joining established political parties. The post-poll realignments are shaping up to be a crucial factor in determining the leadership and stability of municipal administrations across the state.

The municipal elections, held earlier this week, recorded an impressive voter turnout and produced closely contested outcomes in many towns and cities. While major parties secured substantial victories in several municipalities, a notable number of wards were won by independents, making them key players in council formations.

**Independents Hold the Balance**

In municipalities where no single party has secured a clear majority, independents now hold the balance of power. Their support is expected to play a decisive role in electing chairpersons, mayors, and stand-

ing committee members. Political parties have begun reaching out to these elected representatives, seeking their backing to strengthen their position in local bodies.

Observers say that the shift of independents toward larger parties is often driven by practical governance considerations. Aligning with a ruling or major party can provide easier access to development funds, administrative support, and faster approvals for civic projects in their wards. For many newly elected members, this is seen as a way to deliver quicker results to their constituents.

**Debate Over Political Ethics**

However, the trend has also sparked debate about political ethics and voter expectations. Many independents contested on the promise of remaining non-aligned and focusing purely on local issues. Their decision to join parties after elections is being viewed differently by various sections — while some consider it pragmatic, others see it as a departure from the independent mandate. Political analysts point out that such shifts are not unusual in local body poli-



tics, where governance often requires coalition-style cooperation. The fluidity of alliances at the municipal level reflects the practical realities of running civic administrations, where consensus and numbers are essential for decision-making.

**Impact on Local Governance**

The coming weeks will be crucial as newly elected councils convene to elect their leadership. The direction taken by independents could influence policy priorities, budget allocations, and the pace of urban development initiatives. Their support could also determine how effectively municipal bodies function, especially in

towns where margins between parties are narrow.

**The Road Ahead**

As Telangana's municipalities prepare to begin a new administrative term, the focus will gradually shift from electoral arithmetic to governance delivery. Regardless of political alignments, citizens' expectations remain centered on better infrastructure, improved civic services, and transparent administration.

Whether independents choose to remain unaffiliated or align with larger parties, their role in shaping local governance over the next five years is set to remain pivotal.

## KTR Says BRS Expected Better Municipal Results

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau  
 Senior leader of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi and former minister K. T. Rama Rao on Saturday acknowledged that his party had anticipated winning a higher number of municipalities in the recent urban local body elections, even as he maintained that the overall performance remained respectable.

Addressing the media after the results, KTR said the party had hoped to secure control of more municipalities but accepted the outcome as the people's verdict. He noted that while expectations were higher, the results still reflected a significant support base for the BRS across several urban centres. According to him, the party will carefully analyse constituency-wise performance to understand the gaps and recalibrate its strategy going forward. KTR emphasised that elections are part of a democratic process where victories and setbacks must be viewed with equal composure. He said the BRS would continue to function as a strong political force and play a constructive role in public issues, irrespective of the electoral outcome. The leader also expressed confi-



dence that the party's organisational network at the grassroots would remain intact and would be strengthened further in the coming months.

The former minister pointed out that local factors, candidate selection, and evolving political dynamics influenced the results in several municipalities. He added that the party would engage with local leaders and cadres to assess the reasons behind the performance variations and to ensure better coordination in future elections.

At the same time, KTR congratulated the winning candidates across parties and called for cooperative governance at the municipal level. He stressed that civic bodies should focus on urban infrastructure, sanitation, drinking water supply, and citizen-centric services rather than political differences. The priority, he said, should be ensuring efficient administration that directly benefits residents. He also thanked party workers and supporters for their efforts during the cam-

paign, stating that their commitment remained the backbone of the organisation. Despite not meeting expectations in some areas, he said the dedication of cadres demonstrated the party's continued relevance in Telangana's political landscape. KTR concluded by reiterating that the BRS would remain committed to raising public issues and holding governments accountable, while simultaneously preparing for future electoral contests with renewed focus and strategy.

# Congress Claims Victory in Karimnagar Municipal Elections

Karimnagar, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The recent municipal elections in Karimnagar have triggered sharp political reactions, with Congress leaders asserting their dominance and criticizing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the BRS for failing to secure significant victories. The elections, held across 42 municipalities in Telangana, did not yield a clear majority for the BJP, which emerged only as the single largest party.

Speaking to the media, Congress leaders highlighted that BJP central minister Bandi Sanjay's efforts in Karimnagar, including ag-

gressive campaigns and public speeches, did not translate into electoral success. "Despite all theatrics and promises, the BJP could not secure a single municipality in Karimnagar," stated a senior Congress official. The party accused Sanjay of failing to communicate the development works undertaken in the region and attempting to manipulate votes through fear and religious appeals.

The Congress criticized reports suggesting alliances between the BJP and local independents, saying such claims distorted the public mandate. They reaffirmed that the party had no agreements with the MIM and only



engaged in standard discussions with the Majlis for administrative coordination.

"Votes cast for Congress, MIM, and independent candidates were all from the peo-

ple of Karimnagar. Manipulating these narratives to favor the BJP is misleading," the leader

added. The party also targeted the BRS, pointing out that despite being

strong in northern Telangana, the party could not achieve victories in Karimnagar and Nizamabad municipalities. Congress leaders highlighted that public support translated into overwhelming success for their candidates, with nearly 90 municipalities expected to be won by them across the state. They warned against misreporting and distorting election outcomes in media outlets, calling for responsibility and integrity in journalism.

In contrast, the BJP's limited performance, despite holding several MP and MLA positions, has been portrayed as a setback in the local political landscape. Congress leaders also noted

that collaboration attempts between BRS and BJP did not benefit the latter in municipal polls, reiterating their own party's grassroots strength and voter connection.

The statements underscore the growing political tension in Telangana as parties analyze electoral performance and prepare for upcoming alliances and campaigns. The municipal election results have been interpreted by Congress as a reaffirmation of public trust and support, emphasizing voter rejection of divisive politics and the continued prominence of their party in regional governance.

## Grand Celebration of Sevalal Maharaj's 287th Jayanti in Telangana

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Former Minister Satyavati Rathod announced at a press conference at Telangana Bhavan that the 287th birth anniversary of revered Banjara saint Sevalal Maharaj will be celebrated on a grand scale tomorrow. Following the tradition of past years, the celebrations will be held at Telangana Bhavan, with elaborate programs and rituals organized for the community.

Rathod highlighted that the current Telangana government, under Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), has provided official recognition to Sevalal Maharaj's Jayanti for the first time. The state government has allocated Rs. 2 crore for the event, demonstrating KCR's commitment to promoting tribal and Banjara cultural heritage. "Under KCR's leadership, tribal and indigenous communities are experiencing a golden era," Rathod said, adding that the development and welfare

measures for these communities are visible to all.

She contrasted the current government's initiatives with those of the Congress, pointing out that Congress had shown neglect in extending reservation benefits to tribal communities. While former policies provided only four percent reservation, KCR increased it to ten percent, further building on NTR's six percent framework. More than 2,700 tribal villages, including communities such as Gonds, Chenchus, and others, have been organized as village panchayats under the current administration.

Rathod also lauded infrastructure developments, noting that Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad's Banjara Hills, constructed at a cost of Rs. 25 crore, and Komuram Bheem Bhavan, built with similar investment, reflect KCR's dedication to tribal welfare. Additionally, land titles for over four lakh acres were distributed in a



single day, further exemplifying the government's commitment to indigenous communities. The press meet highlighted that KCR's recognition of Sevalal Maharaj has set a precedent, with other states following suit only after Telangana's official acknowledgment. Rathod emphasized the Chief Minister's support for educational opportunities, including establishing Gurukuls for ST students and creating pathways to higher employment.

The celebrations tomorrow will include a ten-hour "Bhog

Bandar" event, and Rathod urged tribal communities to participate in large numbers. Key participants in the event include former municipal chairpersons Ramachandra Naik and Valya Naik, ex-SC/ST commission member Ramble Naik, and BRS leaders such as Karate Raju Naik and Ravi Naik.

Rathod concluded by praising KCR's consistent support, stating that tribal communities will remain loyal and work diligently to ensure his continued leadership as Chief Minister.

## Complaint Filed Alleging Vote Buying in Moinabad Polls

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

A formal complaint has been submitted to the Telangana State Election Commission alleging serious electoral malpractices during recent municipal and local body elections, particularly in Moinabad. The representation, filed by Dasoju Sravan Kumar, raises concerns about large-scale bribery, excessive election expenditure, and the alleged commercialization of the democratic process.

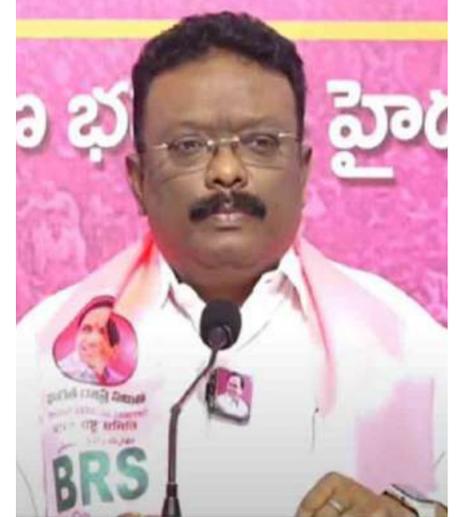
In the letter dated February 14, Sravan Kumar urged the Commission to take immediate action, claiming that democracy was being undermined by the influx of black money in local elections. The complaint specifically cites reports suggesting that an independent candidate in Moinabad allegedly spent around 7 crore and secured victory by a margin of more than 200 votes. It further alleges that voters were offered 70,000 per vote along with 25 kilograms of rice per household.

According to the com-

plaint, such actions constitute a violation of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, particularly provisions related to bribery and undue influence. The letter also states that the alleged distribution of cash and gifts breaches the Model Code of Conduct and could amount to criminal offenses under relevant legal provisions.

Describing the situation as a "commercialization of democracy," the complainant argued that elections risk becoming financial investments rather than public service mandates. The representation warned that candidates who spend huge sums to win office may attempt to recover their expenditure through corrupt practices, thereby weakening governance and accountability.

The complaint calls for a series of measures, including a special audit of the winning candidate's election expenses and assets, an independent probe by the Anti-Corruption Bureau into the source of funds, and



possible disqualification under Section 10A of the law if violations are established.

It also emphasizes that the principle of "one person, one vote" could be undermined if such practices are not addressed decisively. The complainant urged the Election Commission to act as a guardian of democratic values and ensure that electoral

integrity is protected.

Officials from the Commission have not yet issued a public response. However, the allegations have sparked renewed debate over the influence of money power in local body elections and the need for stricter enforcement mechanisms to safeguard the credibility of the electoral process.

## AIFB Councillors from Vaddepally Meet CM Revanth Reddy



Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

A delegation of councillors from Vaddepally Municipality in Jogulamba Gadwal district met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Saturday in a courtesy call aimed at discussing local governance and development priorities. The group comprised eight councillors belonging to the All India Forward Bloc (AIFB), who visited the Chief Minister under the leadership of Vaddepally Srinivas.

The meeting took place in the presence of several senior political leaders and officials, including Telangana PCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, Minister

Jupally Krishna Rao, Member of Parliament Mallu Ravi, Planning Commission Vice Chairman Jillela Chinnna Reddy, and former Alampur MLA Sampath Kumar. Their presence highlighted the importance attached to the interaction and the focus on strengthening coordination between local representatives and the state leadership.

During the discussion, the councillors briefed the Chief Minister on key civic issues and development needs in Vaddepally municipality. They emphasized the importance of improving urban infrastructure, public services, and welfare initiatives to meet the

expectations of residents. The delegation also conveyed their commitment to working in close coordination with the state government to ensure effective implementation of development programs at the grassroots level. The councillors who attended the meeting included Kurva Pavani (Ward 1), Sharada (Ward 2), Manjula (Ward 4), Yugender Reddy (Ward 5), Devamma (Ward 6), Vijay Bhaskar (Ward 7), Jayashree (Ward 8), and Erukala Thimmappa (Ward 10). Their collective representation reflected a broad cross-section of the municipality's elected leadership. Officials described the meeting

as cordial and constructive, noting that such interactions play a vital role in bridging communication between municipal bodies and the state administration. The Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment to supporting local bodies and ensuring that development initiatives reach all urban areas effectively.

The visit is viewed as part of ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration between grassroots representatives and the state government, with a shared objective of accelerating civic development and improving governance standards across municipalities in the region.

## Kavitha Criticises Govt, Reaffirms Jagruthi's Social Agenda

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

K. Kavitha, president of Telangana Jagruthi, on Saturday launched a sharp critique of the state government while reiterating her organisation's commitment to social empowerment and cultural preservation. Addressing a press conference in Hyderabad, she accused the ruling establishment of failing to effectively implement key promises and said several sections of society were still waiting for meaningful relief.

Kavitha stated that governance should prioritise inclusive development and social justice, asserting that policy decisions must reflect the aspirations of ordinary citizens. She alleged that issues concerning welfare delivery, employment opportunities, and support for marginalised communities were not receiving adequate attention. According to her, there was a growing need for transparent governance and accountability to restore public confidence.

Highlighting the role of Telangana Jagruthi,



Kavitha said the organisation would intensify its outreach programmes across districts, focusing on youth engagement, women's empowerment, and the promotion of Telangana's cultural heritage. She emphasised that Jagruthi would continue to act as a bridge between civil society and policymakers by bringing grassroots concerns into the public discourse.

She also stressed that constructive criticism was essential in a democracy and should be viewed as an opportunity to improve governance rather than as political confrontation. Kavitha called on intellectuals, activists, and community leaders to

actively participate in discussions on development priorities and social equity.

Referring to the broader political climate, she observed that public awareness and civic participation were increasing in the state. She said this shift underscored the importance of responsive leadership and inclusive policymaking. Kavitha added that her organisation would host a series of cultural and awareness programmes in the coming months to strengthen community engagement and encourage dialogue on pressing social issues.

The Jagruthi chief concluded by reaffirming her commitment to public causes, stating

that the organisation's future initiatives would be shaped by feedback gathered during its statewide interactions. She expressed confidence that sustained engagement with communities would help address local challenges and contribute to more equitable development.

Her remarks come at a time of heightened political activity in Telangana, with parties and social organisations stepping up their outreach efforts following recent civic developments. Observers say Kavitha's continued public engagements signal her intent to remain an influential voice in the state's socio-political landscape.

# KLH Kala Utsav 2026 Celebrates Student Talent

Quthbullapur, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The campus of KLH University at Bowrampet came alive with vibrant performances and cultural fervor as the two-day "Kala Utsav-2026" concluded on a grand note, showcasing the creativity and talent of students across disciplines. The festival created a celebratory atmosphere, transforming the campus into a hub of art, music, and youthful energy.

Students from KLH Business School campuses located in Aznagar, Bachupally, and

Bowrampet participated enthusiastically in a wide range of events, including dance, music, skits, fashion shows, and cultural presentations. The lively performances drew applause from the audience and reflected the diversity of artistic expression among the student community.

The event was graced by actor Arjun as the chief guest, who interacted with students and appreciated their performances. The team of the film Seetha Payanam also attended the celebrations, adding excitement and motivating



participants with their presence.

Speaking on the occasion, KLH University Dean Dr. Anand said the primary objective of

Kala Utsav-2026 was to nurture creativity among students and provide a platform for them to explore their artistic abilities. He emphasized that along with academic excellence, the institution is committed to promoting culture, values, and leadership qualities. Ac-

ording to him, such initiatives contribute significantly to students' holistic development and confidence building. Over the course of two days, winners of various competitions were honored with prizes, while participants who demonstrated exceptional talent received recognition. Or-

ganizers noted that the festival not only encouraged artistic expression but also strengthened a sense of unity and collaboration among students.

Several dignitaries attended the event, including Director Dr. Narasimha Reddy, actress Aishwarya, Kuchipudi dancer and choreographer Nihantree Reddy,

Bowrampet Principal Dr. Koteswara Rao, Aznagar Principal Dr. Ramakrishna, and members of the Student Activity Center led by Chairperson Sai Vijay and Convener Prem. Faculty members and student volunteers coordinated the event's smooth execution.

Kala Utsav-2026 concluded as a memorable celebration of creativity and cultural values, further enhancing KLH University's reputation as an institution that encourages both academic excellence and artistic expression.

KLH University's reputation as an institution that encourages both academic excellence and artistic expression.

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## Residents Protest to Save Papayi Kunta

Quthbullapur, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Residents of colonies under the Nizampet Circle staged a large protest on Friday demanding immediate measures to prevent sewage inflow into Papayi Kunta, warning of intensified agitation if authorities fail to act. The protest, led by local activists Akula Satish and Alladi Mahesh, drew significant participation from residents, including women, youth, and senior citizens.

According to locals, Papayi Kunta was once a clean freshwater pond and remained fit for use until 2021. However, they alleged that polluted water from Turaka Cheruvu has recently been diverted into the pond, leading to severe contamination. Residents complained that the inflow of sewage has caused foul smell, mosquito breeding, and rising health concerns in the surrounding neighborhoods.

During the demonstration, protesters raised slogans and urged authorities to intervene immediately. They stressed that the pond is a vital ecological and community asset and must be protected from further



degradation. "Papayi Kunta is like the lifeline of our locality. If sewage continues to enter, the pond will be destroyed completely," organisers said.

The residents put forward a set of specific demands. They called for an immediate halt to the release of polluted water from Turaka Cheruvu into Papayi Kunta. They also proposed diverting the sewage through the stormwater drain near Bandaru Layout via the Rajadhani School route. Additionally, they urged the government to reallocate approximately 2 crore originally earmarked for works from Papayi Kunta to Siri Balaji towards diversion works linking Turaka Cheruvu and the stormwater drain network.

Protesters further demanded restoration of the pond to its pre-

2021 condition, including desilting and removal of accumulated waste and debris. They insisted that a comprehensive clean-up drive be undertaken to revive the water body and improve the local environment.

Residents warned that continued inaction by officials would compel them to intensify their agitation in the coming days. They urged concerned departments to conduct an immediate site inspection and take concrete steps to resolve the issue.

The protest concluded with a call for swift administrative intervention to safeguard Papayi Kunta, with locals expressing hope that timely action would prevent irreversible environmental damage and restore the pond as a clean water resource for the community.

## Pulwama Martyrs Honoured with Rally and Tributes



Quthbullapur, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Residents and youth groups paid heartfelt tributes to the soldiers who lost their lives in the Pulwama attack, reaffirming that the nation will never forget their sacrifice. A commemorative bike rally and candlelight vigil were organized on Friday to mark the anniversary and honour the bravery of the fallen

The rally, organized by the Viprava Jyothi Aluri Foundation, began at Suraram Colony and

proceeded to the HMT Grounds at Chintal, drawing participation from local youth, volunteers, and community leaders. Participants carried national flags and placards paying homage to the martyrs, creating a solemn yet patriotic atmosphere along the route.

Following the rally, floral tributes were offered before portraits of the soldiers, and candles were lit in their memory. Jeedimetla Traffic Sub-Inspector Sandeep joined foundation representatives and residents in the homage ceremony,

reflecting the collective respect of the community.

Speaking on the occasion, Foundation Vice President Janga Tataji said February 14 should not only be viewed as a day of celebration but also as a day of remembrance for the soldiers who sacrificed their lives while protecting the nation. He noted that the martyrs' courage and commitment to national security would remain etched in history forever and continue to inspire future generations.

SI Sandeep urged citi-

zens to express gratitude to the armed forces and encouraged youth to move forward with a spirit of patriotism and responsibility. He emphasized that remembering the sacrifices of soldiers strengthens national unity and awareness.

As part of the event, organizers also conducted a service activity at the Nirman Mental Ashram located at the HMT Grounds. Bread and fruits were distributed to differently-abled residents of the ashram, highlighting the humanitarian aspect of the

tribute program. Several volunteers and community members, including Nani, Ravi Varma, Chinna, Narasimha, P Nagaraju, C. Nagaraju, Rajasekhar, Nagesh, Sattibabu, and members of the Cloud9 Namrata team such as Sirisha, Sandhya, Prudhvi, and Gangadhar, took part in the event.

The program concluded with a call for citizens to remember the sacrifices of the Pulwama martyrs and uphold the values of unity, service, and patriotism in everyday life.

## Journalism is the Fourth Pillar of Democracy: N.V.S.S. Prabhakar

Uppal (Hyderabad), February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Former Uppal MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar reiterated that journalism plays a vital role in safeguarding democratic values, describing it as the "fourth pillar of democracy." He made these remarks during a courtesy meeting with members of the Uppal Press Club (Print & Electronic Media Committee) in Uppal on Friday.

The delegation, led by newly elected Press Club



president Vadde Palli Kishore, met Prabhakar as

part of a formal interaction. On the occasion, he fe-

licitated the committee members with shawls and congratulated them on taking charge of their responsibilities. The meeting was marked by discussions on the evolving role of media in strengthening democratic institutions and public accountability.

Speaking to the gathering, Prabhakar said journalism is not limited to reporting news but also involves presenting truthful, unbiased information and bringing societal issues to light. He emphasized that

media professionals should work fearlessly without succumbing to pressures, ensuring that the interests of the public remain paramount.

He also highlighted the media's contribution in creating awareness about welfare schemes and developmental initiatives. According to him, journalists act as a bridge between the government and citizens by disseminating information and amplifying public concerns. He encouraged media representatives

to provide constructive feedback and suggestions on issues related to the development of the Uppal region.

Prabhakar further assured the Press Club of his continued support for its service initiatives and welfare programs. He noted that cooperation between public representatives and the media can play a significant role in achieving inclusive growth and community welfare. Several local leaders and media representatives attended the meeting,

including Ramantapur Division BJP president Vangala Santosh Gupta and Medchal district OBC leader Repu Narasimha. Their participation reflected the collective acknowledgment of the media's influence in shaping informed public opinion.

The program concluded with a renewed commitment from both leaders and journalists to uphold ethical standards and work together for the betterment of society through responsible and transparent reporting.

### Tight Security Arrangements for Maha Shivaratri at Suraram Temple

Quthbullapur (Hyderabad), February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Police in Suraram have made elaborate security arrangements ahead of the upcoming Maha Shivaratri celebrations at the Sri Uma Maheshwara Temple, anticipating a large turnout of devotees. Officials conducted a detailed inspection of the temple premises to ensure that all arrangements are in place for a smooth and safe observance of the festival.

As part of the preparedness review, Sub-Inspectors Murali Goud, Krishna, and Kishan Nayak from the Suraram Police Station visited the temple along with founder Muddapuram

Madan Goud and committee members. They assessed the facilities and discussed measures required to manage the expected crowd efficiently.

Given that special rituals, night-long vigil (jagarana), and abhishekams are scheduled, police emphasized the need for proper queue management and clear movement routes for devotees. Instructions were issued to set up dedicated entry and exit points, ensure adequate lighting, and maintain uninterrupted surveillance through CCTV cameras. Traffic regulation is also a key focus area. Police said special traffic arrangements and parking zones will be



designated to prevent congestion around the temple. Personnel will be deployed at critical junctions to guide vehicles and maintain order during peak hours. Authorities further advised the temple committee to arrange vendor stalls in an organized manner so that pedestrian movement remains unobstructed. They also stressed the importance of keeping emergency services ready, including an ambulance on standby, to respond swiftly in case

of any medical situations. Police appealed to devotees to cooperate with security personnel, follow queue systems, and adhere to guidelines to help conduct the celebrations peacefully. They expressed confidence that with coordinated efforts between the police and temple management, the festival will be held in a safe and devotional atmosphere.

The temple committee echoed similar sentiments, stating that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure devotees can participate in the sacred celebrations without inconvenience.

### Temple Decked Up for Maha Shivaratri in Medchal

Medchal (Hyderabad), February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The historic Sri Ramalingeswara Swamy Temple in Medchal has been beautifully decorated ahead of the auspicious Maha Shivaratri, with temple authorities completing all arrangements for the convenience of devotees expected to visit in large numbers. Temple Chairman Dhatrika Radhakrishna Murthy said the shrine, dedicated to Lord Shiva along with Goddess Dakshayani, has been adorned with lights, floral decorations, and traditional festoons to mark the festival. He noted that Maha Shivaratri is one of the

most significant occasions for devotees, during which special rituals, abhishekams, and archana ceremonies are performed with great devotion.

According to the chairman, comprehensive facilities have been put in place to ensure a smooth darshan experience. Queue lines, drinking water, and basic amenities have been arranged, while volunteers and temple staff will assist devotees throughout the day and night as the celebrations continue. He invited devotees from Medchal and surrounding areas to participate in the special pujas and seek the blessings of the presiding deity. "We



have made all necessary preparations so that devotees can offer prayers comfortably and participate in the rituals in a spiritual atmosphere," he said. Temple Executive Officer Krishnamachari, along with devotees and volunteers including Balaji, Srinivasa Murthy, Dhatrika Lakshman, Srinivasa Chari, Kanakala Nursing, Akash, Ankit, Jalandhar Reddy, Karthik, Aryan, Dasarath, and Santosh Chari, are actively coor-

dinating arrangements to ensure the festival is conducted successfully. Authorities expect a steady influx of devotees through the day, especially during the night-long vigil, which is considered highly sacred on Maha Shivaratri. The temple administration expressed confidence that the celebrations will be held in a devotional and orderly manner, allowing devotees to observe the festival without inconvenience. The committee also urged visitors to follow guidelines issued by temple staff and cooperate in maintaining discipline to make the event a grand spiritual success.

# Grand Preparations in Place for Maha Shivaratri

Warangal, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Elaborate arrangements have been completed for the Maha Shivaratri celebrations at the historic Thousand Pillar Temple, with district authorities and temple officials working in coordination to ensure a smooth and safe experience for devotees. The temple, located in Warangal, is expected to witness a massive influx of pilgrims from across Telangana and neighboring states.

Officials conducted a comprehensive review of preparations, focusing on crowd management, security, and basic amenities. Special queue lines and barricades have been installed to regulate the flow of devotees and minimize waiting time. Entry and exit points have been clearly marked to prevent congestion, particularly during peak hours when attendance is expected to be at its highest.

The police department

has deployed additional personnel in and around the temple premises to maintain law and order. Continuous surveillance through CCTV cameras and monitoring teams will help ensure quick response to any emergencies. Traffic police have also devised a detailed plan with diversions and designated parking zones to manage the expected surge in vehicles and maintain smooth movement in surrounding areas.

Temple authorities said the shrine has been beautifully decorated with lighting and floral arrangements, creating a festive and devotional atmosphere. Special rituals, abhishekams, and night-long prayers will be conducted as part of the Maha Shivaratri observances. The spiritual programs are expected to draw large participation from devotees who consider the occasion highly auspicious.

To provide comfort to visitors, drinking water



counters, temporary shelters, and medical aid facilities have been set up near the temple complex. Emergency services, including ambulances and fire safety teams, will remain on standby throughout the celebrations. Volunteers will assist elderly and differently-abled devotees, helping them access darshan without inconvenience.

Municipal authorities have intensified sanitation efforts in the surrounding areas to maintain cleanliness during the festival. Regular cleaning drives and waste-management measures are being carried out to ensure a hygienic environment for pilgrims.

Officials appealed to devotees to cooperate with the arrangements, follow instructions issued by security personnel, and maintain discipline while participating

in the festivities. They expressed confidence that with coordinated planning and public cooperation, the celebrations will be conducted peacefully and with spiritual fervor.

The annual festival at the Thousand Pillar Temple continues to be one of the most significant religious events in the region, bringing together faith, tradition, and community spirit in a grand celebration.

# Jana Sena Hails Telangana Breakthrough, Vows Stronger Expansion

Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Jana Sena Party has described its victory in two municipal seats in Telangana as a "significant first step" and an encouraging signal of growing public support beyond its traditional strongholds. Party leaders said the results reflect increasing acceptance of their political agenda and grassroots outreach efforts in the state.

In an official reaction, senior party representatives expressed gratitude to voters who backed the party's candidates, stating that the mandate demonstrates trust in its commitment to transparent governance and public-centric policies. They emphasized that even a small electoral gain carries political importance because it marks the party's steady entry into Telangana's local governance landscape.

Leaders noted that the municipal results should not be measured merely by numbers but by the momentum they generate. According to the party, winning two seats in a competitive environment shows that its message is resonating with urban voters, particularly youth and first-time voters who are seeking alternatives to established



political formations.

The party also highlighted the role of grassroots workers, crediting their door-to-door campaigns and community engagement for the outcome. Cadres were praised for maintaining visibility on local civic issues such as sanitation, drinking water supply, and infrastructure, which helped build voter confidence at the ward level.

Looking ahead, Jana Sena leaders said the focus will now shift toward strengthening organizational structures across Telangana. Plans include expanding booth-level committees, enrolling new members, and identifying local leadership capable of contesting future elections more effectively. The party believes sustained grassroots work will translate into improved performance in upcoming civic and legislative polls.

At the same time,

the leadership reiterated that the victory carries a responsibility to deliver results on the ground. Newly elected representatives have been instructed to prioritize civic grievances, maintain transparency in ward development works, and stay accessible to residents. The party said performance in these two wards will serve as a benchmark for its governance model in Telangana.

Political observers view the development as a modest yet symbolic gain, indicating that smaller regional parties can carve out space in urban local bodies through focused campaigns. For Jana Sena, the Telangana foothold is being projected as a stepping stone toward broader ambitions, with leaders expressing confidence that continued public engagement will gradually expand the party's influence in the state.

# Bandi Sanjay Slams State Govt, Outlines BJP Strategy After Civic Polls



Karimnagar, February 14 | TPN Bureau

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday addressed a press conference in Karimnagar, where he reviewed the outcome of the recent Telangana municipal elections and set the tone for the Bharatiya Janata Party's future political strategy in the state.

Speaking to the media, Bandi Sanjay said the civic poll results re-

flected a shifting political landscape and asserted that the BJP would continue to strengthen its grassroots presence across Telangana. He highlighted the party's performance in several municipalities and said the results demonstrated growing public acceptance of the BJP as a credible alternative.

The Union Minister accused the ruling establishment of failing to

address key civic issues

such as urban infrastructure, drinking water supply, sanitation, and employment generation. He alleged that despite repeated promises, several municipalities continue to face governance challenges, and called for greater accountability from local bodies. According to him, the BJP would take up people's issues more aggressively and ensure they are raised at appropriate forums.

ernance and corruption-free administration remain the BJP's core agenda. The party, he said, would closely monitor the functioning of newly elected municipal bodies and hold them accountable to their promises.

Bandi Sanjay concluded by expressing confidence that the BJP's continued engagement with people's issues would translate into stronger electoral performances in the future. He urged party workers to remain connected with citizens and work toward building public trust, asserting that the party is committed to providing an effective and development-oriented alternative in Telangana politics.

The press meet was attended by local party leaders, activists, and supporters, who echoed the call for strengthening the party's organizational network across the state.

# Congress Confident of Strong Showing in Key Civic Bodies



Hyderabad, February 14, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Telangana Congress leadership has expressed strong optimism about its prospects in major urban civic bodies, with party president Mahesh Kumar Goud voicing confidence that the party will secure victories in crucial municipal corporations, including Nizamabad and Karimnagar. His remarks come amid heightened political activity across the state as parties assess their strength following recent local electoral trends.

Addressing party workers and media representatives, Goud said the Congress is witnessing growing public support in both urban and semi-urban regions. He attributed the party's confidence to what he described as improved governance and welfare-focused policies that have resonated with voters. According to him, the party's grassroots network has strengthened considerably over the past year, enabling it to mobilize support more effectively in municipal

areas.

Goud noted that recent local body outcomes and feedback from cadre meetings indicate a positive shift in voter sentiment. He emphasized that the party is not only aiming to win seats but also to establish stable administrations capable of delivering civic improvements. Issues such as urban infrastructure, sanitation, drinking water supply, and employment opportunities are being highlighted as core priorities in the Congress campaign narrative. The Congress chief also stressed the importance of organizational unity, calling on leaders and workers to remain focused on local issues rather than political rhetoric.

He said the party's strategy involves sustained engagement with residents, door-to-door outreach, and highlighting welfare initiatives that directly impact households. By doing so, he believes the party can consolidate support across different social groups. Political observers note that Nizamabad

and Karimnagar hold symbolic and strategic importance due to their demographic diversity and history of competitive elections. A strong performance in these corporations could significantly boost the Congress' momentum ahead of future electoral contests in the state.

Meanwhile, party leaders at the district level have reportedly intensified campaign preparations, organizing meetings and outreach programs to strengthen booth-level coordination. Goud reiterated that the Congress aims to translate public goodwill into electoral success by maintaining discipline and focusing on governance-oriented messaging.

As the political landscape in Telangana continues to evolve, the coming municipal outcomes are expected to serve as a key indicator of party strengths on the ground. With confidence running high in the Congress camp, all eyes are now on how voter sentiment ultimately shapes the results in these prominent civic bodies.

# Congress Steps Up Strategy to Take Control of Bhoodan Pochampally Municipality

Nalgonda, February 14 | TPN Bureau

The Congress party has intensified its political manoeuvring in Bhoodan Pochampally municipality in Nalgonda district, aiming to secure administrative control following the recently concluded Telangana municipal elections. With no single party securing a clear majority in the civic body, the focus has now shifted to post-poll alliances and efforts to consolidate support among newly elected councillors. Senior Congress leaders have been actively engaging with councillors and local representatives in a bid to strengthen the party's position in the municipality. Party sources indicated that the leadership is optimistic about forming the municipal administration, citing positive responses from several councillors who are said to be inclined toward supporting Congress in the upcoming chairperson election.

The political activity in the municipality has intensified over the past

few days, with meetings and discussions being held to finalise strategies. Local leaders believe that controlling Bhoodan Pochampally municipality is crucial not only for governance at the local level but also for strengthening the party's grassroots presence in the district ahead of future electoral battles.

Party insiders say the Congress leadership is focusing on ensuring stability in the municipal council by bringing together like-minded councillors. They argue that a stable administration will help accelerate development works, improve civic services, and address pending infrastructure issues in the town, which is known for its cultural and economic significance.

Meanwhile, rival parties are also closely monitoring the developments, exploring their own options to influence the formation of the municipal leadership. Political observers note that such post-poll negotiations are common in closely contested civic



bodies, where independent councillors often play a decisive role.

Local residents are watching the political developments with interest, expressing hope that whichever party forms the administration will prioritise drinking water supply, sanitation, road maintenance,

and urban development projects. Civic groups have also urged elected representatives to put aside political differences and work collectively for the town's progress.

The election of the municipal chairperson and vice-chairperson is expected soon, and the

outcome will determine which party ultimately takes charge of the civic administration. With intense lobbying underway, Bhoodan Pochampally municipality has emerged as a key political battleground in Nalgonda district in the aftermath of the municipal polls.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Critics contend that the process lacked sufficient public deliberation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The Trigger: The Mandelson Fallout**

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

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

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

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

**Crisis Control: Scripted Posts and Coordinated Support**

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

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



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

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

**ership change. Inside the Party: No Obvious Successor**

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

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

Labour's internal ideological divides.

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

**The Perception Problem**

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

cohort.

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

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

**Beyond Westminster: Broader Implications**

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

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

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

**What Comes Next?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Farmer Meeting on Trade Deal

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

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

### BJP's Criticism

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

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



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

### Opposition's Response

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

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

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

### Political Context

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

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

### Looking Ahead

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

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

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

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

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

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

### A Symbolic and Functional Shift

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



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

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

### Breaking with the Past

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

The landing also held symbolic significance for the northeastern region of

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### National Policy and Regulation Framework

The government has empha-

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

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

### Why the Adoption Gap Matters

The relatively low numbers

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

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

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

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

### Possible Challenges to Adoption

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

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

### Looking Ahead

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Beyond her competitive suc-

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

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

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

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

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

## US Military Prepares for Possible Weeks-Long Operations Against Iran



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

### Scope of Potential Operations

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

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

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

### Diplomatic Efforts Continue

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

### Risk of Retaliation and Escalation

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

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

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

### Strategic and Political Implications

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



clear direction for his government.

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

nor ignoring the priorities of other partners.

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

logical alignment.

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

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

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

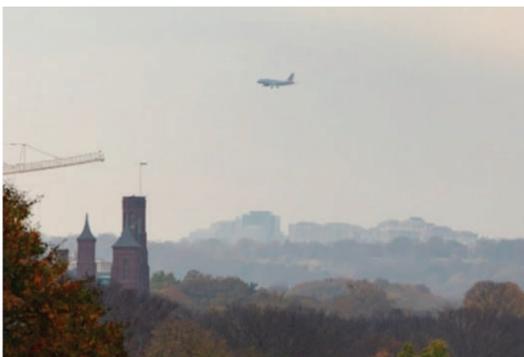
## Cartel Drone Incident and Laser Strike Shut Down Texas Airspace — What Happened

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

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

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

However, media reporting



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

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

The incident highlighted deeper coordination challeng-

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

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

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

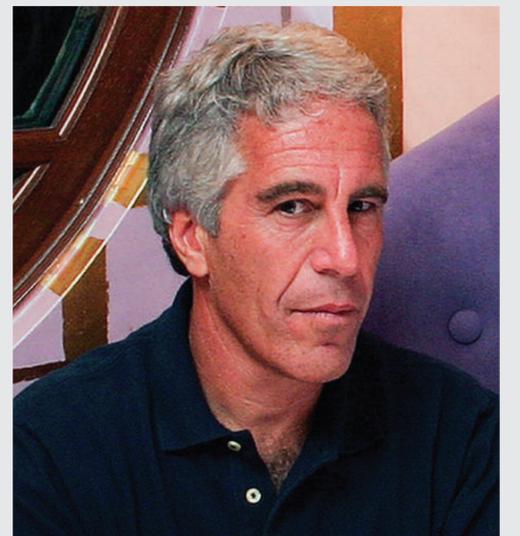
## Doctor Who Observed Epstein Autopsy Says Death Was From Strangulation, Not Hanging

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

ficial ruling accurately reflects what happened.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## BSE Gets SEBI Approval to Launch Derivatives on Focused Midcap Index

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

### What Will Be Launched?

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

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

### About the Focused Midcap Index

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



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

### Why This Matters

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

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

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

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

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

### Broader Market Context

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

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

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

# How Covered Calls Can Help You Monetise Your Portfolio

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

### What Is a Covered Call?

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

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



### When Does This Strategy Work Best?

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

### Possible Outcomes

There are three primary outcomes when you write

a covered call:

- Stock remains below the strike price:

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

- Stock rises above the strike price:

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

- Stock declines:

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

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

### Selecting the Right Strike Price

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

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

appreciation.

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

### Advantages and Limitations

Advantages:

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

Limitations:

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

### Final Thoughts

Covered calls are not a high-risk speculation tool but rather a disciplined income-enhancement strategy. For long-term investors holding quality stocks, this method can help improve overall returns by turning dormant holdings into income-generating assets — especially during periods of muted market activity.

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



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

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

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

### Global Cues Drive Domestic Prices

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

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

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

### Investor Behaviour and Market Outlook

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

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

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

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

### Outlook for Gold Prices

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

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

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

### Key Takeaways for Investors

Cooling inflation data globally, especially in the US, has strengthened expectations of interest rate cuts.

- These expectations have supported a rebound in gold prices, helping them reclaim key psychological levels like ₹5,000 per 10 grams in India.

Investor interest in gold typically rises when real interest rates fall and when markets brace for uncertainty.

The future path of gold prices will be closely tied to macroeconomic data and central bank decisions in the coming months.

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

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

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

### Key Changes in the Rules

- 1. Mandatory 100% Collateral** Under the new guidelines, banks can extend credit to brokers and SEBI-registered intermediaries only if the loans are fully secured by collateral. This marks a clear shift from earlier norms that allowed partial collateral or unsecured guarantees from promoters. Such unsecured backing will no longer be acceptable, and lenders must ensure complete security coverage before disbursing funds.
- 2. Stricter Norms for Bank Guarantees** The amendments also tighten conditions for bank guarantees issued in favour of stock ex-



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

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

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

### 4. Margin Trading Funding Allowed — With Safeguards

While prop trading funding has been restricted, banks can continue to finance margin trading facilities offered by brokers to clients. These arrangements

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

### Implications for the Market

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

are at play between freelancer and client.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The post also sparked a wave of nostalgia. Some

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

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

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

## Canadian Travellers Call Sleepless Indian Train Ride an Unforgettable Experience

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

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

soon became filled with curious local children and fellow passengers.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The chatter about captaincy transitions high-

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

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

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

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

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

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



aggression.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

### Elite Security Cover for Both Teams

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

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

### Special Traffic Arrangements Announced

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

security screenings and congestion.

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

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

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

### A Showcase Event for the Tournament

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cricket analysts note that pre-



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Directed by Anudeep KV, Funky tells the story

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

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

The film's visuals, music, and performances,

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The song's release on

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

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

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

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

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

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

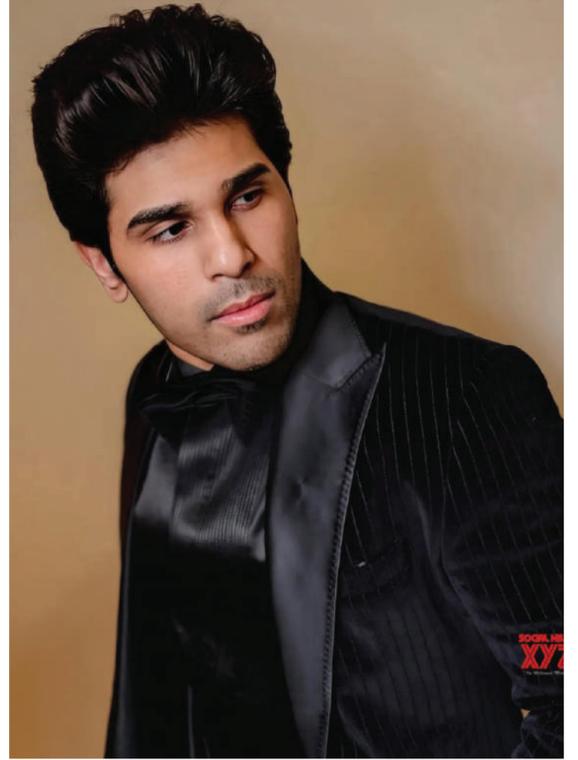
Allu Sirish expressed his excitement at seeing the public's reaction to the film Couple Friendly and shared how honored he felt by the appreciation

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

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

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

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



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



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

slated for a March 13 release.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni highlighted

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

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

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

With its romantic story-