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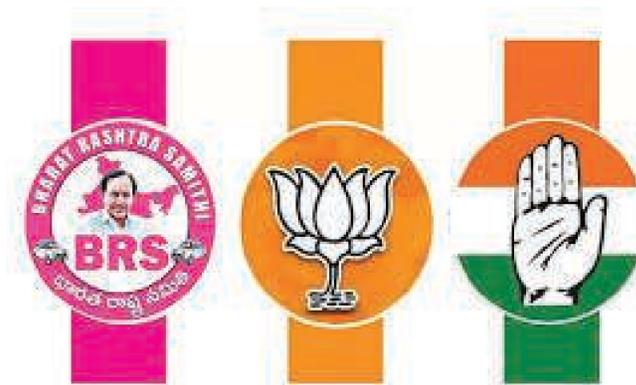
Congress Dominates Municipal Chairperson Polls

Hyderabad, February 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau:

The election of municipal chairpersons and vice-chairpersons across Telangana concluded, with the Indian National Congress emerging as the clear winner in a majority of urban local bodies. Out of 105 municipalities where elections were completed, the Congress secured chairperson posts in 84 municipalities, while the Bharat Rashtra Samithi won 17. The Bharatiya Janata Party captured one municipality, and independent candidates were elected chairpersons in three places.

The chairperson election process was held after the recently concluded municipal polls, which covered a total of 116 municipalities across the state. While the leadership elections were completed in 105 municipalities, the process was postponed in 11 municipalities due to various administrative and procedural reasons, officials said.

According to election data, clear majorities were recorded in 90 municipalities when results were declared, enabling straightforward leadership formation in



those councils. However, 36 municipalities produced a hung verdict, leading to intense political negotiations and strategic alliances. In these councils, the support of independents and smaller parties proved decisive in determining who would assume the chairperson posts.

Political observers note that the outcome reflects a strong performance by the Congress in urban local bodies, reinforcing its organisational presence at the grassroots level. At the same time, the BRS managed to retain influence in several municipalities, while the BJP and independents secured a limited but notable presence.

The indirect elections for municipal leadership positions were conducted during special council meetings, where elected councillors cast their votes. Authorities supervised the proceedings under security arrangements to ensure smooth conduct.

With the completion of chairperson elections in most municipalities, newly elected civic administrations are expected to begin functioning immediately. Their priorities are likely to include improving urban infrastructure, sanitation, drinking water supply, and the implementation of development and welfare schemes.

The results are being

viewed as politically significant, as municipal polls often serve as an indicator of party strength at the grassroots level. The dominance of the Congress in chairperson posts is expected to influence political strategies in the coming months, while parties will continue efforts to consolidate support in municipalities where leadership formation remains pending.

As the new municipal leadership takes charge, attention will now shift from electoral contests to governance, with citizens expecting improved civic services and accelerated development across towns and cities in Telangana.

Hyderabad to Host BioAsia 2026 Summit

Hyderabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

The Government of Telangana is set to host the prestigious 23rd edition of BioAsia 2026, an international life sciences conference, with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy scheduled to inaugurate the event. The two-day summit will be held on February 17 and 18 at the HITEX Exhibition Centre, bringing together global leaders, scientists, and industry experts.

This year's conference is themed "Tech-Bio Unleashed - AI, Automation, and the Next Wave of Life Sciences Transformation." The summit aims to explore how cutting-edge technologies are reshaping the life sciences sector and redefining the future of healthcare. With India emerging as a

global hub for tech-bio innovations, discussions will focus on leveraging advanced technologies to accelerate research, improve healthcare delivery, and drive industry growth.

The Chief Minister will also inaugurate an international exhibition featuring leading global life sciences companies before formally opening the summit and delivering the inaugural address. Over the two days, a series of keynote sessions, panel discussions, and thematic forums will feature prominent national and international speakers sharing insights into emerging trends and breakthroughs.

Among the key speakers are Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Professor Bruce L. Levine from the University of Pennsylvania

Perelman School of Medicine, and Dr Howard Y. Chang, Chief Scientific Officer at Amgen. They are expected to deliver keynote addresses highlighting advancements in biotechnology, genomics, and translational medicine.

The conference agenda includes discussions on science, software and supply chains, next-generation biologics, the future of pharma and biotech, artificial intelligence in research and development, digital transformation, and global collaboration. Special focus sessions will also examine "Telangana Rising 2047," outlining the state's vision to build a world-class life sciences ecosystem.

Delegates from multiple countries, in-



cluding policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and investors, will participate in the deliberations. The summit is expected to strengthen Telangana's position as a leading destination for biotechnology and life sciences while fostering partnerships that could drive innovation, investment, and sustainable growth in the sector.

Telangana Releases Paddy Bonus Funds

Hyderabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

The Telangana Government has released ₹514.36 crore as pending paddy bonus payments, providing a major financial boost to farmers across the state. The funds, credited for the 2025-26 kharif marketing season, will benefit more than 2.17 lakh farmers who cultivated fine-variety paddy.

Officials said the incentive is being paid at ₹500 per quintal over and above the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The amount has been transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts through the Direct Benefit Transfer system, ensuring transparency and eliminating delays. Authorities noted that the move fulfills the government's commitment to clear pending dues at the earliest.

The release is expected to ease financial pressure on farmers, many of whom are preparing for the next agricultural cycle. With rising input

costs such as seeds, fertilizers, and labour, timely payments are seen as crucial in helping cultivators reinvest in their fields without resorting to private borrowing.

According to agriculture department officials, the bonus scheme has played a significant role in encouraging farmers to cultivate fine paddy varieties, which fetch better prices in both domestic and export markets. The state has witnessed a steady rise in acreage under fine-grain paddy over the past few seasons, reflecting growing farmer confidence in the procurement and incentive system.

The government's procurement drive during the current season recorded strong participation, with thousands of farmers selling their produce at designated procurement centres. Officials said the bonus payment complements the procurement effort by ensuring that farmers receive an enhanced return for their produce beyond the MSP.

Farmers' associa-

tions welcomed the release, stating that the payment would improve liquidity in rural areas and support local economies. Many cultivators said the bonus would help them clear existing debts and invest in inputs for the upcoming sowing season.

Authorities have advised beneficiaries to verify their bank accounts for credit confirmation and to approach local procurement officials in case of discrepancies. The administration reiterated that farmer welfare remains a top priority and that support measures would continue to strengthen the agricultural sector.

With the latest disbursement, the state aims to reinforce its farmer-centric policies and sustain agricultural growth. The infusion of funds is expected to provide immediate relief to cultivators while boosting confidence ahead of the next cropping season, underlining the government's focus on improving farm incomes and rural stability.

Tummala Nageswara Rao Meets N. Chandrababu Naidu, Seeks Support on Key Khammam Issues

Khammam, February 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Telangana Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation, Handlooms and Textiles Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and submitted a series of key proposals concerning irrigation, infrastructure, and pilgrim facilities related to Khammam district. The meeting focused on strengthening inter-state coordination and addressing long-pending administrative and development issues affecting border regions.

One of the major requests made by the minister was to facilitate the merger of five gram panchayats—Yatapaka, Kannayigudem, Picchikalapadu, Purushottapatnam, and Gundala—currently in Andhra Pradesh, into Telangana. He explained that these villages, located near Bhadrachalam and surrounded geographically by Telangana territory, are facing significant administrative and connectivity challenges. Residents reportedly travel long distances, sometimes up to eight hours, to access district headquarters, while issues such as inter-state checkpoints, taxation, and limited public services continue to affect daily life, particularly for tribal communities.

The proposed Health City is expected to significantly enhance Telangana's healthcare ecosystem while reinforcing its ambitions of becoming a leading centre for technology-driven medical services.



The minister also highlighted complications arising from portions of land associated with the Bhadrachalam Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Temple falling under Andhra Pradesh jurisdiction. He said administrative clarity through territorial adjustments would help improve temple management and pilgrim services.

On irrigation, Tummala urged Andhra Pradesh to release 85 percent of the funds required for the permanent restoration of the Peddavagu project in Khammam district. The project irrigates about 16,000 acres, of which the majority lies in Andhra Pradesh territory. With restoration costs estimated at ₹92.20 crore, he proposed a cost-sharing arrangement in an 85:15 ratio between the two states to ensure timely completion and protect farmers' livelihoods.

He also requested immediate repairs to the flood protection bund near Bhadrachalam,

particularly at the third sluice, which sustained damage on the Andhra Pradesh side after state bifurcation. Prompt action, he said, is crucial to prevent potential flooding risks to the town.

Among other proposals, the minister sought approval for construction of a Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) temple in Khammam and requested allocation of around five acres in Tirumala for a Telangana pilgrims' guest facility to ease accommodation shortages during peak seasons. He further appealed for cooperation in advancing the Sattupalli-Kovvur and Penuballi-Amaravati railway line projects.

Emphasising the importance of cooperative federalism, Tummala expressed hope that both states would work in close coordination to accelerate development, improve irrigation infrastructure, and enhance facilities for devotees and residents alike.

Health City Planned in Bharat Future City - Sridhar Babu



Hyderabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Minister for IT and Industries, announced that a dedicated "Health City" will be developed in Bharat Future City with international standards, aiming to create a model for other states. He said the initiative reflects the government's vision of

transforming Telangana into a global hub for advanced healthcare and medical innovation.

The minister stated that the Health City will integrate cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and blockchain to extend quality medical services even to remote and underserved regions. He was speaking at a fire-side chat during the

"TAL Hospitals Health Fest 2026," organised at T Hub by the Touch A Life Foundation.

Highlighting key healthcare initiatives, Sridhar Babu said the government is working to provide comprehensive health profiling for every citizen. He noted that large-scale early cancer screening programmes are being conducted for women, while efforts are underway to transform government hospitals to deliver higher-quality medical services through greater use of technology.

The minister said Telangana has introduced a dedicated policy to position the state as a global medical tourism destination. In addition to strengthening healthcare, the government is prioritising research and development across

sectors. He pointed out that the country's first AI-driven Telangana Digital Exchange has been launched to boost innovation and collaboration.

Emphasising workforce readiness, Sridhar Babu said the government has taken up the responsibility of building a "ready-to-work" talent pool aligned with industry needs. He added that the permanent campus of the Young India Skills University is expected to be inaugurated within the next three to four months, which will further strengthen skill development efforts.

The minister also underlined the government's focus on balanced regional growth. Plans are underway to develop tier-2 and tier-3 cities on par with Hy-

derabad, and industrialists have been invited to invest in these emerging hubs. He said new airports are being planned in Warangal and Adilabad to improve connectivity and accelerate economic growth.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to innovation, Sridhar Babu invited entrepreneurs and innovators to collaborate with the state in leveraging technology to drive breakthroughs in healthcare and other sectors. Organisers Sai, Kishore, and others were present at the event.

The proposed Health City is expected to significantly enhance Telangana's healthcare ecosystem while reinforcing its ambitions of becoming a leading centre for technology-driven medical services.

Congress Wins Five Corporations, Polls Deferred in 11 Municipalities



Hyderabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

The Indian National Congress has strengthened its position in Telangana's urban local bodies by securing control of five municipal corporations, while the process to elect chairpersons has been postponed in 11 municipalities, keeping the political atmosphere active across the state.

The results followed closely fought contests in several urban centres, with Congress candidates clinching key mayoral posts. Party leaders said the victories reflect growing public support for the government's welfare initiatives and development agenda in urban areas. The wins are being viewed as a significant boost for the ruling party's organisational strength at the grassroots level.

In a few corporations where no party achieved a clear majority, the Congress relied on support from independent councillors and smaller parties to form the leadership. Political observers noted that post-poll alliances and negotiations played a decisive role in shaping the final outcomes, particularly in closely contested corporations.

Meanwhile, authorities postponed the chairperson election process in 11 municipalities due to administrative and procedural reasons. Officials indicated that new dates would be announced after completing the required formalities. The postponements have intensified political activity in these towns, with parties continuing efforts to consolidate support

ahead of the rescheduled polls.

Opposition parties, including the Bharat Rashtra Samithi and the Bharatiya Janata Party, said the results in some urban bodies indicated a fragmented mandate. They argued that alliances after the polls helped the Congress secure control in certain corporations. However, Congress leaders rejected the criticism, stating that coalition-building is part of democratic politics and reflects their ability to work with diverse groups.

The results also highlighted the growing role of independents in Telangana's civic politics. In several urban bodies, independent councillors held the balance of power, making them crucial in determining leadership positions. Their backing proved decisive in electing mayors and shaping municipal administrations.

With five corporations now under its leadership, the Congress is expected to focus on accelerating urban development projects and improving civic services to consolidate its gains. At the same time, attention remains on the 11 municipalities where elections are pending, as their outcomes could further influence the political balance in the state.

Overall, the latest civic poll results underline the competitive nature of urban politics in Telangana, with alliances, local factors, and grassroots dynamics continuing to shape power equations across municipal bodies.

Ponnam Prabhakar Inspects Canal Works in Karimnagar



Karimnagar, February 17 | TPN Bureau:

Telangana Minister Ponnam Prabhakar inspected the canal connecting Thotapalli to Saidapur mandal near Bommanapalli in Karimnagar district and reviewed ongoing repair works. The visit focused on assessing damage to the irrigation infrastructure and ensuring timely completion of restoration efforts.

During the inspection, the minister closely examined sections of the canal that had been damaged and interacted with irrigation officials at the site. He issued several instructions to the authorities, stressing the need for quality repairs and strict adherence to timelines so that farmers do not face disruptions during the irrigation season.

Officials briefed him on the progress of the repair works currently underway, including strengthening of canal embankments and clearing of obstructions to ensure smooth water flow. The minister emphasized that effective monitoring and coordination among departments are essential to prevent further deterioration and to maintain the canal system in the

long term.

Ponnam Prabhakar said the government is committed to supporting farmers by restoring irrigation facilities at the earliest. He assured that the repair works would be completed soon and that water supply through the canal would be resumed to meet agricultural needs in the region.

Highlighting the importance of irrigation infrastructure for the district's agrarian economy, the minister said canals play a crucial role in ensuring timely water supply and improving crop productivity. He asked officials to remain in constant touch with local farmers and address any concerns raised during the repair process.

The inspection concluded with the minister reiterating that the state government would prioritise irrigation projects to strengthen agriculture and rural livelihoods. Officials accompanying him said progress reports would be reviewed periodically to ensure the works are completed without delay, enabling farmers in the affected areas to receive adequate irrigation water for cultivation.

Bhatti Vikramarka Oversees Congress Win in Madira

Madira, February 16 | TPN Bureau:

The Indian National Congress asserted its dominance in the Madira Municipality on Monday, with Samineneni Sujatha elected as Chairperson and Kona Dhani Kumar as Vice Chairman. The election process, held at the MPDO office, was attended by Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, who exercised his ex-officio vote, underscoring the importance of the civic body's leadership transition.

The victory reflects the Congress party's strong position in the municipality, with its councillors securing the confidence of the majority. The newly elected leadership is expected to take charge of key civic responsibilities and set the tone for governance in the town over the coming years.

Councillors Felicitated

Earlier in the day, Bhatti Vikramarka welcomed the newly elected Congress councillors at his camp office in Madira. He congratulated them on their emphatic victory and encouraged them to remain accessible to the public while prioritizing development. Stressing the need



for teamwork, he advised them to focus on addressing civic issues such as sanitation, drinking water supply, and infrastructure improvements.

Following the interaction, the councillors accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister to the MPDO office, where the formal election process was conducted amid a supportive atmosphere from party workers and local leaders.

Oath Ceremony and Election

The oath-taking ceremony for the councillors was conducted under the supervision of Election Officer Naveen Babu. After the swearing-in, voting was held for the posts of Chairperson and Vice Chairman. Bhatti Vikramarka cast his ex-officio vote as part of the statutory process. With a clear majority backing them, Sujatha and Dhani Kumar were declared elected, a decision formally announced by the election authorities.

Vision for a Model Municipality

Addressing the gathering after the results, Bhatti Vikramarka expressed confidence that the new municipal council would work towards transforming Madira into a model town in the state. He emphasized effective implementation of welfare schemes and transparent governance, urging councillors to uphold the trust placed in them by the electorate.

He also highlighted the state government's com-

mitment to strengthening urban infrastructure and ensuring inclusive growth. Extending his best wishes to the newly elected leadership, the Deputy Chief Minister said the council's performance in the coming term would play a crucial role in improving quality of life for residents. With the leadership in place, the municipality is set to begin its new administrative journey with renewed focus on development and public service.

Municipal Poll Results a 'Referendum' on Govt: Uttam Kumar Reddy

Nizamabad, February 17 | TPN Bureau:

Telangana Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy said the recent municipal election results clearly reflect public endorsement of the state government's performance, describing them as a "referendum" in favour of the ruling Indian National Congress.

Speaking at a press conference held at the party office in Nizamabad after the corporation results, the minister said the outcome demonstrated strong public support for the government's development initiatives and welfare programmes. He noted that across the state, out of 2,996 wards and divisions in 123 municipalities and corporations, the Congress secured victory in 1,537, calling it a clear mandate from voters.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said the party's growth in the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation — where its strength increased significantly — indicates the strengthening of Congress

in urban areas. He also claimed that people had rejected divisive politics and chosen secular values, adding that the results showed voters' preference for governance focused on development and welfare.

The minister criticised the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, alleging that local bodies were neglected during its tenure and that expected progress was not achieved over the past decade. He said the Congress government is now focusing on strengthening municipal institutions and improving civic infrastructure.

Highlighting welfare measures, he said schemes such as supply of fine rice to the poor, free bus travel, and free electricity up to 200 units played a key role in influencing voters. According to him, the electorate's response reflects approval of these initiatives as well as confidence in the government's policy direction.

Uttam Kumar Reddy also said the results show growing public resistance to what he described as communal politics promoted by



the Bharatiya Janata Party. He added that the Congress would continue to strengthen its organisational network and coordination between leaders and cadre to sustain momentum.

Looking ahead, the minister expressed confidence that the party would achieve further success in

upcoming civic polls, including those of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. He called upon party workers to continue working collectively and focus on delivering development at the grassroots level.

Senior leaders, including state party functionaries

and newly elected Mayor Umarani, attended the press meet. The minister thanked party workers and voters for their support and urged the new municipal leadership to prioritise infrastructure, sanitation, and civic services to set a model for urban governance in the state.

BRS Alleges Congress-BJP "Secret Alliance" After Municipal Results



Hyderabad, February 16, 2026 ADD | TPN Bureau:

The political atmosphere in Telangana intensified on Monday as leaders of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi accused the Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party of joining hands to secure power in several municipalities, alleging that ideological differences were set aside to block BRS

from forming local administrations.

In a strongly worded statement, BRS leaders claimed that the recent municipal outcomes reflected what they described as a "hidden understanding" between the Congress and BJP. According to them, the developments across towns such as Aliyabad, Medak, Narsapur, and Amangal indicate a coordi-

nated effort to keep BRS away from power despite its performance in several wards.

The statement questioned whether the political "change" promised by the ruling party meant aligning with the BJP at the local level. It alleged that both national parties had previously accused each other of being proxies for BRS, but recent devel-

opments showed they were willing to cooperate when it suited their electoral interests.

Questions Raised Over Local Alliances

BRS leaders specifically cited instances where chairperson and vice-chairperson posts were allegedly shared between Congress and BJP councillors. They pointed to examples such as Narsapur, where they claimed the chairperson post went to Congress while the deputy position went to BJP, calling it evidence of "opportunistic politics."

Similar allegations were made regarding Sirpur Kazanagar and Metpally, where BRS said it had either secured significant representation or majority support but was unable to assume leadership positions due to post-poll arrangements among rival parties.

Direct Criticism of Leadership

The statement also targeted Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, questioning whether the state government was being run by Congress alone or with tac-

it support from BJP. It contrasted this with the national political narrative, noting that while Congress leaders such as Rahul Gandhi oppose BJP at the national level, local political alignments in Telangana appeared different.

BRS further alleged that in some municipalities, despite winning the highest number of wards, it faced administrative and political hurdles in forming governing bodies. The party claimed that such developments reflected fear among rival parties about BRS's grassroots strength.

Political Tensions Likely to Continue

The accusations have added to the already charged political climate following the municipal polls. While Congress and BJP leaders have not formally responded to the specific claims, political observers expect the issue to remain a point of contention in the coming weeks.

With local body formations still underway in some areas, the unfolding alliances and counter-alliances are likely to shape the next phase of Telangana's political discourse.

Congress Hails Nizamabad Civic Victory – Mahesh Kumar Goud



Nizamabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

Mahesh Kumar Goud, President of the Indian National Congress in Telangana, addressed a media conference in Nizamabad, expressing gratitude to voters for backing the party in the recent municipal elections and helping it secure key victories across the district.

Thanking the electorate of the undivided Nizamabad region, he extended special appreciation to residents of Nizamabad town for electing the party's candidates and placing their trust in the Congress leadership. He credited the guidance of Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy for the party's strong performance, noting that Congress succeeded in capturing a majority of municipalities in the district.

Goud highlighted that the party's win in the Nizamabad mayoral race marked a significant milestone, stating that the Congress had secured the mayor's seat after nearly two decades. He congratulated newly elected Mayor Uma Rani, praising her journey from selling fruits to rising to the city's top civic post. He said her victory symbolises the party's commitment to empowering grassroots workers, adding that such growth opportunities are possible only within the Congress.

Reflecting on governance, Goud said the party utilised

every opportunity over the past two years to push development and welfare initiatives. He asserted that voters rejected attempts to divide people along caste and religious lines, choosing instead to support development-oriented politics. Among key achievements, he cited progress on an engineering college, an agriculture college, and road works worth 680 crore.

He said voters believe that with a Congress mayor, Nizamabad will emerge as one of the leading cities in the state. However, he acknowledged that the party narrowly lost around seven seats due to "sentiment-driven campaigning" by opponents.

In the municipal corporation elections, Congress contested against the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen and won five seats. Goud emphasised that cooperation with AIMIM would be essential for the district's development. He also noted that the lone winning candidate from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi had extended support to the Congress, strengthening its position in the civic body.

Concluding the briefing, Goud reiterated that the party would focus on inclusive growth, infrastructure expansion, and welfare programmes to meet public expectations and accelerate Nizamabad's urban transformation.

Bandi Sanjay Kumar Plays Key Role as BJP Clinches Karimnagar Mayor Seat



Karimnagar, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

The Bharatiya Janata Party scored a major political victory by clinching both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor posts in the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation on Monday, following an intense and closely watched contest.

BJP corporator Kolagani Srinivas from the 2nd Division was elected as the new Mayor, while former Mayor Y. Sunil Rao took charge as Deputy Mayor. The results were formally announced by election officials after a tense session that witnessed heavy political manoeuvring.

The saffron party secured victory by effectively leveraging ex-officio votes and the backing of independent corporators, enabling it to outnumber the Indian National Congress, which had mounted a strong challenge for the mayoral seat. The BJP's strategy proved decisive in achieving the required majority.

In the 66-division municipal corporation, the BJP had emerged as the single largest party with 30 corporators. Its strength increased to 34 after three independent members extended support. The party ultimately crossed the majority mark with the ex-officio vote of Karimnagar MP and Union

Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, whose role was considered crucial in sealing the outcome.

The numbers also tilted in the BJP's favour after nine corporators from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi abstained from the voting process, effectively lowering the threshold needed to secure victory. This development significantly influenced the final result and helped the BJP consolidate its position.

Following the announcement, the newly elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor took oath of office in the presence of officials and party leaders. Supporters celebrated the victory outside the venue, describing it as a landmark moment in Karimnagar's civic politics.

Party leaders said the new administration would prioritise infrastructure development, improved civic amenities, and transparent governance. They emphasised the need for cooperation across party lines to address urban challenges and accelerate growth in the city.

The result is widely seen as a strategic breakthrough for the BJP in Telangana's municipal landscape, reinforcing Karimnagar's importance as a key political centre and setting the stage for more competitive contests in the future.

Komatireddy Urges New Corporators to Make History in Nalgonda

Nalgonda, February 16 | TPN Bureau:

Telangana Roads, Buildings and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy called upon the newly elected corporators of the Nalgonda Municipal Corporation to work in a way that would leave a lasting mark in the city's history. He advised them to serve people with integrity, uphold public trust, and strive for inclusive development across all sections of society.

The minister attended the mayoral and deputy mayoral election meeting held at the corporation's conference hall and also took part in the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected corporators as chief guest. Addressing the gathering after the ceremony, he said public office is not permanent and urged representatives to earn respect through good conduct and dedicated service. He also asked corporators to bring local issues to the attention of the mayor and, if necessary, to his office for quick resolution.

Highlighting social justice, Komatireddy said the Deputy Mayor post was given to a minority representative to ensure inclusive governance. He stressed that the city's development lies in the hands of the corporators and called for collective ef-



orts to accelerate progress while prioritising welfare of the poor.

The minister listed several welfare initiatives being implemented by the state government, including distribution of ration cards, supply of fine rice to poor households, and free electricity up to 200 units, for which the government has paid substantial subsidies. He also mentioned development works taken up in Nalgonda, including procurement of a laparoscopic

machine for the government hospital from his personal funds and construction of a new building for the Manyam Chelka government hospital, which is nearing completion.

Komatireddy further said there is no shortage of funds for Nalgonda's development and announced that 1,137 sewing machines would soon be distributed equally across wards to support poor women. He added that if corporators work collectively, he would facilitate ₹100 crore

in additional funds for the corporation through the Chief Minister.

Earlier, Burri Chaitanya Reddy was unanimously elected as Mayor and Ashraf Ali Mohammed as Deputy Mayor under the supervision of Special Officer Shrawan. District Collector B Chandrasekhar congratulated the new council and urged them to ensure balanced development across all divisions.

Speaking after assuming office, Mayor Chaitanya Red-

dy thanked the leadership for the opportunity and said she would work towards transforming Nalgonda into a smart and well-developed city with the minister's support. Deputy Mayor Ashraf Ali Mohammed also expressed gratitude and pledged to work for public welfare.

Officials and former public representatives attended the programme, which concluded with felicitations for the new mayor, deputy mayor and corporators.

Seethakka Felicitates New Mulugu Chairperson, Calls for Party Unity

Mulugu, February 17 | TPN Bureau:

Telangana Minister Seethakka attended a felicitation programme for Chintanipula Chandrakala Bixapati, who was elected as the new Chairperson of Mulugu Municipality, and extended her congratulations to all councillors elected on the Indian National Congress ticket. The event turned into a show of strength for the party, with workers and leaders gathering in large numbers to celebrate the victory.

The minister honoured the councillors with shawls and praised the cadre for their efforts in ensuring the party's success in the civic polls. Addressing party workers, she expressed gratitude to each of them for working tirelessly to secure the mandate and said the victory belonged to every grassroots activist who stood by the party.

Explaining the decision to appoint Chandrakala Bixapati as Chairperson, Seethakka said the leadership choice was made after care-



ful deliberation, keeping in mind the party's long-term interests and the need for experienced guidance in municipal administration. She noted that while many leaders aspire to the post, only one can be selected, and the final decision was based on commitment, expe-

rience, and a clear understanding of local civic issues.

The minister also acknowledged the role of senior leader Bixapati, describing him as a committed party worker who remained loyal despite facing pressures in the past. She said

the new leadership would help ensure stability and effective governance in the municipality.

At the same time, Seethakka cautioned party members against internal divisions. She alleged that internal sabotage had contributed to the party's defeat

in four wards and warned that such "backstabbing politics" would not be tolerated. Those responsible, she said, should change their approach, calling it a final warning from the leadership.

The minister further alleged that external forces, including what she described as a real estate lobby, attempted to influence the elections, but the people ultimately placed their trust in Congress. She said the victory demonstrated public confidence in the party's commitment to development and welfare.

Calling for unity, Seethakka said every party worker is equally important and urged them to work collectively to address municipal issues. She expressed confidence that the new council would focus on improving civic amenities and ensuring inclusive development, adding that coordinated efforts would help take Mulugu forward on the path of progress.

KTR Slams Congress Over Municipal Polls

Hyderabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

K. T. Rama Rao, working president of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, launched a sharp attack on the Indian National Congress, accusing it of "hooliganism" and intimidation during the recently concluded municipal elections in Telangana.

Addressing party workers and the media, KTR alleged that the ruling Congress resorted to pressure tactics, misuse of police machinery, and coercion to influence election outcomes in several municipalities. He claimed that such actions reflected the party's "fear of defeat" and undermined the democratic spirit of local body elections.

The remarks come in the backdrop of the 2026 Telangana urban local body polls, where voting was held across thousands of wards and dozens of municipalities earlier this month. The elections witnessed a strong contest among Congress, BRS, and the BJP, with several municipalities producing closely



fought results and hung councils.

KTR said that despite what he described as adverse conditions, BRS candidates and workers showed resilience and continued to enjoy public support across the state.

He alleged that attempts were made to lure corporators and influence independent candidates in municipalities where no party secured a clear majority. According to him, such developments raised concerns about politi-

cal ethics and the conduct of the ruling party.

The BRS leader further asserted that his party would continue to stand by its cadre and expose what he called irregularities in the conduct of the polls. He warned that

the people of Telangana were closely observing political developments and would respond appropriately in future elections.

The Congress, on the other hand, has maintained that the municipal results reflect public confidence in its governance and welfare initiatives. Party leaders have pointed to their improved performance across several urban local bodies as evidence of growing support.

Political observers note that the exchange of allegations highlights the heightened political atmosphere in Telangana following the civic polls, which are seen as an important indicator of party strength ahead of future electoral contests.

With both sides trading charges, the municipal election aftermath is expected to keep political temperatures high in the state, as parties work to consolidate support and prepare for the next phase of local governance.

BRS Secures Yellampet Chairperson Post

Medchal, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

In a closely watched development that brought political suspense to an end, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi secured the Chairperson post of Yellampet Municipality, while the Vice-Chairperson position went to the Bharatiya Janata Party, reflecting a strategic understanding between the two parties.

BRS councillor Lavudya Sridevi Naik of Ward No. 8 was elected as Municipal Chairperson. She was proposed by Ward 22 councillor Saddi Nikhita Reddy. With no rival candidate entering the fray, Sridevi Naik was declared elected through a show-of-hands vote conducted by officials.

For the Vice-Chairperson post, BJP councillor Mekala Rajitha Devender Reddy from Ward No. 19 was unanimously chosen. Party sources indicated that the BJP's tactical support to the BRS during the process resulted in the Vice-Chairperson position being allotted to it, a move seen locally as a successful political "power play."

The election process was held on Monday at the Bible College premises within the municipal limits under the supervision of election authorities. To ensure smooth proceedings and prevent any untoward incidents, police deployed tight security arrangements around the



venue.

Following the selection, Election Officer Chandrasekhar administered the oath of office first to the newly elected councillors and later to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The ceremony was attended by former minister and MLA Chamakura Malla Reddy,

who congratulated the newly elected leadership.

Speaking on the occasion, Malla Reddy expressed confidence that the municipality would witness accelerated development under the leadership of the new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. He said the administration would focus on civic infra-

structure and public welfare, adding that continued public support would strengthen their commitment to service.

After the oath-taking, BRS leaders and supporters gathered in large numbers and celebrated the victory with fireworks and slogans. Party workers expressed optimism that the

new leadership would prioritise local development projects and address civic issues effectively.

The outcome marks a significant moment in Yellampet's local governance, highlighting shifting political alignments and setting the stage for the municipality's next phase of administration.

Three Arrested in HCU Laptop Theft Case



Hyderabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

Police have cracked a major theft case involving the disappearance of dozens of laptops from Hyderabad Central University (HCU), arresting three accused and recovering all the stolen devices along with vehicles and mobile phones.

According to officials, the theft occurred on February 8 when unidentified persons allegedly entered the university premises and decamped with 60 laptops. Following a complaint, a case was registered at Gachibowli police station, triggering an intensive investigation.

Police teams launched a probe using technical evidence, surveillance inputs, and field intelligence. The investigation was carried out under the supervision of senior officers, including the Sherilgamapally Deputy Commissioner of Police and Narsingi Assistant Commissioner of Police, who formed special teams to track down the suspects.

During the course of the investigation, officers received credible information that the suspects were hiding in the TNGOs Colony area. Acting swiftly on the tip-off, the Gachibowli crime team conducted a raid on Monday and apprehended three individuals identified as Regyula Chandrasekhar, Sai Charan, and Ashwin Rao.

Following their arrest, police recovered all 60 stolen laptops from their possession. In addition, two cars believed to have been used in the commission of the crime and three mobile phones were also seized as evidence. Officials said the recovery of the entire stolen property marks a significant breakthrough in the case.

Police stated that preliminary interrogation suggests the accused had planned the theft after identifying security gaps within the campus. Investigators are now examining whether the trio acted alone or had assistance from others. Authorities are also looking into possible links to similar thefts in the city to rule out a larger network.

Meanwhile, the recovered laptops are expected to be handed over to the university authorities after completion of legal formalities. University officials expressed relief over the swift recovery and appreciated the police for their prompt action.

The accused have been remanded to judicial custody, and further investigation is underway to establish the full sequence of events and any additional involvement. Police reiterated that enhanced vigilance measures are being advised for institutions to prevent such incidents in the future.

Bachupally Illegal Construction Continues Despite Seal, Raises Questions on Enforcement



February 16, 2026 | Quthbullapur

An alleged illegal construction near Bachupally signal on the main road leading towards Nizampet has sparked controversy af-

ter work reportedly resumed despite the premises being sealed by town planning authorities. The incident has triggered public criticism and raised con-

cerns about enforcement gaps.

According to locals, officials from the town planning wing had recently carried out a sealing operation at the site, located under the Bachupally area within the Nizampet Circle. At the time, residents believed the action would permanently halt the construction activity. However, within days, labourers and materials reportedly reappeared at the location and work resumed, creating surprise and anger among the public.

Residents allege that the builders continued construction despite seal notices and flex banners still being displayed at the site. Locals claim the developers are acting with a sense of impunity, questioning whether enforcement measures are being monitored effectively after initial action is taken.

Questions Over Monitoring

The resumption of activi-

ty has led to speculation over whether there has been a lapse in follow-up inspections by the town planning department. Some residents suspect the possibility of external support or influence enabling the continuation of work, though no official confirmation has been provided.

Locals also report that construction is progressing rapidly during night hours, making it difficult for enforcement teams to intervene in time. The sight of workers and machinery inside a sealed premises has further intensified criticism that sealing operations may be symbolic rather than strictly implemented.

Public Concern Grows

The stretch near Bachupally signal is already known for traffic congestion, and residents fear that unauthorised structures could obstruct future road expansion plans. Civic activists say unchecked constructions could wors-

en urban planning challenges and set a precedent encouraging similar violations in the area.

Many citizens have urged authorities to clarify the status of the property and ensure transparent action. They argue that unless strict enforcement follows sealing measures, public confidence in regulatory mechanisms may erode.

Awaiting Official Response

With the construction continuing, attention has now turned to what steps authorities will take next. Urban planning officials have not yet issued a detailed public statement on the matter.

Residents say decisive action — whether demolition, penalties, or legal proceedings — will determine whether the incident becomes an example of strict governance or another case where enforcement failed to achieve its objective.

KrishMed Specialty Clinics Inaugurated in Bachupally, Focus on Affordable Quality Care



Bachupally, February 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

A new milestone in accessible healthcare was marked with the grand inauguration of KrishMed Specialty Clinics in Rajiv Gandhi Nagar under Bachupally mandal in Quthbullapur on Monday. The modern facility aims to provide comprehensive and patient-centric medical services with advanced infrastructure and experienced specialists.

The clinic was formally inaugurated by P. K. Vohra, a decorated Indian Air Force officer and recipient of the Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, and Vayu Sena Medal, who attended as the chief guest and cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Among the special guests were Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals Managing Director and ophthalmologist Dr. A. Tushara and Medical Director Dr. P. Subbarao, who appreciated the initiative and emphasised the growing need for neighbourhood specialty healthcare centres.

KrishMed Specialty Clinics has been established by former Wing Commander Dr. S. H. N. Murali Krishna and former Squadron Leader Dr. G. Swetha Padma, a doctor couple with a vision to deliver integrated and high-quality medical care under one roof. Speaking at the event, the founders said the centre was designed to bridge the gap between affordability and

advanced treatment, ensuring patients receive timely care without the need to travel long distances.

The facility offers a range of services including general medicine, diabetology, and infectious disease consultations. In addition, patients will have access to specialist consultations across multiple disciplines, diagnostic laboratory testing, outpatient services, and daycare treatments — all within the same premises. Organisers said the clinic's infrastructure has been planned to support efficient patient flow and personalised care.

Operating under the motto "Patient First - Family Always," the management emphasised their commitment to compassionate treatment, transparent processes, and reasonable pricing so that quality healthcare remains within reach of the local community.

The inauguration ceremony witnessed the presence of several dignitaries including Chandra Shekhar, Awasthi, and local leader Kolanu Krishna Reddy, along with healthcare professionals, former defence personnel, and residents who attended in large numbers.

With its launch, KrishMed Specialty Clinics is expected to strengthen primary and specialty healthcare access in the rapidly growing Bachupally region, offering residents a dependable new destination for medical services close to home.

Builder Influence or Regulatory Failure? Anger Mounts Over Illegal Constructions

Quthbullapur, February 16, 2026:

Allegations of unchecked illegal constructions in the Dundigal Circle have triggered strong public outrage, with residents questioning whether builder influence is overriding town planning rules. Locals say violations related to setbacks, floor limits, and building permissions are becoming increasingly common, raising fears about safety and governance.

Residents point to a major construction project on the road leading to D. Pochampally, where a developer is reportedly building a large structure that allegedly violates planning norms. According to locals, despite repeated complaints and media attention, officials have not taken visible action, fuelling suspicions about possible administrative inaction.

Rules Only on Paper?

People in the area claim that regulations governing setbacks and floor limits appear to exist only on paper. On the ground, they say, buildings are rising without visible compliance checks. The absence of stop-work notices, inspections, or sealing actions has led many to question whether the construction has official approval or is proceeding in vio-



lation of rules.

Civic activists argue that if the structure indeed breaches norms, authorities must clarify its status. They stress that transparency is essential to maintain public trust and to prevent similar cases from emerging across the rapidly expanding suburban belt.

Growing Public Anxiety

Residents fear that poorly regulated construction could pose serious risks in the future, especially in

densely populated zones. Concerns range from fire safety and structural stability to road congestion and strain on civic infrastructure. Many warn that ignoring violations today could lead to disasters tomorrow.

The situation has also reignited a broader debate about whether enforcement mechanisms are adequate in fast-growing urban areas. Critics say that without consistent inspections and strict penalties, regulatory frameworks lose their deterrent effect.



Demand for Immediate Action

Local community members are now demanding that town planning authorities conduct an immediate inspection and publicly disclose findings. They want clarity on whether the project complies with approved plans and, if not, what corrective measures will be taken.

Citizens say decisive action — whether through penalties, work stoppage, or legal proceedings — will send a strong message that rules apply equally to all. Until then, frustration continues to grow, with many questioning whether the system is failing to curb violations or simply turning a blind eye.

For now, residents say they will continue to monitor the situation closely, hoping authorities respond before concerns escalate further.

Vakiti Srihari Urges People-Centric Governance in Makthal

Makthal, February 17 | TPN Bureau:

Telangana Minister for Sports, Youth Services, Dairy Development, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Vakiti Srihari called on newly elected municipal representatives in Makthal to work beyond political lines and focus on addressing public issues with commitment and empathy. He made these remarks while felicitating the newly elected members of the Makthal Municipality at a programme held on Monday.

Congratulating the councillors on their victory, the minister said they were chosen with the blessings of the people and must honour that trust through dedicated service. He described the win as a collective achievement of the Indian National Congress cadre and supporters, emphasizing that it was not an individual triumph but the result of teamwork and grassroots effort.

Srihari recalled his own political journey, noting that he received his first opportunity in public life as a Gram Panchayat sarpanch in Makthal. He said the experience gained at the grassroots level played a key role in shaping his approach as a minister today. Serving the poor and addressing their needs, he



said, is what gives true meaning and fulfilment to public office.

The minister highlighted that being elected as a councillor is a significant opportunity to serve the community and bring tangible improvements at the ward level. He observed that many of the newly elected members are young and energetic, and urged them to ensure their developmental initiatives leave

a lasting impact. According to him, the real success of elected representatives lies in winning the hearts of the people through sincere work.

He stressed that despite the implementation of several welfare schemes, Makthal still requires further development, particularly in urban infrastructure and civic amenities. The councillors, he said, should focus on improving

colonies, strengthening basic services, and ensuring inclusive growth across all sections of society.

Srihari also appealed to the representatives to act as a bridge between the government and citizens by ensuring that welfare and development programmes reach every household. Listening patiently to public grievances and striving to resolve them promptly, he added,

should be their top priority.

Reiterating that the newly elected body carries the hopes of the town's residents, the minister expressed confidence that the council would work with dedication and unity. He extended his best wishes to the members and urged them to set an example of transparent, people-centric governance in Makthal.

BRS Complains to EC Over 'Double Vote' Allegation Against MP Kadiyam Kavya



Warangal, February 17 | TPN Bureau:

Leaders of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) have lodged a formal complaint with the State Election Commission alleging irregularities related to ex-officio voting rights of Warangal MP Kadiyam Kavya. The party has urged the Commission to examine what it calls a "double vote" issue and take appropriate action.

Addressing the media, BRS legal cell representative Lalitha Reddy stated that Kavya had taken oath as an ex-officio member of the Warangal Municipal Corporation in her capacity as Member of Parliament and later got herself registered again as an ex-officio member in Thorur. She alleged that the move violates election norms and the Model Code of Conduct.

Reddy said the party had submitted a written complaint to the State Election Commissioner seeking a detailed inquiry. According to her, procedural rules require a notice period of at least 30 days for such registration changes, but the process was allegedly completed within a couple of days. "This is not legally valid, and we have requested the Commission to intervene and take strict action," she said.

BRS leader Kishore Goud also accused the ruling Indian Nation-

al Congress of misusing power in local body elections. He alleged that the party was distributing money and resorting to intimidation in several areas. Referring to Ibrahimpatnam, he claimed the BRS had a clear majority but Congress leaders were attempting to influence the process through pressure tactics.

Goud further alleged that similar developments were being witnessed in Thorur, where, according to him, attempts were being made to secure an additional vote through ex-officio membership. "An elected representative is entitled to vote in only one civic body. Having voting rights in two places is unconstitutional," he said, demanding immediate action from election authorities.

He also criticized the Congress leadership at the national level, saying that while senior leaders speak about protecting the Constitution, party functionaries at the local level were acting in violation of democratic norms.

The BRS leaders reiterated their demand for a thorough probe and appropriate legal action, stating that the integrity of the electoral process must be safeguarded. They expressed confidence that the State Election Commission would examine the complaint and take a decision in accordance with the law.

Special Focus on Class 10 Students, Says Collector Rajarshisha



Adilabad, February 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Emphasising the importance of academic preparedness and student welfare, District Collector Rajarshisha on Monday directed education officials to work with a clear goal of achieving 100 percent pass results in the upcoming Class 10 annual examinations. The

instructions were issued during a review meeting conducted via video conference from the Collectorate camp office, where officials assessed the readiness of schools and departments for the exam season.

During the review, the Collector stressed that special coaching classes should be organised for

Class 10 students to strengthen their understanding of key subjects and improve performance levels. He also underlined the need to focus on students' health and concentration, instructing authorities to provide nutritious protein-rich snacks to support their physical and mental well-being during

the examination period.

Highlighting attendance as a critical factor in success, Rajarshisha directed officials to ensure that students maintain 100 percent attendance until the completion of annual examinations. Mandal Education Officers (MEOs) were asked to closely monitor schools and ensure students arrive on time, particularly during morning study sessions.

The Collector confirmed that the pre-final examinations scheduled to begin on February 18 will be conducted as per the timetable without any changes. He instructed teachers to be fully prepared and ensure smooth conduct of these exams, which are considered crucial for assessing students' preparedness ahead of the final tests.

To boost confidence levels among students, the district administration plans to organise motivational sessions featuring accomplished individuals from various fields. These sessions aim to inspire students, reduce exam anxiety,

and encourage them to set higher academic goals.

In a unique initiative continued from last year, teachers were advised to make "wake-up calls" to students, encouraging them to maintain disciplined study routines and early morning preparation. The Collector said such personalised efforts can significantly improve student morale and performance.

He also reviewed the status of pre-metric scholarship registrations and directed officials to ensure that all eligible students complete their applications without delay, aiming for full coverage across the district.

The meeting was attended by In-charge District Education Officer Rajeshwar, DCB Secretary Gajender, AMO Ajay, headmasters, mandal education officers, special officers, model school principals, and other officials, who shared updates and assured full cooperation to achieve the district's academic targets.

Mallu Ravi Extends Wishes to New Gadwal Civic Leadership



Gadwal, February 17 | TPN Bureau:

Nagar Kurnool Member of Parliament Mallu Ravi exercised his ex-officio voting right at the Gadwal Municipality meeting on Monday and congratulated the newly elected civic leadership. He conveyed his best wishes to Chairperson Vijayalakshmi and Vice Chairman Shankar, who assumed office with the support of the Indian National Congress.

The meeting was attended by local MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy, who also congratulated the newly elected committee and expressed confidence in their ability to deliver effective governance. The leaders said the new municipal body has a crucial responsibility to address key civic challenges and ensure sustained development of the town.

During the interaction, Mallu Ravi emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among elected representatives to accelerate urban development. He noted that improving infrastructure, strengthening sanitation systems, expanding drinking water supply, and upgrading roads should be the immediate priorities of the municipal council. He urged the leadership to work with dedication so that the benefits of development reach every section of society.

The MP also stressed that

transparent administration and people-centric governance are essential to meeting public expectations. He said the success of the new council would be measured by how effectively it resolves day-to-day issues faced by residents and implements welfare schemes at the grassroots level.

MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy echoed similar views, calling for collective action and close coordination between municipal authorities and state agencies. He said that teamwork and proactive planning would help the town achieve faster growth and improved civic services.

Leaders present at the meeting expressed hope that the new governing body would focus on inclusive development and maintain accountability in public administration. They highlighted the need to strengthen basic amenities and ensure that welfare initiatives are implemented efficiently and without delay.

The event concluded with a call for unity among public representatives and officials to take Gadwal forward on the path of progress. With a new committee in place, expectations are high that the municipality will take up priority projects and deliver tangible improvements in civic infrastructure and quality of life for residents.

Raj Gopal Reddy Makes Key Remarks on Party Posts

Hyderabad, Feb 16 | TPN Bureau

Senior Congress leader Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy made noteworthy comments on party positions and internal dynamics, triggering fresh political discussions within Telangana's political circles. His remarks come at a time when municipal election outcomes and organizational restructuring are shaping the political landscape in the state.

Speaking to the media, Raj Gopal Reddy said that party posts should be given based on commitment, grassroots work, and loyalty rather than temporary political equations. He stressed that leaders who have consistently worked for strengthening the party at the ground level must be recognized and rewarded with responsibilities. According to him, this approach would ensure long-term stability and unity within the party ranks.

The senior leader also underlined that internal competition for positions is natural in any democratic party, but it should not affect collective goals. He



called for maintaining discipline and prioritizing the party's growth over personal ambitions. His comments are being seen as a message aimed at both aspirants and the leadership as the party evaluates appointments following recent political developments.

Raj Gopal Reddy further

observed that the Congress cadre remains energetic and motivated across Telangana, particularly after recent electoral battles. He noted that strengthening organizational structures at the municipal and constituency levels will be crucial for future political challenges. The leader

expressed confidence that the party leadership would take balanced decisions while allocating posts.

Political observers say his statements reflect ongoing discussions within the party about accommodating senior leaders and emerging faces. With multiple leaders vying for roles

in party committees and local bodies, the process of distributing responsibilities has gained significance. Raj Gopal Reddy's remarks are therefore being interpreted as both guidance and subtle advice to the leadership.

He also reiterated the need for collective leadership and coordination between senior and young leaders, emphasizing that unity would be key to sustaining political momentum. By highlighting merit-based appointments, he signaled the importance of strengthening internal democracy within the organization.

The comments have sparked reactions from party workers and political analysts alike, many viewing them as an attempt to shape the narrative around upcoming organizational decisions. As Telangana's political environment continues to evolve, statements from influential leaders like Raj Gopal Reddy are expected to play a role in shaping internal strategies and future alignments within the Congress party.

BioAsia 2026 Conference: Telangana Will Be Global Bio Powerhouse



BioAsia 2026 is not just a conference for Telangana. It is a clear sign of how the state is steadily growing into a major global centre for life sciences. On February 17, 2026, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and IT & Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu will inaugurate Bio-



Asia 2026 in HITEX, Hyderabad. Nearly 3,000 delegates from about 50 countries are expected to attend. This global participation itself shows the importance of the event. Over the past two years, Telangana has made remarkable progress in biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, medical technology, and healthcare innovation. Around 190 companies have signed agreements with the government, bringing investments worth nearly ₹73,360 crore. These projects are expected to create more than one lakh jobs. Such large investments clearly show that global companies trust the state's policies, stability, and long-term vision.

One of Telangana's biggest strengths is its well-planned ecosystem. Research centres, Global Capability Centres, and manufacturing units are working together in a connected system. Initiatives like Genome Valley and Green Pharma City have helped create a full chain from research to production. Fast approvals and industry-friendly policies have encouraged multinational companies like Eli Lilly, Sanofi, Amgen, Johnson & Johnson, and Medtronic to expand their presence in the state. Investments are now moving into advanced fields like cell and gene therapy, biologics, artificial intelligence in healthcare, and vaccine production. The conference will be held at the Hy-

derabad International Convention Centre and will focus on the theme "TechBio Unleashed: AI, Automation & the Biology Revolution." The discussions will explore how technology and biology are coming together to shape the future of medicine. Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Ashwini Vaishnaw are also expected to participate, showing the event's national importance. Global experts like Stefan Miltenyi will share their views on next-generation treatments and innovation. A special session on "Telangana Rising: Vision 2047" will present the state's long-term goal of placing Hyderabad among the top five life sciences hubs in the world. The fast growth of research parks and Global Capability Centres shows that this ambition is not unrealistic. BioAsia 2026 is therefore both a celebration of progress and a statement of intent. Telangana has created a strong base with stable policies, good infrastructure, and investor-friendly governance. If this momentum continues, the state is well on its way to becoming India's leading life sciences destination and a respected global player in the sector.



Sagar Vanaparthy, Policy Analyst.

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 concerns. 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 leadership 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 governments 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.

Bhupen Borah Withdraws Resignation, Reinstated as Assam Congress Chief

In a dramatic turnaround, Bhupen Borah has withdrawn his resignation as the president of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), just one day after submitting it. The sudden reversal ends a brief and turbulent episode within the party's state leadership and highlights ongoing internal challenges ahead of crucial elections.

Borah, a senior Congress leader from Assam, had submitted his resignation citing unspecified reasons, which sparked surprise and concern among party members and workers across the state. His decision came at a sensitive political juncture, with the Congress striving to consolidate its organisational strength and electoral strategy against rival parties.

Soon after Borah's resignation became public, reactions poured in from various quarters of the state unit. Many party workers, leaders, and regional legislators expressed surprise and urged him to reconsider, underlining his importance to the party's organisational structure and campaign planning. The swift pushback played a role in Borah's decision to retract his resignation.

In a statement addressing the matter, Borah said that after receiving overwhelming support and encouragement from senior party colleagues and grassroots workers, he had decided to remain in his post. He emphasised his continued commitment to strengthening the party in Assam and working tirelessly ahead of upcoming electoral



battles.

The brief resignation episode has drawn attention to internal dynamics within the Assam Congress, with some observers suggesting that factional pressures and strategic disagreements may have contributed to the initial decision. However, Borah's quick reversal and public reaffirmation of his leadership have been interpreted by many within the party as a sign of unity and resilience.

Senior Congress leaders from New Delhi and regional leadership reportedly intervened to ensure stability within the state unit, urging

dialogue and cohesion rather than abrupt leadership changes. Their involvement in smoothing over the situation reflects the party's desire for organisational steadiness as it gears up for future political contests.

Political analysts note that leadership stability is crucial for the Congress in a politically competitive state like Assam, where electoral outcomes can hinge on strong organisational presence and clear messaging. Borah's reinstatement is seen as potentially bolstering the party's ability to focus on outreach, alliances, and strategy rather than internal uncertainties.

For now, Borah appears focused on his responsibilities, stressing the need for unity and collective effort. The episode, although brief, underscores the intense pressures political leaders often face within party structures and the importance of broad support from workers and colleagues in sustaining leadership roles.

With his position now secured, Borah is expected to lead key party initiatives in Assam in the run-up to critical elections, with renewed emphasis on strengthening grassroots engagement and boosting the Congress's prospects in the region.

Actor Trisha Slams Tamil Nadu BJP Chief Over Comment on Vijay, Calls It 'Distasteful'



Tamil film star Trisha has strongly criticised Tamil Nadu BJP president Vijay Nainar Nagendran for a remark he made about actor Vijay, calling the comment "distasteful" and unbecoming of a political leader.

The controversy erupted after Nagendran, addressing a political gathering, appeared to mock actor Vijay's recent absence from a major event. His comment was widely seen as unnecessary and disrespectful toward the popular actor, who has a massive fan following in the state and is often perceived as influential in Tamil Nadu's cultural and social landscape. Nagendran's remarks quickly drew backlash on social media.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Trisha expressed her strong disapproval, saying the BJP chief's comment was out of line and reflected poorly on political discourse. She emphasised that criticism of artists based on their personal or professional decisions should not be part of political rhetoric. Trisha added that such re-

marks contribute to toxicity in public life and divert attention from substantive issues that matter to citizens.

Several fans and supporters of Trisha and Vijay echoed her sentiment online, criticising political leaders for targeting celebrities rather than focusing on key governance concerns. Many users pointed out that both Trisha and Vijay have long careers in the Tamil film industry and have steered clear of political controversies, making the BJP chief's comments all the more surprising.

Trisha's response highlighted her belief that public figures, including politicians, should respect personal boundaries and avoid unnecessary commentary about individuals' choices. She urged leaders to keep political debates focused on policies, development, and public welfare instead of making statements that polarise audiences or undermine civil discourse.

The exchange has sparked broader discussion in Tamil Nadu about the role of celeb-

rities in public life and how political leaders engage with cultural icons. Some commentators suggested that the incident reflects a growing trend of political polarisation, where every public comment is examined through a partisan lens, sometimes leading to PR battles rather than policy dialogue.

While the BJP has not issued a formal clarification in response to Trisha's criticism, the controversy has generated significant attention, with the actor's supporters backing her stance on social media. It remains to be seen whether Nagendran will respond further or retract his original remark in light of the backlash.

For now, the incident underscores the evolving dynamic between politics and the film industry in Tamil Nadu — a state where cinema and public life have long been closely intertwined. The reaction from audiences highlights sensitivities around how entertainers are discussed in the political arena.

Supreme Court Issues Caution on Pre-Marital Physical Relationships

India's Supreme Court has drawn attention for expressing strong views on pre-marital physical relationships while hearing a bail plea in a legal case where a man stands accused of rape on the basis of a false promise of marriage. The bench, presided over by Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan, made observations that highlighted the need for caution and circumspection in physical relationships before marriage, especially when serious allegations are involved.

During the hearing, the court questioned why a woman would travel abroad before marriage to meet a man with whom she was said to have established a physical relationship, after he had allegedly assured her that he would marry her. The accused was said to have given this promise despite already being married and later marrying another woman. The prosecution's case included claims that intimate videos were recorded without the



woman's consent and used to threaten her.

In its remarks, the Supreme Court suggested that before marriage, a boy and a girl are essentially "strangers" to each other and that engaging in a physical relationship under such circumstances calls for careful judgment. One of the judges noted that they might sound "old-fashioned," but emphasised that individu-

als should be very cautious and not necessarily trust assurances before marriage. The court questioned why the woman would travel abroad if her priority was to secure a marriage first.

The bench also indicated that such cases might be more suitable for mediation rather than lengthy trials, suggesting that consensual relationships outside marriage fall

into a different category compared to coercive or exploitative conduct. The matter has been adjourned for further hearing, including consideration of mediation options.

These comments have sparked wider discussion given that the court was addressing legal issues surrounding consent, promises of marriage, and alleged deception, rather than issuing a general rule about pre-marital sex. Still, the remarks underscore the judiciary's engagement with evolving social norms around relationships and personal decisions, especially when they intersect with criminal law and issues of consent.

While the Supreme Court's observations are oral and made in the context of a specific legal case, they reflect the complex interplay between personal relationships and legal implications under Indian law, particularly when allegations of fraud or coercion are involved.

Mani Shankar Aiyar, Unfiltered: Congress Veteran Targets Pawan Khera

Senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar has once again stirred controversy with sharp remarks aimed at party spokesperson Pawan Khera, deepening internal tensions within the Grand Old Party. Aiyar, known for his outspoken and often provocative comments, responded angrily after the party's leadership distanced itself from his praise of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Aiyar insisted that he remains a member of the Congress, despite recent statements from party officials suggesting otherwise. He rejected claims that he has had no connection with the party in recent years, asserting that if Khera moves to expel him, he would leave happily — and joked that he would "kick his backside" after doing so. This colourful remark underlined his frustration with how the party has responded to his comments.

The spat began when Aiyar, speaking at an event, praised the Kerala government led by Vijayan and expressed confidence that it would return to power, remarks that were quickly dissociated from the Congress by its media and



publicity department. Khera clarified that Aiyar's statements were personal and did not reflect the party's official stance. In response, Aiyar attacked Khera's credibility, calling him a "puppet" who merely repeats what others tell him and implying that he is not an effective representative for the party.

Aiyar's criticism is not limited to Khera. He has also taken aim at other senior Congress figures, suggesting that internal divisions and personal ambitions could harm the

party's prospects, particularly in the upcoming Kerala Assembly elections. His remarks reflect deep frustration with what he perceives as weak leadership and lack of strategic direction within the party.

The controversy has sparked reactions from within the Congress, with some leaders distancing themselves from Aiyar's views while others attempt to downplay the discord. The episode comes at a politically sensitive time, with the party navigating

multiple state elections and striving for unity against rival political forces.

Aiyar's comments have drawn both attention and criticism, illustrating ongoing challenges within the party regarding cohesion, messaging, and leadership. Whether this latest controversy will have lasting political repercussions remains to be seen, but it has certainly highlighted divisions and sparked debate about the direction of the Congress ahead of key electoral contests.

Actor Rajpal Yadav Granted Bail in ₹9 Crore Cheque Bounce Case



Bollywood actor Rajpal Yadav has been granted bail in a high-profile cheque bounce case involving allegations of dishonoured payments worth ₹9 crore. A court in Delhi allowed the actor to walk free on bail after considering his application, as the legal process continues in the matter.

The case stems from complaints that Yadav issued cheques as part of financial dealings, which were subsequently returned unpaid. These incidents triggered legal action under provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act, which deals with penal consequences for issuing cheques that fail to clear due to insufficient funds or other irregularities.

During the bail hearing, Yadav's legal team argued that the matter was fundamentally civil in nature and that there was no intent to defraud. They contended that the return of cheques related to business disputes and that the actor had always been willing to settle any genuine dues. Empha-

sising his cooperative approach and strong ties to the community, the defence presented factors in favour of bail.

The court noted these submissions and granted bail, imposing conditions that Yadav must comply with as part of his release. Such conditions typically include appearing for future court hearings as required and not tampering with evidence or influencing witnesses. The judge also emphasised that the accused must respect the judicial process and remain available for the continuation of trial proceedings.

Legal experts point out that while bail does not mean exoneration, it allows an accused individual to remain out of custody while the case progresses through the courts. The prosecution will have the opportunity to present evidence and arguments, and both sides will continue to engage in the legal process.

For Yadav, the bail decision brings a measure of relief amid intense media scrutiny and public interest

in the case. The actor has featured in numerous popular films and is known for his comic roles in mainstream Bollywood cinema. His supporters welcomed the court's decision, saying that the legal system must afford every individual the right to a fair hearing while balancing accountability.

The matter is expected to proceed to trial, where the details of the cheque transactions, financial obligations, and any disputes between the parties will be examined. Bail ensures that Yadav can prepare his defence and participate in proceedings without being confined to custody, enabling his legal team to engage fully in addressing the charges.

As the case unfolds further in court, attention will remain on how the trial develops and what implications it may have for legal and professional reputations. For now, Yadav's bail status allows him to continue his work outside of detention while adhering to judicial conditions.



Trump's 'Board of Peace' Secures \$5 Billion Pledge for Gaza Reconstruction

Former US President Donald Trump has announced that member nations of the newly formed "Board of Peace" have pledged more than \$5 billion to support humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts in Gaza. The funding commitments are expected to be formally outlined at the group's first official meeting in Washington, where participating countries will also discuss contributing personnel to a proposed international stabilisation force.

Trump, who chairs the initiative, described the effort as a major step toward rebuilding Gaza after prolonged conflict and promoting broader global peace efforts. According to him, the pledges include both financial aid and manpower

support aimed at restoring infrastructure, ensuring security, and stabilising the region in the aftermath of war.

One of the most significant developments linked to the plan is Indonesia's reported willingness to deploy up to 8,000 troops to participate in the proposed peace-keeping and humanitarian mission. If finalised, this would represent one of the largest personnel commitments to the initiative so far. The troops are expected to assist with maintaining order, protecting reconstruction projects, and supporting humanitarian distribution once deployed.

The Board of Peace was first unveiled at an international forum in Davos and is envisioned as a multilateral body bringing

together more than 20 nations. Its primary objective is to oversee Gaza's transition from conflict toward reconstruction under an internationally coordinated framework. The announcement follows a cease-fire agreement that brought an end to two years of intense hostilities in the region.

Despite the \$5 billion pledge, the financial needs for rebuilding Gaza are estimated to run into tens of billions of dollars. Large sections of housing, healthcare facilities, utilities, and public infrastructure were damaged or destroyed during the conflict, underscoring the scale of the reconstruction challenge ahead.

Supporters of the initiative see it as a proactive step toward stabilisation and long-

term recovery. However, questions remain regarding the structure of the Board of Peace, its mandate, and the level of backing it will receive from major global powers. Some observers have also raised concerns about how the international force would operate on the ground and coordinate with local authorities.

The upcoming Washington meeting is expected to provide greater clarity on participating nations, funding allocation, and operational details. As discussions unfold, global attention will remain focused on whether the pledged support can translate into meaningful progress in rebuilding Gaza and maintaining lasting stability in the region.

Bangladesh's New Government Set for Swearing-In Ceremony, Regional Leaders to Attend

Bangladesh is set to witness a significant political transition as the newly elected government prepares to take office at a formal swearing-in ceremony in Dhaka. The event, scheduled to be held at the South Plaza of the National Parliament Building, will mark the beginning of a new administration following the recent national elections that delivered a decisive mandate.

The ceremony is expected to draw around 1,200 guests, including political leaders, diplomats, senior military officials, and foreign dignitaries. The presence of several high-profile international representatives underscores the regional and global interest in Bangladesh's political developments and its future direction under the new leadership.

Among the prominent foreign attendees expected at the ceremony are Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, India's Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Pakistan's Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Nepal's Foreign Minister Bala Nanda



Sharma, Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel, Sri Lanka's Health Minister Nalinda Jayatissa, and the United Kingdom's Indo-Pacific minister Seema Malhotra. Their participation highlights the importance of Bangladesh's ties with neighboring South Asian nations as well as key global partners.

India's representation at the ceremony has drawn particular attention, given the longstanding diplomatic, econom-

ic, and cultural ties between the two countries. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi was invited, he is unable to attend due to prior commitments. However, the participation of the Lok Sabha Speaker signals continued engagement and cooperation between New Delhi and Dhaka.

The swearing-in proceedings are expected to take place in two phases. Newly elected members of parliament will first take their oath, followed

by the oath-taking of the Prime Minister and the new cabinet later in the day. Security arrangements have been strengthened in the capital to ensure the smooth conduct of the event.

The new government's assumption of office comes at a time when Bangladesh faces a range of economic and governance challenges, including inflationary pressures, employment generation, and maintaining export growth. Observers believe the administration's early policy signals and cabinet composition will be closely watched by both domestic stakeholders and international partners.

The presence of regional leaders at the ceremony reflects Bangladesh's strategic importance in South Asia and its role in regional connectivity, trade, and cooperation. As the new government takes charge, expectations are high for political stability and constructive engagement with global partners in the years ahead.

US Democrats Tell Europe Trump's "Temporary Hell" Could End in Three Years

Top Democratic leaders from the United States have warned European partners that the current era of strained transatlantic relations under Donald Trump could be short-lived. They conveyed this message during meetings in Munich, where discussions focused on security cooperation, global challenges, and the evolving international order.

The Democrats described the Trump years as a period of disruption for alliances and longstanding partnerships, particularly with NATO members. While acknowledging the difficulties experienced under the previous administration, they reassured European officials that this phase was likely temporary and could be reversed in the next three years through political change in the United States.

During the talks, Democratic representatives emphasised the importance of a strong and stable transatlantic alliance grounded in shared values, democratic principles, and mutual security commitments. They argued that European concerns about US foreign policy volatility stemmed



largely from unpredictable decisions and rhetoric during Trump's presidency.

The US Democrats highlighted their party's deep support for collective defence and cooperation, underscoring that a return to more traditional foreign policy norms would strengthen Europe's confidence in Washington. They also stressed the need for strategic alignment on issues such as Russia's aggression, trade policy, global health, climate change, and emerging technological competition with China.

European leaders welcomed the engagement and expressed relief at the message that the "temporary hell," as it was described by the American visitors, could be ending. Many diplomats noted that a clear shift toward stability in US leadership would help reassure allies and markets alike, particularly at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions.

The discussions underscored mutual concerns about security in Eastern Europe, energy resilience, and transnational threats. Both sides

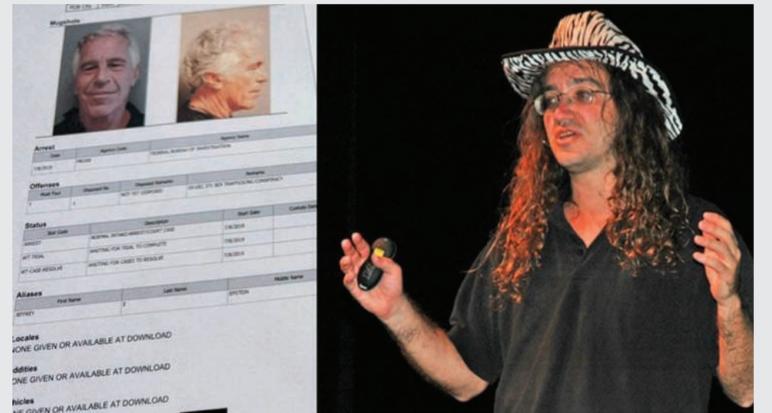
agreed on the need for continued collaboration within NATO and with other regional partners to deter aggression and promote peace.

Democratic officials also emphasised that domestic political processes in the United States, including elections and legislative priorities, play a critical role in shaping foreign policy. They conveyed to their European hosts that efforts to restore predictability and trust in the alliance would be integral to their agenda.

In response, European representatives reiterated their commitment to collective defence and expressed hope for robust cooperation in the years ahead. They highlighted areas where they were ready to work closely with the United States to address global challenges, including cybersecurity threats and economic competitiveness.

Overall, the meetings in Munich focused on reassuring European allies of a future US commitment to shared goals, signalling that current tensions could ease with changes in political leadership and a renewed emphasis on partnership.

Jeffrey Epstein Helped Fund AI Researcher Ben Goertzel, Aiding HK\$8.9 Million in Grants



A prominent artificial intelligence researcher received financial support linked to the late financier Jeffrey Epstein, according to reporting that has raised fresh scrutiny over Epstein's influence in scientific and academic circles. Epstein's backing was tied to support for Ben Goertzel, a well-known AI scientist, and helped him secure substantial research funding in Hong Kong.

Epstein, whose reputation was marred by convictions related to sex offenses and extensive allegations of sexual exploitation, also invested in a range of academic and scientific endeavours before his death. New information reveals that some of his contributions extended into emerging technology sectors like artificial intelligence, where researchers like Goertzel have been prominent voices.

Goertzel, a co-founder of an AI research organisation and an advocate for advanced artificial general intelligence, received donor support influenced by Epstein's connections. These ties are understood to have played a role in Goertzel obtaining roughly HK\$8.9 million in grant funding from

several Hong Kong institutions. The grants were intended to support ongoing AI research projects and collaborations aimed at pushing the boundaries of machine learning and cognitive computing.

The revelations have prompted questions about the ethics of accepting funds that may indirectly originate from controversial figures, even when the research aims are legitimate. AI research, which spans everything from theoretical work to real-world applications, often relies on a mix of public and private financing. But connections to Epstein have triggered intense debate in scientific and policy communities about transparency and accountability in research backing.

Goertzel's supporters argue that funding sources do not necessarily influence the integrity of the scientific work and that research in AI deserves robust backing regardless of unrelated controversies. They point to the importance of continued investment in AI, given its potential impact on industries such as healthcare, robotics and data analytics.

Critics, however, contend that associations with Epstein, even indirectly, risk tarnishing both the research and the institutions involved. They argue that scientific endeavours should maintain strict ethical standards around donations and sponsorships, particularly when linked to individuals with criminal or discredited histories.

The situation has also reignited discussions in broader academic and technological circles about how research institutions evaluate and disclose the origins of funding. Some experts advocate for clearer guidelines and stronger ethical vetting processes for donations, especially for high-profile or high-impact research areas like artificial intelligence.

While there is no indication that the substance of the research itself was compromised, the funding link highlights ongoing tensions between scientific advancement and the imperative of ethical oversight in securing and accepting research support. The debate underscores the need for transparency as AI continues to develop and attract significant global investments.

North Korea Opens New Housing District for Families of Ukraine War Dead

North Korea has inaugurated a new residential district intended to house families of soldiers who died fighting in support of Russia's war in Ukraine. The development, presented as a gesture of respect and care for bereaved families, reflects Pyongyang's continued alignment with Moscow and its efforts to reinforce internal loyalty through symbolic state projects.

The housing complex was unveiled in Pyongyang, where authorities held ceremonies to mark its completion. The project includes apartment blocks and community facilities intended to improve living standards for families of fallen fighters. State media coverage described the move as an important expression of gratitude toward those who made the ultimate sacrifice in what North Korea views as a shared struggle alongside Russia.

North Korea's involvement in the Ukraine conflict has never been publicly confirmed in detail, but evidence from Western governments suggests that Pyongyang has provided military assistance to Russia, including munitions and other equipment. In recent months, reports have indicated that some North Korean soldiers may have been deployed to fight in Ukraine, though such claims are difficult to independently verify due to the secretive nature of the regime.

The housing project underscores the political significance North Korean leaders attach to the country's relationship with Russia. It also serves domestic purposes by reinforcing narratives of loyalty, sacrifice, and international solidarity



under the leadership of Kim Jong Un. Providing improved housing for families of the war dead allows the state to visually demonstrate its commitment to supporting citizens who have suffered personal loss in connection with national priorities.

Observers note that the new housing district is likely intended to bolster morale and unity within North Korean society, particularly at a time when the country faces ongoing economic challenges and international isolation due to extensive sanctions. State propaganda often emphasises hardship and sacrifice as collective responsibilities, and gestures like the housing development are portrayed as evidence of the government's benevolence and resolve.

International reactions to North Korea's actions have varied. Western officials critical of Pyongyang's ties with Moscow have pointed out that honoring families of those con-

nected to the Ukraine conflict could signal deeper levels of military cooperation between the two nations. Meanwhile, analysts caution that propagandistic displays in Pyongyang often serve internal political objectives rather than reflect substantive policy shifts.

Despite the grand presentation of the housing district, details remain limited about how many families will benefit and the criteria for residency. Questions also persist about whether North Korea's support for Russia will translate into more direct involvement in the Ukraine war moving forward.

The unveiling of the new housing area reinforces the complex geopolitical entanglements surrounding the Ukraine conflict and highlights how allied states like North Korea use symbolic state projects to project strength and solidarity both domestically and internationally.

Markets Rebound Strongly: Sensex Jumps 650 Points, Nifty Crosses 25,600



Indian equity markets staged a strong comeback on Monday, snapping a two-day losing streak as benchmark indices rallied sharply amid renewed buying interest. The BSE Sensex surged nearly 650 points to close above the 83,200 mark, while the NSE Nifty50 climbed over 200 points to settle above 25,600. Both indices recovered from early weakness and ended the session near their day's highs, reflecting improved investor sentiment.

Trading began on a cautious note, with the Nifty slipping below 25,400 in early deals due to continued profit-taking and mixed global cues. However, as the session progressed, buying momentum gathered pace across several heavyweight sectors. Strong gains in power, financials, infrastructure, and energy stocks helped lift the benchmarks decisively into

positive territory.

Sectorally, power, PSU banks, private banks, realty, infrastructure, capital goods, and energy stocks posted gains ranging between 1 and 2 percent. The rally in financial stocks played a key role in supporting the broader market recovery. However, not all segments participated equally. Media and automobile stocks remained under pressure, slipping modestly during the session and limiting the overall breadth of the rally.

The broader markets showed a mixed trend. The midcap index registered moderate gains, while the smallcap index ended largely flat. Despite the rebound in frontline stocks, market breadth indicated underlying caution, with a significant number of stocks touching fresh 52-week lows. This suggests that while investor confidence improved in large-cap counters, se-

lective weakness continues in certain pockets of the market.

Among individual stocks, shares in major power and banking companies led the gains, supported by renewed institutional interest. On the flip side, select auto and technology stocks witnessed selling pressure.

The recovery reflects value buying at lower levels after the recent correction. Investors appear to be selectively accumulating quality stocks amid expectations of stable domestic fundamentals. However, analysts caution that sustained buying support and favorable global cues will be necessary to confirm a stronger upward trend.

For now, the market's ability to hold above key support levels will be closely watched, as traders assess whether this rebound marks the beginning of a fresh rally or remains a short-term bounce.

Gold Prices Dip Below \$5,000 as Traders Book Profits After Recent Rally



Global gold prices retreated on Monday, slipping back under the key \$5,000-per-ounce mark following a period of strong gains, as traders took profits amid thinner market conditions. The pullback came after bullion had climbed sharply in the previous session, driven by optimism around softer inflation data from the United States that had boosted expectations of future interest rate cuts.

The recent climb in gold had been significant, touching multi-year highs earlier this year, buoyed by speculative buying and safe-haven de-

mand. However, with prices reaching elevated levels and traders looking to lock in gains, profit-taking activity intensified and resulted in a notable decline in early Asian trading. With many markets in China closed for the Lunar New Year holiday, liquidity remains relatively low, which can exacerbate moves in either direction.

The retreat saw spot gold ease modestly, reversing part of the strong gains from the previous session. This downward momentum was accompanied by declines in other precious metals, includ-

ing silver, which also saw selling pressure amid weaker global cues. Analysts describe the current market phase as one of consolidation, where prices are finding a balance after recent volatility rather than trending decisively up or down.

While the short-term drop may raise concerns for some traders, broader market expectations for gold remain positive over the long term. Many major banks and financial institutions continue to forecast higher gold prices based on enduring structural drivers. These include geopolitical tensions that can elevate

safe-haven demand, questions about central bank independence, and a broad global shift away from traditional assets such as major currencies and sovereign bonds. Some forecasts suggest gold could retest and exceed previous peaks later in the year, amid supportive macroeconomic conditions.

Despite this optimistic outlook, price action in the near term is being influenced by technical factors and profit-taking at high levels. Markets often see sharp rallies followed by retracements as speculative interest ebbs and traders take advantage of

higher price points to secure returns. As such, consolidation below the \$5,000 threshold may represent a natural correction within a larger trend rather than a definitive reversal.

Investors now await fresh catalysts that could provide direction to bullion markets, including upcoming economic data releases from the United States and central bank policy signals. Until then, gold prices are likely to remain volatile, influenced by the interplay of profit-taking, liquidity conditions, and broader macroeconomic sentiment.

PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery IPO GMP Climbs Ahead of Rs 380 Crore Issue Launch



The upcoming initial public offering (IPO) of PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery is generating noticeable buzz in the primary markets as its grey market premium (GMP) has risen ahead of the official subscription window next week. The increase in GMP signals that market participants are expecting healthy list-

ing gains when the shares begin trading on the exchanges.

The company is set to launch its IPO on February 24, with the offer closing on February 26. Bidding for anchor investors is scheduled a day earlier, on February 23. The issue size is Rs 380 crore, and it is composed entirely of a fresh issue of equity

shares, with no offer-for-sale component. Investors will be able to apply for shares in lots of 32, with a price band fixed between roughly Rs 367 and Rs 386 per share.

In the grey market, where unlisted shares are traded unofficially before the official listing, PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery's shares have been com-

manding a rising premium. At one point, indicators from broker platforms showed the GMP at levels suggesting a possible listing gain of around 9 percent. This reflects growing confidence among some investors about the attractiveness of the issue and the potential for a positive debut once shares get listed.

The proceeds from the IPO will be used mainly to support the company's expansion plans, including opening 15 new stores over the next few years, along with meeting marketing and promotional expenses and other general corporate purposes. PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery was formed after its promoter, P N Gadgil & Sons, transferred its diamond jewellery business into a separate entity focused on the retail segment.

As of the latest financial year ending March 31, 2025, the company operated more than 30 stores

across multiple states, including Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka. In the year, revenues grew significantly, reflecting strong demand trends in its core markets, while profits also recorded healthy year-on-year growth.

Despite the early grey market optimism, analysts and investors are watching closely to see how subscription traction unfolds once the IPO opens. Broader market conditions and investor sentiment toward consumer-oriented retail IPOs will play a key role in determining overall demand.

With its debut expected in early March, the PNGS Reva Diamond Jewellery IPO is one of the noteworthy public issues hitting the market in this primary market season, especially given its positioning in the jewellery retail space and the growth prospects of the Indian gems and jewellery sector.

IT Stocks Rebound as Market Views Diverge on AI Impact



Indian IT stocks showed signs of recovery on Monday after a period of intense selling driven by fears of artificial intelligence-led disruption. The Nifty IT index, which had been under pressure for several sessions, reversed course to close higher, ending a three-day losing streak. Mid-cap IT names rallied with stronger gains, helping lift the broader sector sentiment.

Early in the session, heavyweights like Infosys and Tech Mahindra had dragged the index lower, reflecting the lingering nervousness among investors about how advances in artificial intelligence could affect traditional software-services business models. However, as trading progressed, buying interest emerged, particularly in stocks that had seen significant sell-offs in recent weeks.

Analysts point out that the recent volatility in IT stocks has been triggered largely by sentiment rather than shifts in underlying business fundamentals. Some investors worried that new AI tools could automate core functions tra-

ditionally performed by Indian IT firms, potentially reducing demand for outsourced services. This concern intensified after the introduction of a legal AI tool that heightened fears of competition from machine-driven solutions.

Market perspectives on the outlook for IT firms remain sharply divided. At one end, some strategists are urging caution, noting that valuations in the sector appear elevated relative to earnings growth prospects. They believe that IT companies that successfully adapt to emerging technologies at competitive costs may fare better, but there could still be downside risk if market pessimism persists. This cautious view highlights the importance of selective stock picking and careful attention to individual growth trajectories.

On the other hand, a contrasting and more optimistic view is gaining traction among some brokers. They argue that the panic over AI's potential to disrupt IT services is overdone. According to this view, the cost of traditional coding has been falling for

years, and emerging tools—whether low-code platforms or AI-powered systems—should be seen as opportunities to enhance productivity rather than threats to existing business models. These analysts believe that Indian IT firms can adapt and evolve their service offerings to integrate new technologies and continue winning business globally.

This optimism is reflected in the market's rebound on Monday, as investors stepped in to buy stocks that had been oversold amid fear-driven selling. While some large-cap IT names may still face pressure in the near term, improving demand trends and upcoming corporate guidance could help drive a rerating of valuations in the sector.

Investor focus now remains on how IT companies articulate their AI strategy and growth prospects in the coming weeks. A clear demonstration of adaptation to technological change and robust deal pipelines could help solidify the recent recovery and build confidence in the sector's long-term outlook.

Sundaram AMC Launches USD-Denominated India Midcap Fund at GIFT City

Sundaram Asset Management Company has launched a new US dollar-denominated fund aimed at providing overseas investors with access to India's midcap equity segment. The scheme, titled Sundaram India Midcap - GIFT, has been introduced through the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City in Gujarat. The fund opened for subscription on February 16, 2026, with a minimum investment requirement of USD 5,000 for both direct and regular plans. Units are priced at USD 10 during the initial offer period.

The newly launched product is structured as an offshore feeder fund that will primarily invest in the domestic Sundaram Mid Cap Fund, a well-established SEBI-registered mutual fund with a long operating track record. Through this structure, global investors can gain exposure to a diver-

sified portfolio of Indian midcap companies across sectors such as financial services, industrials, healthcare, and consumer-linked businesses.

By offering the fund in US dollars and operating through GIFT City's IFSC framework, Sundaram AMC aims to simplify investment access for international participants. The structure is designed to reduce currency conversion hurdles and administrative complexities that foreign investors often encounter when investing directly in Indian rupee-denominated schemes. Additionally, GIFT City provides a globally aligned regulatory environment and certain tax efficiencies, making it an increasingly attractive platform for offshore investment vehicles.

The move highlights a broader trend among Indian asset management companies to tap global capital through GIFT



City. As India's economic growth and corporate earnings trajectory continue to draw international attention, fund houses are leveraging the IFSC ecosystem to launch innovative products tailored for overseas investors, including non-resident Indians and institutional players.

Midcap stocks, in particular, are viewed as of-

fering strong long-term growth potential, driven by expanding domestic consumption, manufacturing growth, and structural reforms. However, they also carry relatively higher volatility compared to large-cap stocks. The new feeder fund seeks to balance this growth potential with professional portfolio management and diversification.

With the launch of the Sundaram India Midcap - GIFT fund, Sundaram AMC aims to strengthen its global footprint while offering international investors a streamlined route to participate in India's midcap growth story. Market observers will closely monitor subscription levels and investor response as the fund begins attracting global allocations.

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 tour 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.

Omarzai's All-Round Brilliance Guides Afghanistan to First Win, Confirms South Africa's Super 8 Spot

Afghanistan secured their first victory of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 with a thrilling five-wicket win over the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a Group D encounter in New Delhi. The star of the match was Azmatullah Omarzai, whose outstanding all-round performance played a decisive role in the result and also ensured South Africa's qualification for the Super Eights stage.

After winning the toss and opting to bowl, Afghanistan produced a disciplined effort with the ball. Omarzai led the charge with an exceptional spell, claiming four wickets for just 15 runs. His tight lines and ability to strike at crucial moments restricted the UAE to 160 for 9 in their allotted 20 overs. Despite a fighting 68 from Sohaib Khan and a steady 40 from Alishan Sharafu, the UAE struggled to accelerate against Afghanistan's controlled bowling attack.

In response, Afghanistan's chase began cautiously. Early wickets put them under pressure, leaving the side at 41 for 2 during the Powerplay. Opener Ibrahim Zadran then steadied the innings with a composed 53 off 41 deliveries, anchoring the chase



and keeping the required rate within reach.

As the match entered the final phase, Afghanistan still needed quick runs to seal the contest. Omarzai once again rose to the occasion, delivering a powerful unbeaten knock of 40 off just 21 balls. His aggressive strokeplay in the death overs shifted momentum

firmly in Afghanistan's favour. The team eventually reached 162 for 5 in 19.2 overs, completing the chase with four balls to spare.

The win not only boosted Afghanistan's campaign but also confirmed South Africa's progression to the Super Eights, as the result impacted the group standings. Afghanistan

remain in contention for a place in the next stage, though their qualification may depend on other results.

For the UAE, the defeat was disappointing after a competitive batting performance. Their inability to defend a respectable total ultimately proved costly, particularly against Omarzai's late assault.

Omarzai's match-winning display highlighted his growing importance to Afghanistan's T20 setup. His impact with both bat and ball underscored the value of genuine all-rounders in the shortest format and gave Afghanistan renewed confidence as the tournament moves into its decisive phase.

After Heavy Defeat to India, Pakistan Stars Face Backlash and Possible Dropping



Pakistan's crushing 61-run loss to arch-rivals India in their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 clash in Colombo has sparked a furious reaction at home, putting senior players Babar Azam and Shaheen Shah Afridi under intense scrutiny.

The defeat left Pakistan reeling and facing an uphill task to stay alive in the tournament, as they now must beat Namibia in

their final group match to keep hopes of reaching the Super 8 round alive. But it is not just the sporting implications that have dominated headlines back home — strong criticism and calls for drastic action against senior team members have emerged from former cricketers, commentators and fans.

The primary focus of the backlash has been on Babar Azam and Shaheen

Afridi, both of whom failed to make significant contributions in the crucial match against India. Babar, expected to anchor Pakistan's chase, was dismissed cheaply early in the innings, while Afridi, a key bowling spearhead, struggled to make an impact with the ball. Their lacklustre performances have fuelled demands for a shake-up in the batting and bowling order.

Several former Pakistan players and pundits have openly suggested that Babar and Shaheen should be dropped from the remaining T20 World Cup matches if Pakistan are to revive their campaign. There have also been calls to give more opportunities to younger cricketers, with the argument that fresh faces could inject energy and produce results in pressure situations.

The criticism has extended beyond the players to the team management, with some observers questioning selection decisions and overall strategy. In social media discussions and commentary, many fans and analysts have thrown their weight behind the idea of reordering the team's leadership and batting lineup to strengthen performance going forward.

The intense pressure reflects not only Pakistan's disappointing display in the loss but also the broader expectations of fans and former stars alike, who feel the senior players must deliver in marquee matches against major rivals like India. Whether these calls for changes will translate into actual team decisions remains to be seen, but the debate highlights the high stakes and passions surrounding Pakistan's cricketing fortunes in the T20 World Cup.

Pakistan now face a critical match against Namibia, and decisions regarding team composition — particularly the roles of Babar and Shaheen — could prove pivotal for their survival in the tournament.

'Deeply Disappointed' Dressing Room: Mike Hesson Opens Up After Pakistan's Heavy Loss to India

Pakistan head coach Mike Hesson has revealed that the team's dressing room was filled with disappointment following their comprehensive 61-run defeat to India in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 clash in Colombo. Describing the mood as subdued and hurting, Hesson admitted that the loss in such a high-profile encounter was difficult for the players to digest.

Speaking after the match, Hesson said the squad understood the magnitude of the India-Pakistan rivalry and what it means to supporters back home. He acknowledged that India outperformed Pakistan in key phases of the game and deserved the victory. The coach conceded that the team failed to execute their plans effectively, particularly under pressure.

Pakistan had entered the contest with confidence after a string of recent T20 wins, but India's dominant batting display quickly shifted the momentum. Despite believing that bowling first was the right decision based on pitch conditions, Hesson admitted that his side struggled to contain India's aggressive approach. Once the target was set, Pakistan's batting unit was unable to mount a serious challenge during the chase.

Hesson emphasised that such defeats are painful but urged his players to regroup quickly. He stressed that tournaments like the T20 World Cup demand mental resilience and the ability to bounce back from setbacks. According to him, dwelling too long on the loss would not help the team's chances moving forward.

The coach also pointed out that improvements are needed in both execution and composure during high-pressure situations. He acknowledged that expectations from senior players are always high in marquee matches, and delivering in such contests is crucial.

With the defeat denting Pakistan's qualification hopes, their upcoming match against Namibia has become a must-win encounter. Hesson made it clear that the focus now shifts to preparing thoroughly for that game and ensuring that the team responds positively.

While the setback against India has intensified scrutiny and criticism, Hesson's comments suggest that the team management remains determined to fight on. The coming match will test not just Pakistan's tactical



readiness but also their ability to recover mentally after what the

coach described as a deeply disappointing night for the squad.

Mohammad Yousuf Blasts PCB Politics, Calls Pakistan Cricket's Current Phase 'Darkest Period'



Former Pakistan batting legend Mohammad Yousuf has issued a blistering critique of the country's cricket leadership following Pakistan's heavy 61-run loss to India in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, describing the current state of Pakistan cricket as the "darkest period" in its history.

Yousuf took to social media to express his deep frustration, saying that cricket in Pakistan will not return to its former glory unless political influence and personal agendas are removed from the sport. He stressed that without ending such interference, the national team and cricketing ecosystem will continue to struggle and underperform.

In his message, Yousuf argued that the sport has been held back by decisions driven more by politics than cricketing merit, and that this has contributed to inconsistent performances by the national side, including the recent defeat to India which has left Pakistan's progression in the tournament hanging by a thread.

He specifically took aim at the cricket board's leadership, indirectly criticizing the PCB chairman and interior minister for what he sees as politically influenced decision-making. Yousuf insisted that incompetent individuals, both in administrative roles

and within the team setup, should be removed if Pakistan cricket is to be revived and made competitive again.

The comments reflect broader frustration among former players and fans, who feel that off-field issues have overshadowed cricketing priorities and hindered the development of the national team. Yousuf's remarks have sparked widespread discussion about the need for structural reforms, greater accountability and a focus on merit-based selection and management.

The backlash against current leadership comes at a crucial time for Pakistan's squad, which must now regroup and perform under pressure in its remaining matches to have any chance of advancing to the Super Eights stage of the T20 World Cup.

Yousuf's call for change underscores the intensity of feeling surrounding Pakistan cricket at the moment, with many supporters and pundits echoing his demand that political agendas be set aside in favour of a more professional, cricket-first approach. Whether this public criticism leads to any tangible changes in leadership or strategy remains to be seen, but it has clearly highlighted deep concerns about the direction of the sport in the country.

Steve Smith Replaces Josh Hazlewood in Australia's T20 World Cup Squad



Australia have made a key change to their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 squad, bringing veteran batter Steve Smith into the lineup as a replacement for fast bowler Josh Hazlewood. The move comes just ahead of Australia's crucial matches in the tournament, with selectors electing to strengthen the batting lineup at the expense of one of their experienced pacers.

Hazlewood, a seasoned campaigner known for his accuracy and control in limited-overs cricket, has been withdrawn from the squad due to a minor injury concern. While not expected to be sidelined long-term, the team management opted to bring in Smith to provide additional depth and stability in the middle order — particularly as Australia face challenging batting conditions and strong bowling attacks from rival teams.

Steve Smith is one of Australia's most accomplished international batters, renowned for his consistency and adaptability across formats. Although his primary strengths have traditionally been in Test and One-Day cricket, Smith has also proved his worth in T20 competitions around the world with his ability to anchor innings and pace chases. His inclusion is expected to add experience and temperament to Australia's batting unit, especially in high-pressure moments.

The decision reflects a tactical shift by Australian selectors, prioritising batting reinforcement in light of the team's current balance and matchups. Australia's batting lineup already features explosive hitters at the top, but middle-order stability has been an area where the side has sought more solidity — a role Smith is well suited to provide.

With Smith now on board, Australia will look to recalibrate their strategies and batting order to maximise his impact. His presence could prove especially valuable if early wickets fall or if the team needs a composed hand to rebuild innings under pressure.

For Hazlewood, the focus now shifts to recovery and fitness ahead of potential return opportunities later in the tournament or in future fixtures. Given his experience and significance to Australia's bowling attack, team management will monitor his progress closely.

Overall, the inclusion of Steve Smith adds further firepower and leadership to Australia's World Cup campaign, which remains firmly in focus as they seek to defend their title and make a deep run in the competition. Fans and analysts will be watching closely to see how Smith's adaptation to the T20 format impacts Australia's performance in the coming matches.

What's Up Naresh Unveils Valentine's Day Glimpse

The makers of What's Up Naresh have released the second glimpse of their upcoming romantic entertainer as a special Valentine's Day treat, offering audiences a deeper look into the film's emotional core. Positioned as a youthful feel-good rom-com, the film stars Kavya Kalyanram, who rose to fame with Balagam, alongside Anvesh Michael of Kotha Poradu.

Produced by Bhagya Laxmi Chinta under the CVV Cinema banner and directed by CV Vishal, the film had already created buzz with its first glimpse, which introduced the protagonist, his family dynamics, and the beginnings of a relationship. The newly unveiled second glimpse shifts tone, presenting a more intimate and thoughtful interaction between the lead pair.

The teaser showcases the duo connecting through a dating app and meeting for coffee, where their conversation evolves from playful banter to a candid discussion about past relationships and social realities. The inclusion of themes like caste and modern relationship expectations adds a grounded layer to the narrative, hinting that the film aims to balance entertainment with relatable emotions. As the glimpse progresses, viewers are treated to moments charting the gradual evolution of their bond, promising a warm and charming love story.

Both Kavya Kalyanram and Anvesh Michael ap-



pear perfectly suited to their characters, displaying an easy chemistry that anchors the film's romantic tone. Despite the director opting for a relatively lengthy glimpse, the emotional flow remains engaging, never losing its breezy appeal.

Music composer Smaran Sai enhances the teaser with a soothing and vibrant score, amplifying the romantic mood. The track featured toward the end, "Ayomayanga Saaguthunna..." stands out for its classical undertones and energetic finish, further raising expectations for the soundtrack.

Technically, the film boasts cinematography

by Vedaraman Sankaran and editing by Vipray Nshadam, with the visuals capturing the soft, contemporary vibe of the story. The ensemble cast includes K Sai Santosh, Ushashree Murali, Santhosh Nandivada, Priyanka Raviru, and others, adding depth to the narrative world.

With its pleasant tone, relatable themes, and promising performances, the second glimpse suggests that What's Up Naresh is shaping up to be a refreshing addition to the romantic comedy space. The team is expected to unveil more promotional material in the coming weeks as anticipation builds for the film's release.

Seetha Payanam Wins Hearts, Says Arjun Sarja at Thank You Meet



The team of Seetha Payanam celebrated the film's positive reception with a warm Thank You Meet on Sunday, following its theatrical release on February 14. Produced and directed by Action King Arjun Sarja under the banner of Shri Ram Films International, the emotional family drama has been drawing appreciation from audiences and critics alike for its heartfelt storytelling and performances.

Addressing the gathering, Arjun Sarja expressed gratitude for the overwhelming response, saying the film was made "with complete honesty" and a deep sense of purpose. He revealed that the story was inspired by a real-life accident he witnessed years ago, which led him to reflect on gratitude and life's unpredictability. "Everyone who watches the film feels it mirrors their own journey. Life itself is a journey filled with lessons,"

he said, adding that the encouraging feedback has been deeply satisfying.

The film marks the screen debut of his daughter Aishwarya Arjun alongside newcomer Niranjan, who comes from a film family connected to actor Upendra. Arjun shared that he was delighted by the praise Aishwarya has received, calling it a proud moment as a father and filmmaker. He also commended Niranjan for delivering a sincere performance that adds emotional depth to the narrative.

The director highlighted the contributions of senior actors Prakash Raj, Sathyaraj, and Kovai Sarala, noting that their presence elevated the film. He also mentioned a powerful cameo by Dhruva Sarja as one of the highlights appreciated by fans.

Speaking at the event, Aishwarya Arjun thanked audiences for

embracing the film and said the love it has received makes the project even more special. Niranjan echoed the sentiment, calling the film a perfect family entertainer rooted in values and emotions, while expressing gratitude to Telugu audiences for supporting newcomers.

Music composer Anup Rubens said films like Seetha Payanam require courage and conviction, praising Arjun's vision to create meaningful cinema. Dialogue writer Sai Madhav Burra noted that every character and scene carries depth, adding that viewers are leaving theatres with a sense of fulfillment.

With strong word-of-mouth and emotional resonance, the team remains optimistic that Seetha Payanam will continue its successful run, connecting with families and reinforcing the timeless message of gratitude and positivity.

Pocket Novel Title Revealed for Vijay Sethupathi's New Film

The much-anticipated new project starring Vijay Sethupathi has officially been titled Pocket Novel, creating fresh excitement among fans and industry circles. The film brings together the versatile actor with acclaimed filmmaker Thiagarajan Kumararaja, marking their reunion after the cult success of Super Deluxe.

The announcement of the title has sparked curiosity about the film's narrative style, as Kumararaja is known for his unconventional storytelling and genre-blending approach. With Pocket Novel, the director is expected to once again present a unique cinematic experience that combines strong characters with an engaging narrative structure.

Joining Vijay Sethupathi in the film is Malavika Mohanan, who plays the female lead. The cast also includes Raj B Shetty, making his Tamil film debut, along with seasoned performer Kishore in a key role. The ensemble lineup has already raised expectations, as each actor is known for delivering powerful performances.

Music for the film is being composed by legendary maestro Ilayaraja, whose involvement has added further prestige to the project. Industry insiders believe his score will play a major role in shaping the film's

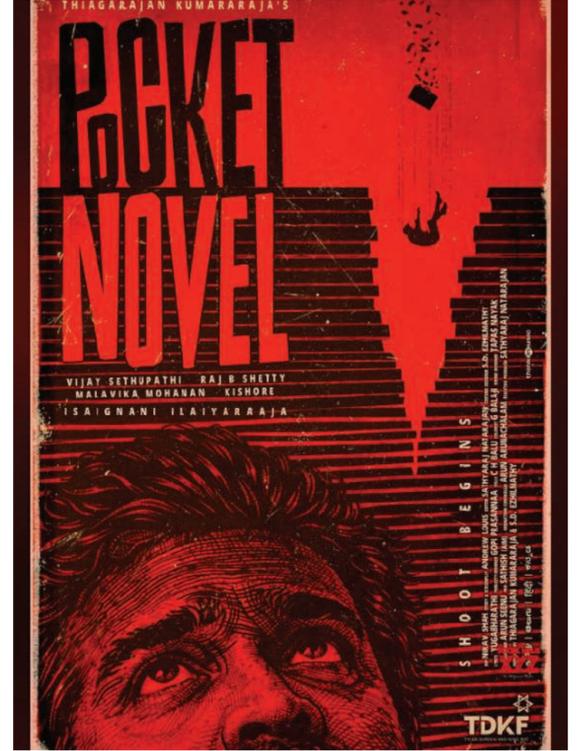
mood and emotional depth, especially given the director's penchant for atmospheric storytelling.

While the makers are keeping the storyline tightly under wraps, the title Pocket Novel hints at a narrative that could unfold like a compact yet layered story, possibly exploring multiple perspectives or interconnected events. Given the creative synergy between Vijay Sethupathi and Thiagarajan Kumararaja, expectations are high for a film that balances artistic sensibilities with mainstream appeal.

Production on the film has already commenced, and the team is reportedly progressing at a steady pace. With its intriguing title, strong technical crew, and talented cast, the project is being seen as one of the most promising upcoming ventures in Tamil cinema.

Fans of Vijay Sethupathi are particularly excited to see him collaborate again with Kumararaja, as their previous partnership delivered memorable performances and critical acclaim. As anticipation builds, the makers are expected to unveil more details, including first-look visuals and teaser content, in the coming months.

With its combination of star power, creative storytelling, and musical brilliance, Pocket Nov-



el is shaping up to be a film that could capture both critical at-

tention and audience interest upon release.

Hey Balwanth Promises Full-On Entertainment, Says Shivani Nagaram



The upcoming entertainer Hey Balwanth is gearing up for its theatrical release on February 20, and the film's leading

lady Shivani Nagaram says audiences can expect a complete package of fun, emotions, and laughter. Headlined by

Suhas alongside Shivani, the film also features senior actor Naresh and anchor Sravanti in key roles.

Backed by producer Bunny Vas and Vamsi Nandipati, the film is produced by B. Narendra Reddy under the Trishul Visionary Studios banner and directed by Gopi Acharya. The project was earlier titled Hey Bhagavan before being renamed Hey Balwanth.

Speaking to the media, Shivani described the film as a light-hearted contrast to her earlier intense roles. She revealed that her character blends innocence with comedy and said the story will keep viewers entertained throughout, while also delivering an emotional father-and-son thread that connects with audiences. "The entire movie will fully entertain, and the climax emotions will touch everyone," she said.

Shivani, who reunites with Suhas after their previous collaboration, expressed confidence in their on-screen chemistry, calling him a supportive co-actor and a strong performer. She added that the comedic elements, particularly the characters played by Naresh and comedian Venela Kishore, will be a major highlight, promising plenty of laughs. According to her, the interval sequence is de-

signed as a surprise moment that will leave audiences delighted.

On choosing the film, Shivani said she prioritizes stories and roles that resonate with her, regardless of scale or star power. She noted that while her first film lacked comedy and her second leaned heavily into humor, Hey Balwanth strikes a balance she found appealing from the moment she heard the script.

Apart from acting, Shivani shared that she has a background in music and classical dance, revealing she is a singer-turned-actor and open to singing opportunities in future projects. Reflecting on her journey, she credited her family's support and said she aims to build a career by choosing quality scripts rather than focusing on quantity.

With colorful visuals, lively performances, and a blend of comedy and emotion, Hey Balwanth is positioned as a wholesome entertainer. As anticipation builds ahead of its release, Shivani expressed hope that the film will continue her successful run and resonate strongly with audiences in theatres.

Shivoham Wraps Shoot, Moves to Post-Production

The upcoming film Shivoham, spearheaded by filmmaker Vijay Yarramsetti, has officially completed its shooting schedule, marking a major milestone for the production team. Backed by the JC Film Factory, the project is now progressing into post-production, with the makers gearing up for promotional activities ahead of its theatrical release.

Adding to the film's buzz, the team recently unveiled a striking villain look poster to coincide with the festive spirit of Maha Shivaratri, giving audiences a glimpse into the film's intense tone. The movie is planned for a bilingual release in Telugu and Hindi, aiming to reach a wider audience base.

The film features veteran producer-actor Tummalapalli Rama Satyanarayana in a piv-

otal role, alongside a diverse ensemble cast that includes E. V. Prasad, Shirisha, Srilatha, Rani, G. V. V. Siddu, B. Shivashankar, Munesh, Swathi, Muralidhar, Pullayya, Manisha, and Viswanadh Reddy. With a mix of experienced performers and fresh faces, the team promises a narrative packed with drama and strong character arcs.

Apart from directing, Vijay Yarramsetti has taken on multiple responsibilities for Shivoham, handling the story, screenplay, and production, reflecting his personal creative vision for the film. The cinematography is helmed by Satish Pilli, whose visual treatment is expected to enhance the film's thematic depth and visual appeal.

Industry observers note that the completion

of shooting on schedule indicates a smooth production phase, which often translates into a more polished final product. With post-production work now underway, including editing, sound design, and music, the makers are focusing on fine-tuning the film's technical aspects.

While plot details remain under wraps, the title Shivoham and the recently released poster hint at a story with spiritual undertones blended with dramatic elements. The team is expected to announce the official release date and teaser in the coming weeks.

With momentum building and curiosity growing, Shivoham is positioning itself as a notable addition to the upcoming slate of Telugu cinema releases, as audiences await further updates from the makers.

