



Bulls Roar Back: Sensex Surges 939 Points, Nifty Reclaims 23,400 Mark



BUZZ POINTS

State Committed to Farmers' Welfare: Minister Kollu Ravindra



PAGE 02

Potti Sriramulu Embodied Sacrifice: Lokesh



PAGE 03

Chandrababu Naidu Attends Iftar Feast in Vijayawada



PAGE 04

Chandrababu Naidu Unveils 'Statue of Sacrifice' for Potti Sriramulu

Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday unveiled a massive 58-foot bronze statue of freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu in Amaravati, paying tribute to the legendary leader whose sacrifice led to the formation of Andhra State.

The monument, named the "Statue of Sacrifice," was inaugurated at Shakhamura Park near Tulluru in the capital region as part of the celebrations marking the 125th birth anniversary of Potti Sriramulu. The statue symbolically represents the 58-day fast-unto-death undertaken by Sriramulu demanding a separate state for Telugu-speaking people.

Addressing the gathering after unveiling the statue, Naidu said Potti Sriramulu's life and sacrifice remain a great source of inspiration for the Telugu people. He noted that the formation of Andhra State following Sriramulu's martyrdom was a historic milestone that later paved the way for the reorganisation of states in India on linguistic lines.

The Chief Minister said Sriramulu dedicated his life to social justice and equality and fought for the rights of the peo-



ple with unwavering commitment. He urged citizens to draw inspiration from the freedom fighter's ideals and work collectively for the development of Andhra Pradesh.

The statue has been installed as part of a larger memorial complex being developed in Amaravati. Constructed using several tonnes of bronze and iron, the towering structure stands on a large pedestal and is expected to become a major landmark in the capital region.

The memorial park is being developed across nearly 6.8 acres and will be completed in phases. In addition to the statue, the complex is planned to include facilities such as a museum, auditorium, library and skill development centre to showcase the life and contributions of Potti Sriramulu.

Several prominent leaders and dignitaries attended the unveiling ceremony. Among those present were Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, minister Nara Lokesh, members of the state cabinet, public representatives and community leaders.

Naidu said that the progress and development of Andhra Pradesh would be the true tribute to Potti Sriramulu's sacrifice. He also acknowledged the contributions and sacrifices made by farmers in the Amaravati region for the development of the capital city.

The unveiling of the statue marks an important moment in the state's history and is expected to serve as a symbol of inspiration for future generations, reminding them of the determination and sacrifice that led to the formation of Andhra State.

Sizzling Prices: LPG Shortage Hits City's Street Food Vendors

Amaravathi, 16 March 2026

The aromatic steam rising from roadside stalls—a staple of the city's urban landscape—now comes with a heavier price tag. A persistent shortage of commercial cooking gas (LPG) has sent the informal food sector into a tailspin, forcing street hawkers to break their long-standing promise of affordability.

Across the city, "pocket-friendly" menus are being rewritten. From savory snacks to hot beverages, prices have climbed by **15% to 25%** over the last fortnight, marking one of the sharpest hikes in recent memory for the street food industry.

The Supply Chain Squeeze

The crisis stems from a localized dip in commercial gas availability, reportedly triggered by logistical bottlenecks and a sudden surge in industrial demand. For the neighborhood vendor, this is more than a minor inconvenience; it is a threat to their livelihood.

Unlike established restaurants that can absorb cost fluctuations through diverse revenue streams, street vendors operate on paper-thin margins. With legal supply lines

running dry, many are forced to procure fuel at **inflated "black market" rates**, which can cost significantly more than the standard commercial rate. Consequently, the five-rupee tea or the twenty-rupee snack has become a relic of the past.

The Consumer Burden

The shift is hitting the city's most vulnerable consumers the hardest. Students, office commuters, and daily wage laborers rely on these stalls as their primary source of sustenance during work hours.

- Average price hike: ₹5 to ₹15 per item. Primary cause: Scarcity of 19kg commercial LPG cylinders. Secondary cause: Rising costs of edible oils and raw ingredients.

While the government maintains that the supply disruption is temporary, the psychological barrier of "low-cost dining" has been breached. If the gas shortage persists, the vibrant culture of affordable street eating may face a permanent transformation, leaving the common man with a much lighter wallet and a bitter aftertaste.

Lokesh Hosts Dinner for Potti Sriramulu Trust Members

Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh IT and HRD Minister Nara Lokesh hosted a special dinner for members of the Potti Sriramulu Memorial Trust at his residence in Undavalli, marking a gesture of respect and gratitude towards those associated with preserving the legacy of freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu.

The dinner meeting was organised following the unveiling of the "Statue of Sacrifice" dedicated to Potti Sriramulu in the capital region. Members of the trust, along with several dignitaries and invited guests, attended the gathering and interacted with the minister in a



cordial atmosphere.

During the event, Lokesh warmly welcomed the trust members and expressed appreciation for their efforts in promoting the ideals and contributions of Potti Sriramulu. He noted that the freedom fighter's sacrifice played a crucial role in the formation of Andhra State and continues to inspire generations of people.

The minister said the state government is committed to preserving the history and leg-

acy of great leaders who fought for the rights and identity of the Telugu people. He added that memorial initiatives and cultural programmes dedicated to such personalities would help educate younger generations about their contributions.

The dinner gathering provided an opportunity for the trust members and guests to exchange views and share memories related to Potti Sriramulu's life and struggle. Participants appreciated the government's initiative to honour the freedom fighter through the installation of the statue and the development of a memorial complex in Amaravati.

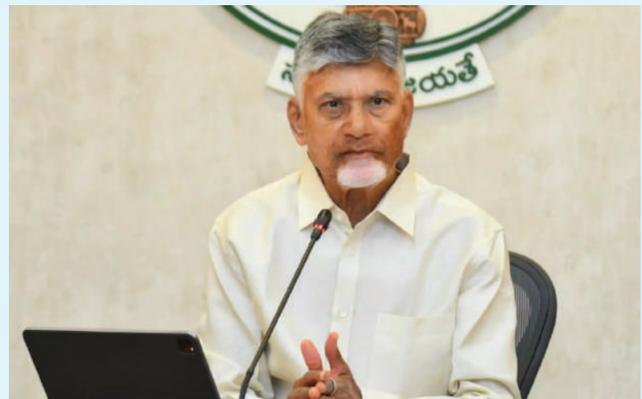
Lokesh also interacted personally with several attendees during the evening, enquiring

about their well-being and acknowledging their association with the trust's activities. The informal interaction created a warm and respectful environment that reflected the significance of the occasion.

Members of the trust expressed their gratitude to the state government and the minister for recognising the historical importance of Potti Sriramulu's sacrifice. They said such initiatives would help keep alive the values of dedication, sacrifice and public service that he represented.

The gathering concluded with discussions on future initiatives to promote awareness about Potti Sriramulu's life and contributions through educational and cultural programmes across the state.

Chandrababu Naidu Plans East Coast Cargo Corridor for AP



Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has unveiled an ambitious plan to transform the state into a major logistics and trade hub by developing an East Coast Cargo Corridor. The initiative aims to strengthen cargo movement, improve port connectivity, and boost industrial growth along the state's long coastline.

During a review meeting on ports, shipping, and infrastructure development, the Chief Minister directed officials to prepare a comprehensive strategy to integrate the state's ports with road and railway networks. He emphasized that Andhra Pradesh, with its strategic location on the east coast and a coastline stretching over 1,000 kilometers, has the potential to become a key gateway for domestic and international trade.

As part of the plan, the government is focusing on the rapid development of major ports, including Machilipatnam Port and Ramayapatnam Port. Officials informed the Chief Minister that construction work at these ports is progressing steadily and they are expected to be completed by 2026. Once operational, the ports are expected to significantly increase cargo handling capacity and support industrial expansion in the region.

Naidu said that strengthening port infrastructure would not only improve exports and imports but also attract investments from industries that rely heavily on efficient logistics. He noted that the development of Ramayapatnam Port could

gain further momentum if the proposed refinery project by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited is established in the region. The refinery is expected to generate substantial cargo movement and enhance the port's role as a major bulk and container handling hub.

To improve cargo transportation, the government is also working closely with railway authorities to enhance freight connectivity. Plans are underway to develop a dedicated rail link connecting Ramayapatnam Port with the proposed steel plant in Kadapa district. This railway connectivity is expected to facilitate faster movement of raw materials and finished goods, thereby supporting industrial operations.

The Chief Minister also proposed the creation of a large freight corridor along the eastern coast, stretching from Kharagpur in West Bengal to Chennai in Tamil Nadu via Vijayawada. This corridor would integrate several ports along the eastern coastline and streamline cargo transportation across multiple states.

Officials believe that the proposed East Coast Cargo Corridor will play a crucial role in strengthening the state's economy. It is expected to boost exports, improve supply chain efficiency, and create new employment opportunities in coastal districts.

The Andhra Pradesh government is also focusing on port-led industrial development, encouraging the establishment of logistics parks, warehouses, and processing units near major ports. With improved connectivity and infrastructure, the state aims to position itself as one of India's most important maritime and logistics hubs on the east coast.

Pawan Kalyan Recalls Gandhi's Praise for Potti Sriramulu

Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan recalled the remarks made by Mahatma Gandhi about freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu while addressing a gathering during the unveiling of the "Statue of Sacrifice" in Amaravati.

Speaking at the ceremony, Pawan Kalyan highlighted the determination and dedication of Potti Sriramulu in the freedom struggle and the movement for a separate state for Telugu-speaking people. He said Mahatma Gandhi had once remarked that if he had just eleven individuals like Potti Sriramulu, India could achieve independence within a year. The statement, he noted, reflected the extraordinary commitment and strength of character possessed by Sriramulu.

Pawan Kalyan said the towering statue installed in the capital region would stand as a lasting tribute to the great leader and his sacrifice. He noted that such monuments help preserve history and inspire future generations to learn about the struggles and sacrifices that shaped the nation.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the Telugu people must always remember the sacrifices made by leaders like Potti Sriramulu, whose relentless fight ultimately led to the formation of Andhra State. He said Sriramulu's life continues to serve as a powerful example of dedication, discipline



and service to society.

Pawan Kalyan also expressed gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for taking the initiative to install the statue in the heart of Amaravati. According to him, the monument would become an important landmark and a source of pride for the Telugu community.

He further thanked minister Nara Lokesh for playing a key role in organising the event and supporting the development of the memorial. The Deputy Chief Minister said commemorating great leaders in this manner helps keep their ideals alive in public memory.

Pawan Kalyan added that although he never had the opportunity to meet Potti Sriramulu personally, interacting with members of his family helped him better understand the sacrifices made by the freedom fighter.

He concluded by urging people, especially the younger generation, to draw inspiration from the life and ideals of Potti Sriramulu and work collectively for the progress and unity of society.

Pawan Kalyan on 'Jananayagan' Censor Issue

Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has reacted to the controversy surrounding the censor issues faced by the upcoming film Jananayagan, starring Vijay.

Speaking about the issue, Pawan Kalyan said it was not appropriate to blame governments or political parties for decisions taken by the film certification authorities. He clarified that the certification process is handled by the Central Board of Film Certification and operates according to established rules and guidelines.

The Deputy Chief Minister noted that the situation surrounding the film's certification appeared to have been mishandled at some level, but stressed that rules must be applied equally to everyone. According to him, regulations cannot be altered or tailored for particular individuals, filmmakers, or political circumstances.

Drawing from his own experience in the film industry, Pawan Kalyan said that even films associated with him have undergone strict scrutiny during the certification process. He pointed out that the upcoming film OG, in which he plays the lead role, received an "A" certificate despite his position in the government. This, he said,

demonstrates that the certification board follows its procedures regardless of a person's political status.

Pawan Kalyan also advised filmmakers to approach certification matters through the appropriate channels rather than escalating disputes unnecessarily. He suggested that legal battles over censor decisions could complicate the situation further and delay the release of films.

The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised that the film industry should respect the established certification framework while also engaging in constructive dialogue with authorities if concerns arise. Maintaining a balanced approach, he said, would help avoid controversies and ensure smoother film releases.

The censor issue surrounding Jananayagan has sparked discussions within the film fraternity and among fans. Pawan Kalyan's comments have attracted attention due to his unique position as both a senior political leader and a prominent actor in the Telugu film industry.

He concluded by reiterating that rules and regulations must remain consistent for everyone, adding that transparency and fairness in the certification process are essential for the healthy functioning of the film industry.

BC Janardhan Reddy Hails Potti Sriramulu on Jayanti

Banaganapalle, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Various business associations and prominent members of the Arya Vaishya community in Banaganapalle warmly felicitated Minister B.C. Janardhan Reddy during the Potti Sriramulu Jayanti celebrations and conveyed their congratulations. The event highlighted the legacy of the revered leader and the government's initiatives in his honor.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Janardhan Reddy described Potti Sriramulu as a great patriot who sacrificed his life for the formation of Andhra State. He recalled that Sriramulu undertook a 58-day fast unto death, ultimately giving up his life to achieve the demand for a separate state for the Telugu people. The minister said that his sacrifice liberated the region from the control of the then united Madras State and paved the way for the creation of Andhra State.

He noted that Potti Sriramulu followed the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and worked tirelessly to unite Telugu people through peaceful struggle. The minister expressed happiness that, under the coalition government, a 58-foot bronze statue titled "Statue of Sacrifice" is being installed in Amaravati to honor the martyr's contribution. He stated that the statue, constructed over six acres at a cost of ₹25 crore within seven months, reflects the government's respect for the Amarajevee.

According to him, the initiative aims to ensure that future generations understand the sac-



rifices made for statehood. He said the coalition government, under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, is committed to supporting all sections of society and giving due recognition to historical figures.

The minister emphasized that the installation of the Potti Sriramulu statue should be viewed not only as a tribute to the Arya Vaishya community but as an honor for all people of Andhra Pradesh. He urged citizens to participate in programs commemorating the leader's services and ideals. He appreciated the unity and cooperative spirit of the Arya

Vaishya community, stating that their non-partisan approach and social contributions are commendable.

Janardhan Reddy also recalled the services of former leader Pendedakanti Venkatasubbayya to Banaganapalle, noting that a stadium was named after him in recognition of his contributions. He alleged that the previous government neglected the Arya Vaishya community, while the coalition government is ensuring adequate representation and opportunities across sectors.

He highlighted that the Industries portfolio has been al-

located to TG Bharat from the Arya Vaishya community, and an Arya Vaishya Corporation has been established for the welfare of economically weaker sections. He further mentioned that during the earlier TDP government, key departments were entrusted to leaders from the same community.

The minister concluded by calling upon Arya Vaishya associations to work collectively for the welfare of the poor, inspired by the ideals of Potti Sriramulu, and reiterated that the coalition government remains committed to equal support for SC, ST, BC, Minority, and all communities.

BC Janardhan Reddy Receives Public Petitions

Banaganapalle, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

State Roads & Buildings, Investments and Infrastructure Minister B. C. Janardhan Reddy received several petitions from the public at his camp office in Banaganapalle on Sunday evening. People from different sections of the district visited the office to submit their grievances and requests related to various issues.

During the programme, the minister personally interacted with the petitioners and assured them that their problems would be addressed at the earliest. He directed concerned officials to take immediate steps to resolve the issues and ensure justice to the affected individuals.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that the government is committed to resolving public grievances in a transparent and timely manner. He stated that genuine problems



brought to the government's attention would be taken seriously and resolved in coordination with the respective departments.

In several cases, the minister directly contacted concerned officials over the phone and instructed them to initiate prompt action to address the com-

plaints. His immediate response to some of the petitions brought relief and appreciation from the people who had approached him seeking assistance.

The grievance redressal programme witnessed participation from a large number of residents from across the district. People from various com-

munities, along with coalition party leaders and workers, attended the session to present their issues and seek solutions.

Many petitioners expressed satisfaction over the minister's approach and his willingness to listen to their concerns personally. They said such initiatives help strengthen communication between the public and the administration and ensure that people's problems receive the attention they deserve.

Officials present during the programme noted down the grievances and assured follow-up action as directed by the minister. The event continued from evening till late night, reflecting the active engagement of the minister in addressing the concerns of the people.

The programme was organized under the supervision of the Ministry of Roads & Buildings, Investments and Infrastructure, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

State Committed to Farmers' Welfare: Minister Kollu Ravindra



Anakapalli, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

State Mines and Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra stated that the coalition government is giving top priority to the development of the agriculture sector and the welfare of farmers. He said that when farmers prosper, the entire state benefits. The minister participated in the 'Rythanna Meekosam' programme held at Venku Palem village in Anakapalli Rural Mandal.

The initiative was launched in Gannavaram to highlight the benefits extended to farmers and to create awareness about welfare schemes. Minister Ravindra informed that the government has implemented the Annadata Sukhibhava scheme for around 46.83 lakh farmers across the state. Under the scheme, ₹7,000 was credited in the first phase amounting to ₹3,174 crore, followed by 3,135 crore in the second phase. In the third phase, ₹6,000 per farmer was distributed, totaling approximately ₹2,600 crore. Altogether, nearly ₹9,000 crore has been deposited directly into farmers' bank accounts. In Anakapalli district alone, ₹132 crore has been disbursed. He added that the government has presented an unprecedented budget of ₹53,000 crore for farmer welfare.

The minister expressed concern over the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to increase crop yields. He warned that overuse of chemicals could have serious consequences for future generations. Citing the situation in Punjab, he said that many

farmers there are suffering from cancer due to chemical-intensive farming practices. He noted that a large number of cancer patients reportedly travel daily to Delhi for treatment, highlighting the severity of the issue. Therefore, the government is encouraging natural and organic farming to ensure sustainable agriculture and improved yields.

Ravindra observed that earlier, agriculture was mainly associated with the Godavari districts, but today regions like Anantapur have emerged as strong competitors in horticulture. He urged farmers to make effective use of government incentives for sprinkler and drip irrigation systems to enhance productivity and conserve water.

He also stated that efforts are underway to complete the Polavaram Project by 2027. Through the Left Canal, Anakapalli district will have the opportunity to receive abundant irrigation water, benefiting local farmers. The minister mentioned that during the recent visit of Bill Gates to Andhra Pradesh, he expressed willingness to extend technological support to the agriculture sector.

Calling upon farmers to move beyond merely selling raw produce, Ravindra encouraged them to establish processing units to add value to their crops. He said such initiatives would increase income and create employment opportunities in rural areas. The programme witnessed participation from local officials, farmers, and public representatives.

Potti Sriramulu's Sacrifice a Timeless Inspiration: Atchannaidu



Vijayawada, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Marking the 125th birth anniversary of Amarajevee Potti Sriramulu, State Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu paid rich tributes by offering floral respects to his portrait at the camp office in Vijayawada. The minister described Potti Sriramulu's sacrifice as a permanent source of inspiration for the Telugu people and a historic chapter in India's freedom and post-independence history.

Speaking on the occasion, Atchannaidu said that Potti Sriramulu symbolized the self-respect and aspirations of the Telugu community. His unwavering determination and historic fast-unto-death for the formation of a separate Andhra state remain unforgettable in the annals of history. The minister recalled that in 1952, Sriramulu undertook a 58-day hunger strike demanding the creation of Andhra State, ultimately sacrificing his life for the cause. His death sparked widespread public movement across the country and accelerated political developments that led to the formation of Andhra State in 1953.

The minister stated that Potti Sriramulu's sacrifice played a significant role in the reorganization of states on a linguistic basis in

India. He emphasized that the Telugu people owe a great deal of gratitude to the leader whose commitment paved the way for statehood. According to him, no one can replace the unique place Sriramulu holds in Telugu history.

Atchannaidu termed the unveiling of a 58-foot bronze statue of Potti Sriramulu in Amaravati by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu as a historic moment. He said the statue stands as a symbol of Telugu self-respect and will continue to inspire future generations. The monument reflects the state's recognition of Sriramulu's extraordinary contribution and sacrifice.

The minister urged the youth to draw inspiration from Potti Sriramulu's ideals and dedicate themselves to social service and public welfare. He said that remembering such leaders strengthens democratic values and reinforces unity among people. He called upon citizens to uphold the spirit of sacrifice, commitment, and selfless service demonstrated by the Amarajevee.

The event witnessed participation from officials and party leaders, who joined the minister in paying homage to the revered leader on his 125th birth anniversary.

Govt Reaches Farmers' Doorstep with 'Rythanna... Meekosam'

Amaravati/NTR District, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government has launched the "Rythanna... Meekosam" programme with the aim of reaching every farmer and guiding them towards profitable agriculture, said State Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu. The minister inaugurated the programme at Gollapudi in Mylavaram constituency of NTR district along with MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad.

As part of the initiative, the minister interacted with local farmers, distributed pamphlets, and explained the government's plans to strengthen the agriculture sector. He said the programme focuses on five key principles—water security, demand-based crops, agri-technology, food processing, and government support—to provide a new direction to farming in the state.

Atchannaidu said agriculture must become profitable to strengthen the rural economy. In a state where nearly 62 percent of the population depends on agriculture and allied sectors, the coalition government aims to ensure that farmers are treated as the backbone of the economy. The programme will be conducted across the state from March 16 to March 22 to provide guidance and support to farmers.



Officials and public representatives will directly meet farmers' families, educate them about profitable cultivation practices, and collect details about crops being grown in each area through Rythu Seva Kendras. Based on national and international market trends, farmers will also be advised on which crops to cultivate in their respective regions.

The minister said Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed that the Kharif season should begin from May 15 this year. With reservoirs currently holding nearly 80 percent water storage, the government is completing canal repairs to ensure sufficient irrigation supply. Starting cultivation earlier, he noted, will

help farmers protect crops from potential unseasonal rains.

Highlighting government support, the minister said the NDA government has already deposited ₹20,000 financial assistance to farmers in three instalments, with 99.75 percent of beneficiaries receiving funds within hours of the Chief Minister pressing the release button. He also said the government spent ₹588 crore to support nearly one lakh farmers cultivating crops such as tobacco, mango, cocoa, tomato, and onion when prices dropped in the market.

Atchannaidu urged farmers to focus on crop diversification and choose crops based on global demand. He cited the success of oil palm cultivation in the Eluru

region and increasing cultivation of cocoa and pepper in several areas. Farmers were also encouraged to adopt drip and sprinkler irrigation systems to reduce water consumption.

The minister added that the government is promoting horticulture hubs, strengthening food processing, and integrating technology into farming to improve productivity and income. He also advised farmers to plan cultivation carefully in view of changing weather conditions and possible lower rainfall this year.

The programme will conclude on March 25 with a review by the Chief Minister. Farmers, officials, and leaders from NDA coalition parties participated in the event.

Lakshmi Durga Appears Before SIT in Driver Murder Case

Kakinada, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Lakshmi Durga, wife of MLC Ananta Satya Udaya Bhaskar (Anantha Babu), appeared before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Monday for questioning in connection with the murder of former driver Veedhi Subrahmanyam.

She attended the inquiry at the office of the Sub-Divisional Police Officer in Kakinada following directions from the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Investigating officers reportedly questioned her regarding her alleged role in the case and the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Lakshmi Durga has been named as Accused No. 2 in the case in the supplementary charge sheet filed by the SIT. Earlier, a non-bailable warrant had been issued against her by a special SC/ST court in Rajamahendravaram. She subsequently approached the High Court seeking relief from the warrant.



The High Court granted conditional relief and directed her to cooperate with the investigation between March 16 and March 30. As part of the order, she has been instructed to appear before the SIT for questioning during the specified period and assist investigators in the probe.

The case relates to the 2022 death of Subrahmanyam, who had worked as a driver for Anantha Babu. According to investigators, the victim died under suspicious circumstances in Kakinada. Authorities alleged that the legislator was involved in the incident and later transported the body to

the victim's residence, initially claiming it was a road accident.

However, the victim's family suspected foul play and demanded a thorough investigation into the incident. The case later drew significant attention across the state, leading to further legal scrutiny and investigation.

During the ongoing probe, the SIT has been examining technical evidence, including CCTV footage and other forensic materials. Investigators are trying to establish the sequence of events on the night of the incident and determine the roles of all individuals connected to the case.

Officials said the questioning of Lakshmi Durga is part of the continuing investigation aimed at gathering more information and strengthening the evidence in the case. Further rounds of questioning and examination of evidence are expected as the SIT continues its probe.

Potti Sriramulu Embodied Sacrifice: Lokesh



Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Education Minister Nara Lokesh described Potti Sriramulu as the embodiment of sacrifice while addressing a gathering during the 125th birth anniversary celebrations of the revered freedom fighter in Amaravati.

Speaking at the event, Lokesh said Potti Sriramulu was a tireless warrior who dedicated his life to the cause of the Telugu people. He stated that Sriramulu's sacrifice continues to live on through the formation of the Andhra state and remains a guiding inspiration for future generations.

As part of the celebrations, a massive 58-foot bronze statue of Potti Sriramulu was installed in Amaravati. The statue was unveiled by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu in the presence of ministers, public representatives and several dignitaries.

Lokesh noted that Potti Sriramulu's unwavering commitment and historic fast unto death played a crucial role in achieving a separate state for Telugu-speaking

people. He said the freedom fighter's dedication, determination and sacrifice hold a special place in the history of the Telugu community.

The minister further said that remembering the life and ideals of Potti Sriramulu is important for strengthening unity and commitment toward public service. He called upon the younger generation to learn from the values of sacrifice, integrity and perseverance that Sriramulu stood for.

Several leaders, officials and members of the public attended the programme held in the capital city to pay tribute to the legendary figure. Floral tributes were offered to the statue, and speakers at the event recalled the contributions of Potti Sriramulu to the creation of Andhra state and the larger movement for linguistic identity.

The ceremony marked a significant moment in the 125th birth anniversary commemorations, celebrating the legacy of a leader whose sacrifice remains deeply etched in the history of Andhra Pradesh.

Payyavula Seeks Central Funds for AP

New Delhi, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav held a series of meetings with senior officials of the Union Finance Ministry during his visit to the national capital, seeking financial assistance and the release of pending funds for the state.

During the meetings, the minister submitted representations to various departments of the Ministry of Finance requesting additional support for Andhra Pradesh in view of its special financial circumstances. He urged the Centre to provide certain relaxations and expedite the release of funds pending under various schemes.

Payyavula Keshav also explained how central funds are being utilised in the state and highlighted the need for further financial assistance for development works. Discussions were also held on providing financial support for several infrastructure and development projects



in the Rayalaseema region.

In another meeting, the minister discussed issues related to the Rural Development Trust (RDT) with Union Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu. The discussion focused on resolving difficulties faced by the organisation after the cancellation of

permission to receive foreign funds under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act.

State leaders explained that the cancellation of approval under FCRA had created obstacles for the functioning of the Rural Development Trust and requested the Union minister to inter-

vene and help resolve the issue by coordinating with the concerned departments.

Members of Parliament Ambica Lakshminarayana and Sana Satish also accompanied the state minister during the meeting and supported the request for addressing the matter at the earliest.

Responding to the appeal, Ram Mohan Naidu assured that he would immediately hold discussions with the relevant departments to explore possible solutions and help remove the hurdles affecting the organisation.

The visit is part of the Andhra Pradesh government's efforts to secure additional financial support from the Centre and accelerate development initiatives across the state. Officials said such meetings are crucial for strengthening coordination between the state and central governments on key financial and development matters.

Avinash Reddy Alleges 'Heart Attack Story' Fabricated in Viveka Case



Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Kadapa Member of Parliament Y. S. Avinash Reddy has made fresh allegations in connection with the murder case of former minister Y. S. Vivekananda Reddy, claiming that the initial narrative suggesting a heart attack was fabricated.

Speaking to the media, Avinash Reddy alleged that Y. S. Sunitha Reddy and some of her family members had first suggested that Vivekananda Reddy might have died due to a heart attack soon after the incident. According to him, the claim was later changed as the case took a different direction.

The MP said that statements given earlier indicated that Sunitha Reddy herself had raised doubts about a possible heart attack, noting that Vivekananda Reddy had previously undergone a stent procedure. He questioned why certain details and statements from the early stages of the investigation were not being discussed now.

Avinash Reddy also asked why a thorough investigation was not being demanded into other possible motives behind the murder. He suggested that aspects such as family disputes and property-related

issues should also be examined as part of the investigation.

He further alleged that the case was being projected in a particular manner through press conferences and public statements. According to him, some people were attempting to divert attention from other issues by repeatedly highlighting selective aspects of the case.

The murder of Vivekananda Reddy in March 2019 at his residence in Pulivendula initially led to confusion after reports suggested that he had died due to a heart attack. Later investigations, however, indicated that it was a murder, leading to a long-drawn legal and political battle.

The case has remained one of the most high-profile and sensitive investigations in Andhra Pradesh politics, drawing significant attention from political leaders and the public alike.

Avinash Reddy reiterated that all possible angles should be examined to ensure that the truth behind the murder is fully revealed. He said a comprehensive and unbiased investigation is necessary to bring clarity to the case and deliver justice.

Putta Mahesh Denies Wrongdoing in Farmhouse Case



Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Member of Parliament Putta Mahesh has once again clarified his stand regarding the alleged drugs case linked to the Moinabad farmhouse incident, stating that he has committed no wrongdoing and is confident of proving his innocence.

Speaking to the media, the MP expressed concern over his name being mentioned in connection with the case and said he felt it was his responsibility to respond to the allegations and present the facts.

Mahesh admitted that he had attended a dinner at the farmhouse in Moinabad but strongly denied any involvement in illegal activities. He said that while his presence at the dinner was true, he had not done anything wrong and was confident that the investigation would prove his innocence.

"I attended the dinner at the Moinabad farmhouse, but I have not committed any mistake. I am confident that I will come out of the case as an innocent person," he said.

The MP stated that he would fully cooperate with the police investigation and provide all necessary information to the authorities. He emphasised that he respects the law and is ready to assist investigators in every possible way so that the truth can come out.

Putta Mahesh also said that he would follow the directions of the party leadership and provide a detailed explanation to the party high command regarding the issue. He reiterated that he has nothing to hide and is prepared to face the investigation process.

The farmhouse incident has drawn attention after reports linked several individuals to an alleged drugs case. However, Mahesh insisted that he had no involvement in any unlawful activities and expressed confidence that the investigation would eventually reveal the truth.

Reaffirming his stance, the MP said he trusts the legal process and believes that justice will prevail once the inquiry is completed.

Nimmala Slams YSRCP Over Remarks on Potti Sriramulu Statue



Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

Andhra Pradesh Water Resources Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu strongly criticised leaders of the YSR Congress Party for their remarks on the statue of Potti Sriramulu installed in Amaravati, calling the comments irresponsible and disrespectful.

Reacting to the criticism, the minister said the statue was erected to honour the immense sacrifice made by Potti Sriramulu and to inspire future generations. He stated that the 58-foot bronze statue stands as a symbol of dedication and remembrance of the freedom fighter who gave his life for the formation of a separate Andhra state.

Nimmala Rama Naidu said the memorial was not built for political purposes but to remind people of Sriramulu's commitment and struggle for the Telugu people. He said leaders who criticise such initiatives fail to recognise the historical importance of Sriramulu's sacrifice and the movement that led to the creation of Andhra state.

The minister alleged that certain political leaders were making unnecessary remarks out of

political frustration and attempting to create controversy around an issue that should unite people. According to him, the life and sacrifice of Potti Sriramulu should be respected by all sections of society, irrespective of political differences.

He further said that honouring great leaders is the responsibility of every government and society. The Amaravati statue, he noted, would stand as a permanent tribute to the freedom fighter and a reminder of the historic struggle undertaken for the rights and identity of Telugu-speaking people.

Nimmala Rama Naidu also urged political parties to avoid dragging such commemorative initiatives into political debates. He stressed that the legacy of leaders who fought for the welfare of the people should be preserved with dignity and respect.

The minister reiterated that the state government remains committed to honouring the contributions of great personalities in the history of Andhra Pradesh and ensuring that their ideals continue to guide future generations.

No Need to Panic Over LPG Supply: Chandrababu

Vijayawada, March 16 | TPN Bureau: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu assured the public that there is no need to panic about LPG availability in the state and said the government is closely monitoring the situation to ensure uninterrupted supply.

During a review meeting with officials, the Chief Minister directed authorities to keep a close watch on LPG stocks, bookings and distribution across the state. He emphasised that strict monitoring should be maintained to prevent hoarding, black marketing or diversion of cooking gas cylinders.

Naidu instructed officials to ensure that essential services such as hospitals, schools, temples and public food centres do not face any disruption in LPG supply. He also asked the concerned departments to take precautionary measures so that households across Andhra Pradesh continue to



receive cylinders without inconvenience.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that the state currently has sufficient LPG stocks and that distribution is being carried out through a large network of gas agencies. However,

they noted that delivery times in some places may take slightly longer due to transportation and logistical factors.

The Chief Minister directed ministers and officials to maintain close coordination with the Union government and oil

marketing companies to ensure that the supply chain remains stable. He stressed the importance of proactive planning so that any potential disruption can be addressed quickly.

Naidu also called upon people not to believe rumours regarding LPG shortages. He said unnecessary panic or bulk booking of cylinders could create artificial supply pressure and inconvenience for other consumers.

He reiterated that the state government is reviewing the situation regularly and is prepared to take immediate steps if required. Ensuring uninterrupted LPG supply for households and essential institutions remains a priority for the government, he added.

Officials said continuous monitoring and coordination with supply agencies will help maintain smooth distribution of LPG cylinders across the state in the coming days.

'Amarajeevi Jaladhara' Water Project Named in Honour of Sriramulu: Pawan

Amaravati, March 16 | TPN Bureau: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan announced that a major drinking water grid project in the state has been named "Amarajeevi Jaladhara" in honour of legendary freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu.

The announcement was made during a programme held in Amaravati to commemorate the legacy and sacrifice of Potti Sriramulu. Addressing the gathering, Pawan Kalyan said the project was named as a mark of respect to the freedom fighter whose historic sacrifice played a key role in the formation of Andhra state.

He said associating the project with Sriramulu's name would ensure that future generations remember his dedication and commitment to the cause of Telugu-speaking people. The Deputy Chief Minister noted that Sriramulu's 56-day fast unto death remains one of the most significant chapters in the history of Andhra Pradesh.



Pawan Kalyan explained that the Amarajeevi Jaladhara project is part of the state government's efforts to strengthen rural drinking water infrastructure and ensure safe drinking water for households across several districts. The initiative is being implemented in line with the objectives of the

national drinking water mission aimed at improving water access in rural areas.

Under the programme, the government plans to supply about 55 litres of safe drinking water per person per day to households in rural areas. The project is expected to benefit a large number of villages by im-

proving water supply systems and ensuring reliable access to clean drinking water.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the state government has already taken up several major water grid projects across different districts as part of the initiative. Additional projects are also planned in the coming phases to further expand the drinking water network and cover more regions of the state.

He emphasised that development projects should also reflect respect for the sacrifices of great leaders who shaped the state's history. Naming the water project after Potti Sriramulu, he said, is a tribute to the freedom fighter's dedication and a reminder of the values he stood for.

Pawan Kalyan added that the government remains committed to improving basic infrastructure in rural areas while honouring the legacy of leaders who fought for the welfare and identity of the Telugu people.

Chandrababu Naidu Attends Iftar Feast in Vijayawada



Vijayawada, March 16 | TPN Bureau: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu participated in a state-level Iftar feast organised in Vijayawada on Monday as part of the holy month of Ramadan.

The event was held at the A Plus Convention Centre, where Muslim religious leaders, community representatives, public officials and political leaders gathered to take part in the celebrations. The Chief Minister extended his greetings to the Muslim community and joined the gathering during the Iftar programme.

Addressing the gathering, Naidu said the holy month of Ramadan represents values such as discipline, compassion and charity. He appreciated the devotion shown by Muslims who observe fasting during the sacred period and emphasised the importance of helping the poor and those in need.

The Chief Minister said such events play an important role in strengthening communal harmony and bringing people from different communities together. He noted that Andhra Pradesh has always upheld traditions of unity and mutual respect among people of all religions.

Naidu also interacted with religious leaders and members of the Muslim community during the programme. He assured them that the state government remains committed to the welfare, development and security of minority communities across the state.

The Iftar gathering was organised as part of the government's outreach initiatives during Ramadan. Similar programmes are being conducted in several districts to promote communal harmony and extend support to the Muslim community.

Several ministers, legislators, public representatives and senior officials attended the event along with members of minority organisations. Community leaders welcomed the initiative and appreciated the government's efforts to celebrate the festival with people from different backgrounds.

Naidu said festivals such as Ramadan remind society of the importance of compassion, patience and unity. He expressed hope that the holy month would inspire people to strengthen bonds of brotherhood and work together for peace, harmony and progress in the state.

TTD Chairman B. R. Naidu Launches Free Annadanam Facility in Ontimitta



Kadapa, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has inaugurated a free annadanam centre at the Kodandarama Swamy Temple, Ontimitta in YSR Kadapa district to provide meals for devotees visiting the temple.

The annadanam centre was formally inaugurated by TTD Chairman B. R. Naidu. On the occasion, the temple chairman, district Collector and Superintendent of Police participated in the programme and personally served food to devotees as part of the launch event.

Officials said the initiative was taken following directions from Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. During his visit to the temple last year for the Sri Rama Kalyanam celebrations, the Chief Minister had instructed TTD authorities to establish a permanent annadanam centre at Ontimitta similar to the facility being run at Tirumala.

Acting on these instructions, TTD made arrangements to set up the free meal centre so that devotees visiting the temple can receive food

throughout the year. Authorities said the facility would benefit thousands of pilgrims who visit the historic temple regularly.

The annadanam centre has been inaugurated at a time when preparations are underway for the upcoming annual Brahmotsavams at the temple, which are expected to begin within a week. Temple authorities stated that special arrangements are being made to manage the anticipated increase in the number of devotees during the festival period.

Meanwhile, the temple chairman announced that elaborate arrangements are also being made for the grand celebration of the Sita Rama Kalyanam at the temple scheduled for April 1. The event is one of the most important religious ceremonies conducted at the temple and attracts devotees from across the state.

Officials said the newly opened annadanam centre will ensure that devotees visiting the temple during major festivals and throughout the year receive free meals, further enhancing the facilities available for pilgrims at the sacred site.

APCRDA Signs Agreement for Three-Star Hotel in Amaravati



Amaravati, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) has executed an Agreement for Sale of Land with Kandhari Hotels Private Limited for the establishment of a three-star category hotel in the capital city, Amaravati.

The agreement was formally signed on March 16, 2026, at the APCRDA office. As part of the project, the company plans to invest approximately ₹80 crore to develop the proposed hotel. Officials said the upcoming facility will strengthen hospitality infrastructure in Amaravati and cater to the needs of visitors, business travellers, and institutions setting up operations in the capital region.

For the project, APCRDA has allotted land measuring one acre (Ac. 1.0 Cts.) in Survey No. 185 of Thuluru village within the capital city area. The land allocation is intended to promote private investment and support the overall development of the region.

The agreement was signed by Sri Jubin Cheeran Roy, Joint Director (Estates), APCRDA, on behalf of the Authority. Kandhari Hotels Private Limited was represented by its CEO (Administration), Sri Punu-

kollu Nandadeep, who signed the agreement on behalf of the company.

APCRDA officials stated that such investments are expected to contribute significantly to the development of Amaravati as a vibrant administrative and economic hub. They noted that the establishment of quality hospitality facilities will not only support government offices and business activities but also enhance tourism prospects in the capital region.

The Authority emphasized that infrastructure growth, including hotels and related services, will create employment opportunities for local youth and boost the service sector. Officials expressed confidence that the project will encourage further private participation in Amaravati's development and help build a strong ecosystem for commerce, administration, and public services.

The agreement marks another step in strengthening Amaravati's infrastructure framework, aligning with the broader vision of developing the capital city into a well-planned urban center with modern amenities and investment opportunities.

SIT Questions Avinash Reddy in AP Liquor Case



Vijayawada, March 16 | TPN Bureau:

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Monday conducted a lengthy interrogation of Muppidi Avinash Reddy in connection with the alleged liquor scam that took place during the previous YSR Congress Party government in Andhra Pradesh.

Avinash Reddy, listed as Accused No. 7 in the case, was questioned by SIT officials for nearly seven hours on the first day of custodial interrogation. Investigators reportedly sought information regarding his alleged role in the liquor policy decisions and related financial transactions linked to the case.

After the questioning session, Avinash Reddy was taken for medical examination as per legal procedures and later shifted to Guntur Jail. Officials confirmed that further rounds of questioning would continue over the next two days as part of the ongoing investigation.

The SIT had earlier approached the ACB Court seeking custody of the accused for five days, stating that crucial information needed to be extracted from him regarding the alleged irregularities in the liq-

uor distribution system. After hearing arguments from both sides, the court permitted the SIT to take Avinash Reddy into custody for interrogation on March 16, 17 and 18.

Based on this order, investigators began questioning him on Monday and reportedly gathered several details related to the case. Officials are expected to focus on various aspects of the alleged scam, including the policy framework, implementation process and the involvement of other individuals connected to the liquor business during the previous administration.

Sources indicated that the SIT is trying to trace the flow of funds and identify the network involved in the alleged irregularities. Investigators believe the questioning of Avinash Reddy could provide important leads in the case.

The alleged Andhra Pradesh liquor scam has been under investigation for several months and has attracted significant political attention. With the interrogation of key accused persons now underway, authorities are expected to intensify the probe to uncover the full extent of the alleged irregularities.

Krishna University Students Sweep Prizes at UNI-FEST 2026



Classical Group song of our students going on now



Machilipatnam, 16th March 2026 | TPN Bureau
Krishna University, Machilipatnam, is celebrating a stellar performance as its students clinched seven prizes across all seven events they entered at the All India National Inter University Cultural Fest—UNI-FEST 2026—in Chennai. Results announced yesterday have sparked jubilation, marking a triumphant showcase of talent from Andhra Pradesh on the national stage.

Clean Sweep in Classical Arts
The university dominated classical categories, securing first place in both Classical Vocal Solo and Classical Non-Perfusion. These victories highlight the rigorous training and cultural preservation efforts at Krishna University, where students blend tradition with precision under expert guidance. Folk Dance also fetched a gold medal, captivating judges with vibrant choreography rooted in regional heritage. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Koonna Ramji hailed the

wins as “a proud moment for Krishna district and Andhra Pradesh.”
Strong Show in Group and Vocal Events
Team efforts shone through with second prizes in Group Song (Indian) and Music, demonstrating seamless coordination and melodic prowess. Light Vocal Solo earned third place, while the Cultural Procession rounded off the haul with bronze, featuring elaborate floats and performances

that embodied India’s diversity.
Prof. Ramji extended heartfelt thanks to the faculty, students, and sponsors, emphasizing the role of such fests in fostering national unity through arts. This haul underscores Krishna University’s rising stature in inter-university competitions, inspiring peers amid growing emphasis on cultural education. As UNI-FEST 2026 wraps up, all eyes turn to these young artistes’ future endeavors.

CPM Public Awareness Padayatra Raises Local Issues in Veeravasaram

Veeravasaram, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau
The CPI(M) public awareness padayatra reached Veeravasaram on Sunday, where the party organized a press meet at Tulasi Kalyana Mandapam. Addressing the media, CPI(M) West Godavari District Secretary J.N.V. Gopalan said the ongoing padayatra aims to understand public problems directly and mobilize people for solutions through collective struggle.

He stated that the party has planned a 650-kilometre padayatra covering 20 mandals and six towns in the district. So far, in 19 days, the team has completed 464 kilometres across 16 mandals and five municipalities. Gopalan said the response from the public has been encouraging, with thousands of grievances submitted during the journey.

According to him, the padayatra has received 3,775 petitions highlighting various issues. He alleged that once political parties come to power, they ignore public needs, and even those who lose elections fail to engage with people. He said CPI(M)’s objective is to identify community concerns and organize struggles to resolve them.



A major concern raised during the padayatra is the delay in new pension applications for senior citizens, widows, and persons with disabilities. Gopalan claimed that neither the previous government in its final two years nor the current coalition government has allowed fresh applications for pensions. He said hundreds of thousands of eligible people are waiting and urged the government to immediately initiate the process. He added that while the government claims to distribute pensions on the first of every month, adjustments are made only when it falls on holidays,

which he termed insufficient. Water scarcity emerged as another significant issue. Women in several villages and municipalities expressed their grievances during the padayatra. Gopalan said that despite adequate water resources in the district, residents are facing severe drinking water problems. He alleged that supplied water is often untreated, without proper filtration or chlorination, making it unsafe for consumption. Many families are reportedly spending between ₹600 and ₹1,000 per month to purchase drinking water from private plants, adding financial pres-

sure on daily wage earners. Housing and house site allocations were also highlighted. Residents reportedly submitted applications stating that they do not own homes or house sites, contradicting government claims of complete housing coverage. Gopalan said multiple families are living under one roof due to lack of housing. He demanded immediate allocation of house sites and housing for all eligible beneficiaries without delay. He also called for granting land titles to those who constructed homes on government land instead of demolishing them. Other issues raised include mosquito menace due to poor sanitation and drainage systems, agricultural support schemes, and delays in fee reimbursement for students. He urged the government to release pending dues to colleges to prevent institutions from withholding certificates from students. The padayatra will continue for another week, with participation from district leaders, activists, women leaders, artists, and party members. Gopalan said public response to the initiative has been overwhelmingly positive.

MLA Balaramakrishna Meets Collector on Rajanagaram Development

East Godavari, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau
Rajanagaram MLA Battula Balaramakrishna met East Godavari District Collector Keerthi Chekuri on Monday at the Collector’s office in Bommuru and submitted representations seeking solutions to several development and public issues in the constituency.

The MLA raised concerns related to road infrastructure, drinking water supply, irrigation facilities, land acquisition, and temple development. He urged the district administration to expedite the proposals already brought to the government’s attention and ensure that essential infrastructure is provided to the people at the earliest.

Explaining the issues faced by residents of various villages, Balaramakrishna said land acquisition is required to create an outlet for a drainage canal in Kothathungapadu village. Due to the lack of proper drainage, wastewater has been stagnating in the area, causing health concerns for villagers.

In Madhurapudi village, he requested immediate acquisition of 72 cents of land from farmers to facilitate the construction of rural roads sanctioned under the SASCI scheme.



The MLA also highlighted issues faced by farmers in Korukonda due to lands registered under Section 22A(1)C of the Endowments Department. Because of the classification of these lands as inam properties, farmers are facing difficulties in land transactions and obtaining bank loans. He also brought up the long-pending compensation issue for farmers who had given their land for the Purushothapatnam Lift Irrigation Scheme. The MLA said the affected farmers have not received compensation for the past eight years and requested that the determined compensation be released immediately along with six percent interest. Balaramakrishna further proposed that the historic Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Korukonda be adopted

and developed by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. Considering the upcoming Godavari Pushkarams, he stressed the need to improve facilities for pilgrims visiting the temple. The MLA also pointed out that three road works funded by the New Development Bank have been stalled and requested the release of pending bills to resume the projects. He proposed expanding the road from Srirampuram to Police Quarters into a double lane with an estimated cost of ₹6.50 crore and widening the Korukonda temple road at a cost of ₹3.60 crore. He sought ₹27.50 lakh for repairs to the building of the Seethanagar Primary Health Centre. To address potential summer drinking water shortages, he recommended six urgent water supply works in Korukonda, Velugubanda,

Chakradwarabandham, Farijellipeta, and Kunavaram areas. The MLA also asked for special repairs worth ₹10 crore for the Sri Sathya Sai drinking water scheme due to maintenance issues. Additionally, he proposed permanent protection works for the Burada canal near Srirangapatnam to reduce flood damage. Other proposals included construction of a bridge over the Polavaram Left Main Canal at Gadarada village, sanction of a lift irrigation scheme in Kanupuru village, and implementation of 24 civic infrastructure works worth ₹1.27 crore in Divan Cheruvu Gram Panchayat. Balaramakrishna also raised safety concerns at the Narendra Puram-Rajanagaram junction, which he described as a dangerous accident-prone “black spot.” Over the past four years, 23 accidents have reportedly occurred there, resulting in 13 deaths. He requested construction of a flyover and deployment of a 24-hour traffic constable to prevent further accidents. Responding to the representations, Collector Keerthi Chekuri assured that the issues would be examined and necessary steps would be taken to resolve them at the earliest.

Fake Goods Trade Grows Rampant in Parvathipuram Manyam



Parvathipuram, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The sale of counterfeit goods is reportedly increasing in Parvathipuram Manyam district, raising concerns among consumers and local traders. According to reports, fake products resembling popular branded items are being widely circulated through small retailers, weekly markets, and rural outlets, affecting unsuspecting buyers, especially tribal communities and daily wage workers. Sources indicate that counterfeit items are being manufactured with brand names that closely resemble well-known companies, with only minor spelling changes, making it difficult for consumers to distinguish between original and duplicate products. From essential food items to electronic goods, the fake product network appears to have expanded across multiple sectors. Commonly used items such as tea powder, coffee, detergent soap, detergent powder, bathing soaps, seeds, medicines, and other daily necessities are reportedly being sold as branded products.

Several counterfeit goods mimic established brands, including products similar in appearance to popular items in the market. Traders are allegedly targeting small vendors by promising higher profit margins, encouraging them to stock and sell these goods. Weekly markets have also become key distribution points, where products are being sold to rural consumers at lower prices compared to genuine brands.

The issue is said to be more prevalent in Parvathipuram, Palakonda, Salur, and surrounding hill villages. Locals allege that

limited inspection and enforcement by authorities have contributed to the continued circulation of counterfeit items. Concerns have also been raised regarding the sale of food-related counterfeit products, which could pose health risks to the public.

In addition to fake goods, the illegal sale of products from neighboring Odisha is reportedly increasing in the district due to price differences between the two states. Since Odisha shares a border with Parvathipuram Manyam district, traders are allegedly bringing in goods such as wheat flour, detergent powder, soaps, and other essentials from Odisha and selling them locally. Officials note that price variations between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha create opportunities for such cross-border trade.

For example, certain branded wheat flour and detergent products are available at lower prices in Odisha compared to Andhra Pradesh, leading to unauthorized imports and sales. Authorities say such activities not only impact state revenue but also disrupt the local market.

Residents and local business groups are urging vigilance and stronger enforcement measures to curb the circulation of counterfeit goods. They have called upon district officials and inspection authorities to conduct regular raids and strengthen monitoring systems to protect consumers and ensure fair trade practices.

The situation highlights the need for increased awareness among consumers to verify product authenticity before purchase and to report suspected counterfeit goods to relevant authorities.

Life Imprisonment for Four in Kasturi Rape and Murder Case



East Godavari, March 16, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a major verdict in a sensational rape and murder case that shocked East Godavari district, a court has sentenced four accused to life imprisonment for the brutal assault and killing of a woman in Kadiyam mandal. The judgment was delivered on Monday by the VIII Additional District Judge Court after the prosecution successfully proved the charges.

Addressing a press conference, East Godavari Superintendent of Police D. Narasimha Kishore said the verdict reflects the strength of the police investigation and the commitment of law enforcement to ensure justice for victims of heinous crimes.

The case relates to the murder of Routu Kasturi, a married woman from Burrilanka village in Kadiyam mandal. According to police, the incident occurred on October 15, 2024, when Kasturi went to work at a nursery but did not return home. During the investigation, it was found that four accused—Devara Yesu, Velubudi Praveen, Lokina Jayaprasad, and Dasari Suresh—who were allegedly under the influence of alcohol, attacked her while she was walking alone.

Police said the accused dragged her into the nursery area and sexually assaulted her. Fearing that the crime would be exposed, they later murdered her and dumped the body in a nearby canal. The crime created widespread outrage in the region.

SP Narasimha Kishore said the police launched a swift investigation immediately after the case was reported. A special team led by DSP Bhavya Kishore collected scientific and forensic evidence to establish the case. Within days of the incident, the accused were arrested on October 30, 2024, and sent to judicial remand.

The police completed the investigation and filed a detailed charge sheet, presenting strong evidence and witness testimonies before the court. After examining the evidence and hearing arguments from both sides, the court found the accused guilty under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including sections related to gang rape and murder.

The court sentenced all four accused to life imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹6,000 each.

SP Narasimha Kishore praised the efforts of the investigation team and prosecutors who worked on the case. He announced rewards for key officials, including DSP Bhavya Kishore, APP Radhakrishna Raju, Kadiyam CI Venkateswara Rao, SI Naga Durga Prasad, court constable Srinivas, and other staff members for their role in securing the conviction.

Residents and civil society members welcomed the verdict, saying it serves as a strong message that those who commit such crimes will face the full force of the law. Many expressed hope that strict punishments like this would act as a deterrent against future crimes.

Kerala Congress' Silent Power Struggle: Tharoor, Chennithala And Others Eye The Top Job



As Kerala moves closer to the 2026 Assembly elections, the Congress party in the state is witnessing a quiet but intense internal contest. The battle is not against political opponents but within the party itself, as several senior leaders position themselves as potential chief ministerial candidates if the United Democratic Front (UDF) returns to power.

At the centre of this silent struggle are four prominent figures: V. D. Satheesan, Ramesh Chennithala, K. C. Venugopal, and Shashi Tharoor. While they publicly present a united front, each leader is carefully building influence, strengthening support networks, and expanding public appeal ahead of the crucial election.

V. D. Satheesan, the current Leader of the Opposition, holds a natural advantage due to his position. He has emerged as a strong voice against the ruling Left government and has actively taken up issues ranging from governance failures to corruption allegations. His elevation to the top opposition role signaled a shift toward younger leadership in the state unit. However, Satheesan faces challenges as he does not command a strong factional base within the party. His relations with some influential community organizations have also been strained, limiting his broader political reach. To counter this, he has focused on outreach to minority groups, civil society,

and coalition partners, projecting himself as a consensus builder.

Ramesh Chennithala represents experience and organizational depth. A veteran leader with decades of service, he has held key positions both in government and within the party structure. His supporters argue that his earlier tenure as Opposition Leader was constrained by internal dynamics that prevented him from fully capitalizing on public dissatisfaction with the ruling government. Despite past setbacks, he maintains strong connections with party workers and senior leaders across districts. This organizational strength could play a decisive role in any internal leadership contest.

K. C. Venugopal occupies a different space altogether. As a senior national leader closely associated with the party's central leadership, he enjoys significant influence beyond Kerala. His proximity to the high command could become an advantage if the leadership question is decided at the national level, as is often the case in Congress. However, his challenge lies in translating this central influence into grassroots support within the state. While respected within party circles, he lacks the broad mass appeal of some of his rivals.

Shashi Tharoor stands out as the most publicly recognizable face among the contenders. A four-time Member of Parliament from Thiruvanan-

thapuram, he enjoys popularity among urban voters, young professionals, and sections of the middle class. His articulate communication style and international profile have made him one of the party's most visible leaders. However, his independent views and occasional divergence from official party positions have sometimes caused discomfort within the organization. This has led to a complex relationship with the state leadership, even as his popularity among voters remains strong.

The Congress in Kerala has traditionally followed a model of collective leadership, avoiding the projection of a single chief ministerial candidate before elections. Instead, the leadership decision is typically made after the results, based on legislative strength, factional balance, and coalition considerations. While this approach helps maintain unity during campaigns, it also encourages behind-the-scenes maneuvering as leaders attempt to strengthen their claims in advance.

The stakes in the upcoming election are particularly high. Kerala politics has historically seen power alternate between the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front every five years. This pattern was broken when the Left retained power for a second consecutive term in 2021, making the next election a critical opportunity for Congress to stage a comeback. Publicly, party leaders continue to

emphasize unity and teamwork. Yet their individual outreach programs, distinct political strategies, and factional loyalties suggest an undercurrent of competition. Satheesan is consolidating minority support and coalition leadership. Chennithala is strengthening organizational networks. Venugopal is leveraging national influence. Tharoor is expanding his appeal beyond traditional party structures.

None of the leaders appears willing to step aside, but none can decisively dominate the field either. This delicate balance has created a situation where competition remains intense but largely unspoken.

If the UDF succeeds in winning the election, the real battle may unfold afterward. The choice of chief minister will depend on multiple factors, including the number of legislators backing each leader, the preferences of coalition partners, and the decision of the central leadership.

In essence, the Congress in Kerala is navigating a complex phase marked by both opportunity and uncertainty. The presence of several capable leaders reflects the party's depth, but the absence of a clear frontrunner also highlights internal divisions. Whether this diversity becomes a strength or a weakness will play a crucial role in shaping the party's future in one of India's most politically aware states.

India-Japan Ties At A Turning Point: How A Takaichi Mandate Could Redefine The Partnership



Japan's political transition under the leadership of Sanae Takaichi comes at a moment of profound global uncertainty — and it could significantly reshape relations with India. With a strong mandate in Tokyo, the two countries have an opportunity not merely to continue their partnership but to transform it into a more strategic, future-oriented alliance suited to an increasingly volatile world.

India and Japan have long shared a special strategic relationship, strengthened during the tenure of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Their personal rapport helped promote the vision of a "free and open Indo-Pacific," emphasizing democratic values, open trade routes, and regional stability. Abe's assassination slowed that momentum, but continuity in Japanese leadership aligned with his worldview could revive and modernize the partnership.

Today's geopolitical environment makes such cooperation more urgent than ever. Conflicts in the Middle East, tensions in key maritime chokepoints, and disruptions to global trade have exposed the fragility of energy supplies and supply chains. Both India and Japan depend heavily on imported energy, making them vulnerable to shocks in oil markets and shipping routes. Coordinated policies — such as diversifying energy sources, building strategic reserves, and strengthening maritime security — could protect both economies while enhancing their global influence.

The partnership also benefits from deep historical and cultural connections. Civilizational links, particularly the spread of Buddhism from India to Japan, have created a reservoir of goodwill that few bilateral relationships possess. In an era when international relations are often transactional, this foundation of trust offers a significant strategic advantage.

Economically, the two countries are highly complementary. Japan brings advanced technology, capital, and expertise in manufacturing, while India offers a vast market, a growing innovation ecosystem, and a youthful workforce. Past collaborations demonstrate the power of this synergy — from automotive partnerships to major infrastructure projects such as metro rail systems and industrial corridors.

Looking ahead, cooperation in critical technologies will be central. Sectors such as semiconductors, batteries, clean energy, and critical minerals are now essential not only for economic growth but also for national security. By coordinating research, investment, and production, India and Japan could reduce dependence on unstable supply chains and position themselves as key players in future industries.

Defence and security cooperation is another area ripe for expansion. Rather than large, politically sensitive arms deals, both sides could focus on joint development, modular projects, and co-production. Such practical collaboration would build operational familiarity between the two militaries while strengthening deterrence capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region.

Demographics offer a powerful opportunity for mutual benefit. Japan faces a rapidly ageing population and shrinking workforce, while India has one of the world's youngest populations. Structured labour mobility programs, skills partnerships, and technology transfer could address Japan's labour shortages while providing employment opportunities for Indian professionals.

Beyond bilateral gains, the partnership could extend into third regions such as Africa and Southeast Asia. Combining Japanese financing and technological strength with India's entrepreneurial capacity and regional knowledge could create sustainable development models that differ from purely extractive approaches often associated with great-power competition.

Both countries also maintain close ties with the United States, making trilateral or multilateral cooperation feasible. Coordinated strategies among like-minded democracies could help preserve a rules-based international order at a time when global institutions face mounting pressure. Acting together in forums such as the Quad enhances their collective leverage while allowing each nation to maintain strategic autonomy.

However, challenges remain. Bureaucratic hurdles, differences in regulatory systems, and slow project implementation have historically limited the full potential of India-Japan cooperation. Turning ambitious plans into concrete outcomes will require sustained institutional engagement, political will, and clear accountability mechanisms.

A strong Japanese leadership mandate could help overcome these obstacles by enabling decisive policy action. It would also signal continuity to investors, allies, and regional partners, encouraging long-term commitments rather than cautious short-term engagement.

Ultimately, the evolving global landscape — marked by geopolitical conflict, technological rivalry, and economic uncertainty — is pushing India and Japan closer together. Their shared democratic values, complementary strengths, and converging strategic interests position them to play a stabilizing role in Asia and beyond.

If both nations seize this moment, the relationship could move beyond goodwill and symbolic cooperation toward a genuinely transformative partnership. With strong leadership in Tokyo and a willingness in New Delhi to match ambition with execution, India-Japan collaboration may indeed be poised to enter a new and consequential era — one defined not only by shared interests but by coordinated action in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific and the global order.

When Crisis Struck, India Stood By The UAE — A Partnership Forged In Trust

During a period of heightened instability in the Middle East, India's swift and firm support for the United Arab Emirates highlighted the depth of a relationship that extends far beyond routine diplomacy. As attacks threatened civilian lives and critical infrastructure, New Delhi's response demonstrated solidarity, reassurance, and strategic confidence in one of its closest partners in the Gulf.

The crisis involved missile and drone strikes targeting civilian areas and key facilities in the UAE, resulting in casualties that included foreign nationals. Among those affected was an Indian citizen, underscoring how closely the safety of the two countries' populations is intertwined. The incident served as a stark reminder that regional instability can directly impact millions of expatriates living far from home.

At the core of India-UAE relations is the vast Indian diaspora in the Emirates. Numbering in the millions, Indians form one of the largest expatriate communities there. They contribute across all sectors of the economy, from construction and services to healthcare, education, technology, and business leadership. Their presence has helped shape the UAE's growth story, while remittances sent home support countless families across India.

Economic ties between the two nations are equally strong. The UAE ranks among India's most important trading partners and serves as a major gateway for Indian exports to the wider Middle East and Africa. Cooperation spans energy, infrastructure, finance, technology, logistics, and investment. This dense web of economic interdependence means that stability in the UAE is vital not only for its own citizens but also for India's economic interests.

When the crisis unfolded, India responded quickly at the highest level. Strong condemnation of the attacks and expressions of solidarity were conveyed directly between the leadership of the two countries. This prompt engagement



reflected a relationship built on trust and frequent communication rather than formal protocol alone. India's diplomatic stance signaled that it viewed the security of the UAE as closely linked to its own regional interests.

Beyond bilateral exchanges, India also supported broader international efforts aimed at addressing the situation and restoring stability. Such actions reinforced the perception that the partnership is both strategic and principled, grounded in a shared desire for peace, economic continuity, and regional security.

Despite fears that the conflict might weaken the UAE's economy or trigger instability, the country's underlying

strengths remain significant. Over the years, it has diversified its economy beyond oil, developed world-class infrastructure, and built substantial financial reserves. These factors provide resilience against external shocks and reassure investors, residents, and partners alike.

The episode also demonstrated how people-to-people ties can strengthen diplomatic relations. Cultural exchanges, tourism, business links, and long-standing personal connections between families across the two countries have created a bond that transcends formal agreements.

Ultimately, India's support during the crisis illustrated a partnership defined

ability. For India, the safety of its citizens abroad, uninterrupted trade flows, and regional stability are crucial concerns. For the UAE, India's backing reinforced confidence that a trusted partner would stand by it during difficult moments.

In international relations, true alliances are tested in times of uncertainty. This episode showed that India and the UAE share not just economic interests but a durable connection rooted in mutual respect, trust, and long-term cooperation. As the geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, this relationship is likely to remain a cornerstone of engagement between South Asia and the Gulf region.

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Jaishankar Optimistic Iran Talks Will Help Indian Ships Cross Hormuz Safely

India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar has expressed cautious optimism that ongoing diplomatic talks with Iran will help ensure safe passage for Indian vessels through the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz. His remarks come amid heightened tensions in West Asia that have disrupted one of the world's most important shipping routes.

The Strait of Hormuz is a critical maritime chokepoint through which a large share of global oil and gas supplies passes. Ongoing conflict involving Iran has led to security concerns, attacks on vessels, and a sharp decline in shipping traffic. For India, which relies heavily on energy imports from the region, keeping this route open is of paramount importance.

Jaishankar revealed that New Delhi has been in continuous dialogue with Tehran since hostilities escalated. He has reportedly held multiple conversations with his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, focusing on the safety of commercial shipping. Iran has indicated it is open to



discussions with countries seeking secure passage for their vessels.

Encouragingly, two India-bound LPG tankers recently managed to cross the strait safely after diplomatic engagement between the two nations. The ships, carrying tens of thousands of tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas, are headed to ports in Gujarat. Jaishankar described this development as proof that dialogue

can yield results, emphasizing that coordination and reasoned negotiations are preferable to confrontation.

However, he clarified that there is no blanket agreement guaranteeing passage for all Indian ships. Each vessel's movement is being handled individually, reflecting the fragile and unpredictable situation in the region. Talks remain ongoing as many more Indian ships are still affected by the crisis.

India's approach contrasts with calls from some global powers for military intervention to secure the waterway. New Delhi has instead chosen diplomacy, leveraging its longstanding relationship with Iran to protect its economic interests without escalating tensions.

The Hormuz disruption has already had global repercussions, including rising energy prices and supply uncertainties. For India, ensuring uninterrupted maritime trade is essential not only for energy security but also for overall economic stability.

Jaishankar stressed that continued engagement with Iran will remain crucial. He noted that if diplomacy continues to produce positive outcomes, India will persist with this strategy and hopes it will contribute to broader regional stability.

As the crisis unfolds, India's careful balancing act between safeguarding national interests and avoiding military escalation highlights the importance of dialogue in resolving complex geopolitical challenges.

Over 4,300 Flights Cancelled Amid Middle East Crisis: Centre



The ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States has severely disrupted air travel across West Asia, forcing thousands of flight cancellations and affecting passengers worldwide. The Indian government informed Parliament that the crisis has led to the suspension of a massive number of flights due to safety concerns and widespread airspace closures.

Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammoan Naidu told the Rajya Sabha that Indian airlines alone have cancelled 4,335 flights so far. In addition, foreign carriers have cancelled 1,187 flights operating in or through the region. The cancellations are largely the result of closed or restricted airspace across several Middle Eastern countries as military tensions escalated.

The minister emphasized that passenger safety remains the government's top priority. Airlines are unable to operate normally when airspace becomes unsafe or inaccessible due to missile strikes, drone attacks, or military activity. Several countries in the region have either shut their skies completely or imposed strict controls, making regular commercial flights impossible.

The conflict has disrupted one of the world's busiest aviation corridors, which connects Asia, Europe, and Af-

rica. Major airlines have been forced to reroute aircraft, suspend services, or operate limited schedules. Airports across the Gulf region have experienced chaos, delays, and uncertainty, leaving many passengers stranded or forced to change travel plans at short notice.

Despite the crisis, the government noted that a significant number of travelers have still managed to fly during this period using alternative routes. However, longer flight paths, higher fuel costs, and operational risks continue to challenge airlines.

The broader impact extends beyond passenger inconvenience. Global trade, tourism, and cargo movement have also been affected, as the Middle East serves as a key transit hub for international flights. Disruptions in this region ripple across the entire aviation network.

Authorities continue to monitor the situation closely while coordinating with airlines and foreign governments. Flight operations are expected to remain volatile until tensions ease and airspace restrictions are lifted.

For now, travelers are advised to check flight status regularly, stay in touch with airlines, and prepare for possible delays or cancellations as the geopolitical situation evolves.

Rajya Sabha Elections In Three States Turn Into A Test Of Opposition Unity

The upcoming Rajya Sabha elections in three Indian states have emerged as a critical test of cohesion and loyalty within the opposition ranks. Traditionally viewed as routine parliamentary processes, these polls have taken on heightened political significance this year as parties navigate alliances, internal rivalries, and strategic positioning ahead of larger electoral battles.

The Rajya Sabha, the upper house of India's Parliament, elects members through state legislative assemblies. Unlike direct public elections, these polls reflect the strength and alliances within state legislatures, making them important indicators of political influence and collaboration. With several key seats up for grabs in states where opposition parties hold significant numbers, how these parties cooperate — or fail to — is being watched closely by political analysts.

In all three states facing Rajya Sabha elections, opposition leaders are confronting the challenge of choosing common candidates and preventing internal dissent. When multiple parties contest the same seats without coordina-



tion, it can split the opposition vote and inadvertently benefit the ruling party's candidates. This dynamic makes unity essential for maximizing representation in the Upper House.

In one state, longstanding rivalries between regional allies have resurfaced as discussions about seat sharing continue. Senior leaders have been trying to broker agreements, but lingering distrust from past conflicts has complicated negotiations. In another state, smaller parties are asserting their demands more forcefully, seeking recogni-

tion and influence proportional to their legislative strength, which has put additional pressure on traditional allies.

These internal pressures are happening against a broader backdrop of national politics, where opposition parties are attempting to present a united front against the ruling coalition at the Centre. Rajya Sabha elections offer a chance to demonstrate that unity, as a strong showing can send a message of solidarity and shared purpose to voters ahead of major state and general elections.

Yet, analysts point out that unity for its own sake is not enough. Opposition parties must balance cooperation with maintaining their individual identities and policy priorities. Finding that balance is proving difficult in states with diverse political landscapes, ideological differences, and strong personalities.

The outcome of these Rajya Sabha polls could have implications beyond the seats themselves. A successful collaboration would bolster confidence among opposition ranks and signal effective strategy ahead of future contests. Conversely, visible fractures could weaken the perception of readiness to govern collectively.

As the election dates draw near, all eyes are on how opposition leaders manage alliance talks, candidate selections, and internal expectations. What began as a procedural election has transformed into a barometer of opposition unity, testing whether diverse political entities can work together in pursuit of shared goals or whether internal divisions will limit their impact.

"Culture Of Casual Protests" In Parliament: Deve Gowda Writes To Sonia Gandhi

Former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda has written a strongly worded letter to senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi expressing deep concern over what he described as growing disorder and frequent protests in Parliament during the ongoing Budget Session.

In his letter dated March 16, the 92-year-old veteran said he was disturbed by the confrontational atmosphere inside and around Parliament, warning that repeated disruptions could weaken the foundations of India's parliamentary democracy. He noted that he had initially hoped the situation would improve but saw little sign of change.

Drawing on his decades-long political career, Deve Gowda pointed out that he had spent nearly 65 years as a legislator and parliamentarian, much of it in the Opposition. Despite this, he said he had never resorted to storming the well of the House or staging disruptive protests either in Parliament or in state legislatures.

The former Prime Minister alleged that Congress MPs, led by the Leader of the Opposition, were responsible for many of the recent disruptions, including slogan-shouting, demonstrations, and protests within the Parliament complex. He also criticized the increasing practice of holding dharnas and blockades outside Parliament, calling them unprecedented in scale.

One of his key concerns was what he described as an emerging "culture of casual protests." Referring to recent demonstrations, he said scenes of MPs sitting on Parliament steps, ordering tea, snacks, and engaging informally during protests diminished the dignity of the



institution.

Gowda recalled that his understanding of parliamentary conduct had been shaped by the ideals of India's founding leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, B. R. Ambedkar, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. In his view, the current level of chaos and casualness had rarely been seen in earlier decades.

Appealing directly to Sonia Gandhi, whom he described as one of the most senior figures in the Opposition, he urged her to guide party leaders toward restoring decorum and responsibility in parliamentary proceedings. He expressed hope that her experience would help bring restraint and seriousness back to debates and discussions.

Deve Gowda's intervention highlights growing concern among senior leaders about the functioning of Parliament, where frequent disruptions often stall legislative work. His letter underscores the belief that maintaining dignity, discipline, and constructive debate is essential for preserving democratic institutions.

The development has sparked political discussion about the balance between protest and parliamentary functioning, especially during contentious sessions.

TMC Walks Out Of Rajya Sabha Over Transfer Of Bengal's Top Officials After Poll Announcement



Members of the All India Trinamool Congress staged a day-long walkout from the Rajya Sabha on Monday, protesting the Election Commission of India decision to transfer several senior bureaucrats in West Bengal shortly after announcing the state Assembly election schedule.

The protest was led by senior TMC MP Derek O'Brien, who raised the issue before the Zero Hour proceedings began. He strongly criticized the late-night administrative reshuffle, describing it as a sudden move carried out "in the dead of night" and questioning the timing of the decision immediately after poll dates were declared.

The Election Commission had ordered the removal of key officials, including Chief Secretary Nandini Chakravorty and Home Secretary Jagdish Prasad Meena, within hours of announcing the election schedule. Replacement officers were appointed soon afterward, triggering political backlash from the ruling party in the state.

O'Brien acknowledged that the Commission has the authority to make administrative changes during elections but argued that the manner and timing of the transfers raised serious concerns. As a mark of protest, he announced that TMC MPs would boycott proceedings for

the entire day, calling the move an unwarranted intervention in the state's administration during a sensitive pre-election period.

Responding to the protest, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju defended the poll body, emphasizing that the Election Commission is an independent constitutional authority. He maintained that its decisions should not be questioned on the floor of Parliament and accused opposition parties of repeatedly targeting constitutional institutions.

The administrative reshuffle has sparked a wider political controversy in West Bengal, where relations between the state government and the Election Commission have often been tense during election cycles. The ruling party views the transfers as disruptive, while supporters of the Commission argue that such measures are necessary to ensure neutrality, fairness, and a level playing field during polls.

With Assembly elections approaching, political tensions in the state are expected to intensify further. The Rajya Sabha walkout highlights how decisions involving election administration can quickly escalate into national political disputes, especially when they affect senior officials in a politically sensitive state.

AIADMK Faces Existential Test In 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections



The upcoming Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu are shaping up to be a decisive and potentially existential battle for the opposition All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. Once a dominant force in the state's politics, the party has struggled to regain its footing since the death of its iconic leader J. Jayalalithaa.

Without her towering presence, the party has faced internal divisions, leadership tussles, and electoral setbacks, weakening its once formidable base. Now led by Edappadi K. Palaniswami, the AIADMK hopes to stage a comeback and reassert itself as the primary challenger to the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government headed by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin.

The stakes are unusually high because the party's relevance in Tamil Nadu politics is increasingly being questioned. Several developments have contributed to this perception. Former senior leader and ex-Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam has moved away from the party, while longtime Jayalalithaa confidante V. K. Sasikala has launched a separate political outfit. These moves have fragmented the traditional support base that once rallied firmly behind AIADMK.

Adding to the challenge is the emergence of new political forces. Actor-turned-politician Vijay has entered the

political arena with his party, drawing significant public attention and potentially reshaping voter dynamics, particularly among youth and urban voters. This new competition could split opposition votes and further complicate AIADMK's path to power.

Despite these setbacks, the party leadership remains confident. Palaniswami has been touring the state extensively, attempting to consolidate cadre support and project unity. AIADMK is also working on alliances and campaign strategies to counter the ruling DMK's organizational strength and welfare-driven governance narrative.

The election is expected to be held in a single phase, with all 234 Assembly constituencies voting on the same day. For AIADMK, the outcome will determine whether it can reclaim its position as a major political force or risk sliding into long-term decline.

Political observers believe that this contest is not merely about winning or losing seats but about survival. A strong performance could revive the party's fortunes, while a poor showing may accelerate fragmentation and marginalization in Tamil Nadu's evolving political landscape.

As campaigning intensifies, the battle for Tamil Nadu promises to be one of the most closely watched state elections in recent years — and for AIADMK, perhaps the most crucial in its history.

Israel Envoy Clarifies Timing Of Iran Offensive After PM Modi's Visit



Israel's Ambassador to India has addressed speculation surrounding the timing of the ongoing Iran conflict, stating that the military operation against Iran was approved only after Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his visit to Israel. The clarification comes amid political criticism suggesting that the trip coincided with preparations for war.

According to the envoy, the "operational opportunity" for Israel and the United States to launch strikes emerged after the Indian Prime Minister had departed Tel Aviv following a two-day visit. He emphasized that although the region was already tense, the decision to proceed with the offensive was taken later. The Israeli cabinet, he said, formally approved the operation two days after the visit ended.

The explanation was aimed at countering allegations that the timing of the visit created the impression of tacit support for military escalation. Critics had argued that the trip ap-

peared poorly timed given the rapidly deteriorating situation in West Asia. The envoy's statement sought to dispel that perception by stressing that the attack plans were finalized only afterward.

He also indicated that the strikes had significant strategic objectives. According to his assessment, the offensive targeted Iran's military infrastructure and leadership, severely weakening its capabilities. He claimed that about 70 percent of Iran's missile-launching capacity had been degraded as a result of the operation.

Another key objective, he said, was to neutralize Iran's nuclear ambitions. The strikes reportedly made the country's nuclear stockpile inaccessible and disrupted production capabilities spread across multiple locations. Israel maintains that preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons remains a central goal of its military strategy.

The broader conflict has had far-reaching consequences across the Middle East and be-

yond. Joint US-Israeli airstrikes on Iran triggered retaliatory attacks, including missile and drone strikes on regional targets. The escalation has also severely disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy corridors.

This narrow waterway carries roughly one-fifth of global seaborne oil supplies, making any disruption a major threat to the world economy. Following the outbreak of hostilities, tanker traffic fell sharply, insurance costs soared, and many shipping companies suspended operations due to security risks.

The conflict has already caused global energy prices to spike and raised fears of prolonged supply shortages. Analysts warn that extended disruption in the Gulf could trigger inflation, economic instability, and supply-chain shocks worldwide.

India, which depends heavily on energy imports from the region, has been closely monitoring the situation. The safe-

ty of Indian nationals and the uninterrupted flow of oil and trade remain top priorities for New Delhi. Diplomatic engagement with regional players has intensified as the crisis unfolds.

The envoy's remarks underscore how sensitive diplomatic timing can be during periods of conflict. While leaders often travel amid uncertain conditions, subsequent military actions can quickly reshape perceptions of those visits.

By clarifying that the operation was approved only after the Indian Prime Minister's departure, Israel appears keen to prevent any misunderstanding about India's role or position in the conflict. The statement also reflects the broader effort by all sides to manage international opinion while military operations continue.

As tensions remain high and the situation evolves, the conflict's trajectory will likely depend on both battlefield developments and diplomatic efforts to prevent a wider regional war.

Netanyahu "Death" Rumours Swirl After New Video Sparks Deepfake Claims



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has become the focus of intense online speculation after a video released to dispel rumours about his death instead fueled fresh controversy. The clip, showing him calmly drinking coffee at a café, quickly spread across social media but raised questions about its authenticity.

Rumours claiming that Netanyahu had been killed or seriously injured began circulating amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. In response, a video was shared through official channels in which he appeared relaxed, casually addressing the speculation while seated in a public setting. The intention was to reassure the public that he was alive and well.

However, the footage had the opposite effect for some viewers. Social media users pointed to what they described as unusual visual details, including facial expressions and hand movements, suggesting the possibility that the video might have been digitally manipulated. These claims rapidly gained traction, with many questioning whether the clip had been generated using artificial intelligence.

The controversy intensified when an AI chatbot on a major social media platform

reportedly labeled the video as a potential deepfake. The system cited possible inconsistencies such as unnatural lip movement and visual anomalies, further amplifying doubts among online audiences. This added another layer of confusion, as people debated whether to trust the video or the algorithm's assessment.

Despite the speculation, independent verification efforts indicated that the footage was genuine. The café where the video was recorded was identified as a real location, and additional images reportedly showed Netanyahu present there. These findings supported the view that the video captured an actual visit rather than a computer-generated scene.

Netanyahu later appeared to treat the rumours with humor, dismissing claims about his death and mocking the theories circulating online. Officials from his office also rejected the allegations, stating that the prime minister continues to perform his duties as usual.

The episode highlights how quickly misinformation can spread during periods of crisis. In an environment already charged with fear and uncertainty, unverified claims can gain momentum within minutes, especially when amplified by

social media platforms.

It also underscores the growing impact of artificial intelligence on public trust. Deepfake technology has advanced to the point where fabricated videos can appear highly realistic, making it difficult for viewers to distinguish authentic footage from manipulated content. At the same time, automated systems designed to detect fake media can sometimes produce uncertain or misleading conclusions, adding to the confusion.

In this case, a video intended to serve as proof of life became a source of further suspicion. The incident illustrates a broader challenge facing governments and the public alike: even credible evidence may be doubted once the possibility of digital manipulation enters the conversation.

As conflicts increasingly unfold alongside online information battles, the ability to verify facts and assess sources has become as important as events on the ground. The controversy surrounding Netanyahu's video demonstrates how modern technology can blur the line between reality and perception, turning a simple reassurance into a global debate over truth and authenticity.

Trump Urges Allies To Escort Ships Through Hormuz — But Key Nations Hold Back

As the Iran conflict intensifies and global energy markets face mounting pressure, U.S. President Donald Trump has called on allied nations to deploy warships to escort commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. The proposal, aimed at safeguarding one of the world's most vital shipping routes, has received a cautious response, revealing divisions among major powers over how to manage the escalating crisis.

The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow but strategically crucial passage linking the Persian Gulf to the open ocean. A significant portion of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supplies passes through this corridor each day. Any disruption to traffic in the strait can therefore have immediate and far-reaching consequences for global energy prices, trade flows, and economic stability. In the wake of the ongoing conflict, shipping activity has slowed sharply due to attacks, mines, and fears of further escalation.

Washington is reportedly seeking to form an international coalition to ensure the safe passage of oil tankers and merchant vessels. The United States argues that countries heavily dependent on Gulf energy supplies should contribute naval assets to keep the route open. Officials have warned that failure to act collectively could strain long-standing security partnerships and alliances.

Despite these concerns, several major allies have been hesitant to commit forces. Some nations have indicated they have no immediate plans to deploy ships, citing domestic political constraints, legal limitations, and the risk of becoming directly involved in hostilities. Others are still assessing



their options but remain wary of actions that could escalate tensions or expose their naval personnel to missile or drone attacks.

Iran's stance has further complicated the situation. Tehran has signaled that it is prepared to defend its interests and has warned that vessels belonging to adversarial nations could face danger in the area. The uncertain security environment has made shipping companies, insurers, and governments extremely cautious, leading many commercial operators to avoid the route altogether whenever possible.

The disruption has already triggered a surge in global oil prices, fueling fears of inflation and economic slowdown.

Higher insurance premiums, increased shipping costs, and delays in supply chains are adding to the strain on importing nations. Because alternative routes cannot easily handle the same volume of energy shipments, a prolonged crisis could have severe consequences for economies worldwide.

Beyond the economic impact, the situation carries major geopolitical implications. A multinational escort mission could help deter attacks and restore confidence among commercial shippers, but it also risks direct confrontation with Iranian forces. Conversely, inaction could encourage further disruptions and undermine the credibility of security guarantees in the region.

Governments are therefore balancing competing priorities: protecting energy supplies, avoiding military escalation, and maintaining diplomatic channels. The decisions made in the coming weeks will likely shape not only the course of the conflict but also the stability of global markets.

Ultimately, the debate over escorting ships through the Strait of Hormuz highlights a broader dilemma facing the international community — how to secure critical global infrastructure without triggering a wider war. As tensions remain high, the world is watching closely, aware that developments in this narrow waterway could have consequences far beyond the Middle East.

Trump May Send Troops To Seize Iran's "Crown Jewel" Kharg Island



Amid the escalating conflict with Iran, U.S. President Donald Trump is reportedly considering sending ground troops to capture Kharg Island — Iran's most critical oil export hub and a target he has described as the country's "crown jewel." If carried out, such a move would represent a major escalation, shifting the conflict from air and naval strikes to a potential ground operation.

Kharg Island, located in the Persian Gulf, plays a central role in Iran's economy. Despite its relatively small size, the island handles a large share of the country's crude oil exports and hosts extensive storage facilities, pipelines, and loading terminals connected to offshore oil fields. Control over the island would therefore strike directly at one of Iran's most important sources of revenue.

The United States has already conducted heavy bombing raids on the island, focusing primarily on military targets such as missile storage areas, naval bases, and defensive infrastructure. Oil facilities were largely avoided in these strikes, though officials have indicated that restraint could change depending on

Iran's actions in the region. The attacks are said to have significantly weakened Iran's military presence on the island.

Capturing Kharg Island would have both economic and strategic implications. Economically, it could severely disrupt Iran's ability to export oil and finance its war efforts. Militarily, it would give U.S. forces a forward base close to the Iranian mainland and near vital shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf. Such a position could also be used to monitor or deter threats to commercial vessels passing through the region.

The broader conflict has already affected global energy markets. Iran has been accused of threatening shipping routes and targeting vessels, contributing to rising oil prices and increased insurance costs for maritime transport. Any further disruption could deepen economic uncertainty worldwide.

However, a ground invasion of Kharg Island would carry significant risks. Amphibious assaults are complex operations requiring extensive preparation, air superiority, and naval support. Iran could respond with missile strikes, drone attacks, naval mines, or re-

taliation against U.S. bases and allied interests across the Middle East. Such escalation could quickly draw additional countries into the conflict.

Reports indicate that additional American forces and naval assets have been deployed to the region, signaling readiness for a range of possible actions. At the same time, diplomatic efforts continue behind the scenes as international actors seek to prevent a wider war.

For now, no final decision has been publicly announced, and officials maintain that all options remain under consideration. The situation remains fluid, with developments on the battlefield likely to influence the next steps.

What is clear is that Kharg Island has emerged as one of the most strategically important flashpoints in the crisis. Control over this small but vital territory could significantly affect Iran's economic stability, regional security, and global energy supplies. As tensions continue to mount, the fate of the island may shape the next phase of the conflict and determine whether the confrontation remains limited or expands into a broader regional war.

Bulls Roar Back: Sensex Surges 939 Points, Nifty Reclaims 23,400 Mark

Indian stock markets staged a strong comeback, snapping a three-day losing streak as heavy late buying pushed benchmark indices sharply higher. The rally lifted the BSE Sensex by about 939 points and drove the Nifty 50 comfortably above the key 23,400 level, signaling renewed bullish momentum.

After a weak and volatile start, markets fluctuated between gains and losses for most of the trading session. However, strong buying in the final hour reversed earlier declines and powered the indices into solid positive territory by the close. The Sensex finished near the 75,500 mark, while the Nifty settled around 23,409, reflecting a sharp recovery after recent losses.

Key Sectors Lead The Rally

The rebound was largely driven by strength in automobile, banking, FMCG, and metal stocks. Large-cap companies in these sectors attracted significant buying interest, helping the benchmarks climb steadily.

Among the major gainers were Mahindra & Mahindra, Grasim Industries, Trent Limited, UltraTech Cement, and HDFC Bank. On the other hand, stocks such as Bharat Electronics Limited, Wipro, Sun Pharmaceutical, and Coal India ended the session lower.



Broader Market Shows Mixed Trend

Despite the strong headline performance, the broader market remained under pressure. Midcap and smallcap indices lagged behind the main benchmarks and slipped slightly during the session. A large number of stocks also touched their 52-week lows, indicating that weakness persists beneath the surface.

This divergence suggests that the rally was concentrated mainly in heavyweight stocks rather than being broad-based across all segments of the market.

Short-Covering And Bargain Hunting Drive Gains

Market analysts attributed the surge to value buying after recent declines, along with short-covering by traders who had bet on falling prices. Investors appeared to take advantage of lower valuations, stepping in to buy fundamentally strong companies.

Heavyweights such as Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, and State Bank of India played a major role in lifting the indices from intraday lows.

Outlook Remains Cautious

While the rebound indicates that bullish sentiment is still

present, uncertainty continues due to global factors such as geopolitical tensions, oil price movements, and monetary policy expectations.

The sharp recovery suggests that investors are willing to buy on dips, but volatility is likely to remain high in the near term. Sustained upward momentum will depend on supportive global cues and stable domestic conditions.

Overall, the session delivered a strong signal that the bulls have returned after recent weakness — though the path ahead may remain uneven as markets react to evolving economic and geopolitical developments.

Kotak Mahindra MF Raises Stake In Park Medi World, Stock In Focus



Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund has increased its shareholding in Park Medi World Limited to above the key 5 percent mark after purchasing additional shares through open market transactions.

Prior to the latest acquisition, the fund held just under 5 percent of the company's equity, amounting to more than 2.15 crore shares. It subsequently bought around 1.75 lakh additional shares, taking its total holding to about 5.04 percent. Crossing the 5 percent threshold is significant because it triggers mandatory disclosure requirements under market regulations, drawing attention from investors and analysts.

The purchase was made through various schemes of the mutual fund and does not involve the company's promoters. Such investments by large institutional players are often viewed as a sign of confidence in a company's long-term growth potential, particularly in sectors with strong demand out-

looks like healthcare.

Park Medi World operates a network of multi-specialty hospitals and has been expanding its capacity to capitalize on rising healthcare needs. Increasing health awareness, growing insurance coverage, and higher spending on medical services are supporting long-term growth prospects for hospital chains across India, especially in smaller cities.

A brokerage firm has also initiated coverage on the company with a positive outlook, citing strong expansion plans and favorable industry trends. Policy support and a gradual shift toward higher-value treatments are expected to improve the company's earnings potential over time.

Despite the positive signal from institutional buying, the stock did not witness a sharp rally during the trading session. Shares opened slightly lower than the previous close and slipped further during the day, reflecting cautious sentiment among

investors.

Market participants note that while institutional investments can boost confidence, short-term price movements depend on several factors including overall market conditions, valuations, liquidity, and profit-taking.

Park Medi World has attracted attention since its listing, but analysts emphasize that sustained stock performance will depend on the company's execution, expansion strategy, and financial results in the coming quarters.

The increase in stake highlights growing institutional interest in India's healthcare sector, which is expected to expand steadily due to demographic changes and rising demand for quality medical services.

Overall, Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund's move places Park Medi World firmly on investors' radar, signaling confidence from a major institutional investor even as near-term market reactions remain cautious.

PhonePe Puts IPO On Hold As West Asia Crisis Shakes Markets

Digital payments major PhonePe has postponed its much-anticipated initial public offering due to escalating tensions in West Asia and the resulting volatility in global financial markets.

The Bengaluru-based fintech firm has decided to defer its public listing plans until market conditions stabilize. The IPO, which was expected around the middle of the year, is now on hold as investors adopt a cautious approach amid geopolitical uncertainty.

Conflict Triggers Market Turbulence

The ongoing crisis in West Asia has unsettled financial markets worldwide, leading to sharp fluctuations in stock prices, currency movements, and overall investor sentiment. Indian markets have also experienced pressure, with significant swings in valuations over recent weeks.

In such uncertain conditions, companies often struggle to secure favorable pricing for public offerings. Launching an IPO during volatile periods can result in weak demand, discounted valuations, or disappointing listing performance — risks that firms typically aim to avoid.

PhonePe's leadership has indi-



cated that the company remains committed to going public in India but will wait for stability to return before proceeding.

Size And Structure Of The Proposed IPO

The company was reportedly planning to raise around 1.5 billion dollars at a valuation of approximately 15 billion dollars, which would make it one of the largest fintech listings in India.

The proposed issue was expected to involve existing shareholders selling part of their stakes rather than the company issuing a significant number of new shares. Major investors, including entities linked to Walmart,

were likely to reduce their holdings through the offering.

Market Concerns Add Pressure

Apart from geopolitical risks, analysts have pointed to concerns about elevated stock market valuations following a long rally. Recent corrections have increased fears of further volatility, making the timing less favorable for large public offerings.

PhonePe's decision reflects a broader trend, with several companies delaying IPO plans and adopting a wait-and-watch strategy until investor confidence improves.

Strong Growth, Ongoing Losses

Despite being one of the dominant players in India's digital payments ecosystem, PhonePe continues to report losses, though these have been narrowing. The company's revenues have been growing steadily, driven by strong user adoption and expansion into new financial services.

As a leading participant in India's UPI ecosystem, PhonePe's eventual IPO is expected to be a landmark event for the country's fintech sector.

What Lies Ahead

For now, the company is waiting for calmer market conditions before reviving its listing plans. Investors eager to participate in the offering will likely have to wait until geopolitical tensions ease and market stability returns.

PhonePe's move highlights how global events can directly influence corporate fundraising decisions, even for companies operating far from the conflict zone. If conditions improve in the coming months, the IPO could be relaunched — potentially becoming one of the most significant fintech listings in India.

Fino Payments Bank Shares Plunge After Probe Reports Rattle Investors

Shares of Fino Payments Bank tumbled sharply, falling about 16 percent in a single trading session and hitting a 52-week low, even as the lender issued a clarification denying serious allegations circulating in the media.

The steep decline followed reports that certain online gaming transactions linked to the bank could come under scrutiny by the Enforcement Directorate. Such reports triggered panic selling among investors, who reacted to fears of potential regulatory action.

However, the bank moved quickly to reassure stakeholders. In an official statement, it said it is not under investigation by the Enforcement Directorate or under money-laundering laws. Instead, it confirmed that the only ongoing inquiry is by the Directorate General of GST Intelligence in Hyderabad, and that too relates to certain program managers and merchants rather than the bank's core operations.

The lender also rejected claims that it was involved in betting or gaming activities. It stated that it does not directly or indirectly promote or facilitate such busi-



nesses through any platform or channel.

Despite the clarification, market sentiment remained weak. Investors appeared unconvinced, partly because regulatory scrutiny in the financial sector can escalate quickly and carry significant reputational and financial risks.

Adding to concerns is a separate development involving the bank's leadership. Its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Rishi Gupta, was arrested in

late February under provisions of GST laws as part of an investigation into suspected irregularities. The case is reportedly linked to transactions handled by associated entities rather than the bank itself, but the incident has heightened uncertainty.

Analysts say that banking stocks are particularly sensitive to governance issues because trust is a critical factor in financial institutions. Even the possibility of regulatory action can lead to sharp sell-offs, as investors

try to reduce exposure to risk.

The sell-off also pushed the stock close to lower circuit levels during trading, reflecting intense selling pressure. The decline came even as the broader market showed relative stability, indicating that the fall was driven largely by company-specific concerns rather than overall market conditions.

Interestingly, the bank highlighted positive business indicators at the same time. It reported strong deposit growth, reaching around Rs 2,900 crore, and said it had added about 1.5 lakh new accounts in recent weeks. However, these fundamentals did little to calm investor nerves amid the controversy.

For now, the stock's future trajectory will likely depend on how the investigation unfolds and whether authorities provide further clarity. If regulatory concerns ease, the shares could stabilize, but continued uncertainty may keep pressure on the stock in the near term.

The episode underscores how quickly confidence can erode in the financial sector when questions arise about compliance, governance, or regulatory scrutiny.

Ola Electric Plans Stake Sale To Raise Up To ₹2,000 Crore For Battery Arm



Ola Electric is preparing to raise up to ₹2,000 crore by selling a minority stake in its battery subsidiary, Ola Cell Technologies, as part of efforts to strengthen its finances and accelerate its turnaround strategy.

The proposed fundraising will involve bringing in financial investors rather than issuing new shares at the parent company level. The move comes at a time when the electric two-wheeler maker is restructuring operations, attempting to regain market share, and stabilise its balance sheet amid declining sales.

Battery Arm At The Core Of EV Strategy

Ola Cell Technologies operates a lithium-ion battery manufacturing facility in Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu, often described as one of India's first gigafactories for electric vehicle cells. The plant currently has an operational capacity of about 1.5 GWh, with plans to expand to around 6 GWh by the end of the financial year.

The facility represents a major investment and is central to India's push to localise battery production, reduce dependence on imports, and build a domestic EV supply chain.

Beyond powering elec-

tric scooters, the plant is designed to support broader energy storage solutions across sectors, including residential and commercial applications.

Valuation And Investor Interest

The stake sale is expected to help establish an independent valuation for the battery business, which has not previously been valued separately. The asset has reportedly attracted interest from large financial investors, including global funds.

Investment banks have been appointed to manage the fundraising process and identify potential buyers for the stake.

Part Of Broader Restructuring

Ola Electric has been implementing cost-cutting measures and operational restructuring to improve efficiency and move toward profitability. The company faces intense competition in India's electric two-wheeler market from established automakers and emerging EV startups, which have steadily gained market share.

Recent declines in sales have increased pressure on the company to streamline operations and secure

fresh capital to support expansion plans.

Strategic Importance Of Battery Technology

Battery manufacturing is widely considered the most critical component of the electric vehicle ecosystem. By investing heavily in cell production, Ola Electric aims to control costs, improve performance, and reduce reliance on foreign suppliers.

The company is also working on advanced battery technologies and manufacturing processes to strengthen its long-term competitiveness in both domestic and global EV markets.

What Lies Ahead

If successful, the fundraising could provide the capital needed to expand production capacity, launch new products, and strengthen the company's financial position. It would also represent one of the significant investments in India's domestic battery manufacturing sector.

The outcome of the stake sale will play a key role in shaping Ola Electric's future growth trajectory and its ability to compete in an increasingly crowded electric mobility market.

Man Confronts Students Throwing Paper From School Bus, Viral Video Sparks Debate



A viral video showing a man confronting school students for littering has ignited widespread discussion on social media about civic responsibility and appropriate ways to correct public behaviour. The incident, captured on camera and widely shared online, shows pieces of paper scattered across a road after being allegedly thrown from a passing school bus.

According to reports, a motorcyclist noticed the litter on the street and believed it had come from the bus. He then chased the vehicle, pulled alongside it, and eventually boarded it while recording the entire episode. Once inside, he questioned the students about their actions and asked why they had thrown trash onto a public road, challenging them to consider whether they thought it was acceptable behaviour.

The video, posted on social media on March 14, quickly gained traction, drawing tens of thousands of views and reactions. Faces of the students and staff were blurred, and the exact time and location of the incident have not been officially verified.

Online reactions have been sharply divided. Many viewers praised the man for taking a stand and teaching the students a lesson about cleanliness and public responsibility. Supporters argued that such direct action is neces-

sary in a country struggling with littering issues, especially when young people fail to understand the impact of their behaviour on shared spaces.

Others, however, criticized the confrontation. They felt the biker's approach may have been excessive and potentially unsafe, suggesting he should have reported the matter to school authorities instead of confronting minors directly. Some commenters also emphasized that children make mistakes and should be guided rather than publicly reprimanded.

The incident has therefore sparked a broader conversation about how society should address civic misconduct, particularly when it involves young people. While most agree that maintaining cleanliness in public spaces is essential, opinions differ on whether public shaming, direct confrontation, or institutional action is the best solution.

Ultimately, the viral clip highlights a persistent issue — everyday littering — while also revealing deeper concerns about accountability, education, and the role of ordinary citizens in enforcing social norms. It serves as a reminder that building civic sense requires both awareness and constructive guidance, especially among the younger generation.

Folk Musicians Turn Airport Security Check Into A Magical Musical Moment



Passengers at Jodhpur Airport recently witnessed an unexpected cultural treat when a group of Rajasthani folk artists transformed a routine security check into a lively musical performance. What is usually a quiet, procedural moment suddenly became memorable as traditional melodies filled the terminal.

The artists, led by renowned folk performer Ismail Langa, began singing while passing through the screening area, surprising both travellers and airport staff. Their spontaneous performance featured soulful Rajasthani folk music, instantly creating a warm and festive atmosphere inside the otherwise formal security zone.

The performance was later shared online by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which manages airport security across India. Posting the video on its official social-media account, the force described the episode as a "musical moment at the airport," noting how the artist's heartfelt rendition added a touch of sweetness to the travel experience.

According to reports, the group was travelling together when the impromptu performance occurred. Rather than a staged event, the song emerged naturally during the security process, blending traditional culture with a modern travel setting. Passengers nearby paused to watch, many appear-

ing delighted by the unexpected show.

The video captures the troupe's distinctive musical style — rich vocals accompanied by traditional expression — delivered with ease despite the unusual environment. The fusion of heritage art with a contemporary public space created a unique scene rarely witnessed in airports, where strict procedures typically leave little room for spontaneity.

Rajasthani folk music is known for its deep emotional quality, storytelling tradition, and vibrant cultural roots. Performances like this highlight how such art forms continue to thrive beyond formal stages, reaching audiences in everyday spaces.

Online reactions to the clip have been overwhelmingly positive. Many viewers praised the artists for spreading joy and showcasing India's cultural richness in an unexpected setting. Others noted how the moment humanized airport security, turning a routine checkpoint into a shared experience of music and connection.

Ultimately, the viral video serves as a reminder that art can emerge anywhere — even in the most ordinary situations. For a brief moment at Jodhpur Airport, travellers were not just passengers rushing to catch flights but an audience brought together by the timeless power of folk music.

Living Solo In Goa: Techie Reveals ₹82,000 Monthly Expense Breakdown

A software professional has sparked online discussion after sharing how much it costs to live alone in Goa. In a detailed social-media post, the techie revealed that maintaining a comfortable single lifestyle in the popular coastal state costs about ₹82,000 per month — a figure that surprised many who consider Goa a budget-friendly destination.

According to the breakdown, accommodation formed the largest portion of expenses. The techie reportedly lives in a rented apartment, paying a substantial amount for housing due to the demand for well-located homes near workspaces and urban conveniences. Rent alone consumed a major chunk of the monthly budget, reflecting how property prices in Goa have risen with the influx of remote workers and digital nomads.

Food and groceries accounted for another significant share. The individual balanced home-cooked meals with occasional dining out, which pushed monthly food expenses upward. Transportation costs were also notable, as public transport options in



Goa are limited compared to major metros. Many residents rely on private vehicles or rentals, adding to recurring expenses.

Utility bills — including electricity, internet, water, and mobile services — further increased the total. Reliable high-speed internet, essential for tech professionals working remotely, can be a particularly important expense. In addition, routine household costs such

as maintenance, cleaning supplies, and personal care items contributed steadily to the monthly outflow.

Lifestyle spending played a key role as well. The techie allocated money for entertainment, shopping, subscriptions, and leisure activities, reflecting a comfortable but not extravagant way of living. Health-related expenses, insurance, and emergency provisions were also

part of the budget, underscoring the need for financial planning when living independently.

The post triggered mixed reactions online. Some users felt the amount was high for a single person in Goa, arguing that a simpler lifestyle could cost far less. Others noted that the figure seemed reasonable for someone seeking privacy, modern amenities, and a balanced quality of life.

Cost-of-living studies

support this wide variation. Monthly expenses for a single person in Goa can range roughly from ₹35,000 to ₹90,000 depending on housing choice and lifestyle preferences.

Overall, the techie's detailed account highlights an important reality: while Goa is often seen as a relaxed, affordable paradise, living there full-time — especially alone and comfortably — can be significantly more expensive than many people expect.

₹1.5 Lakh Salary, Only ₹20,000 Saved: Viral Post Reveals Bengaluru's Costly Reality

A viral social-media post has ignited debate about the true cost of living in Bengaluru after revealing that a professional earning ₹1.5 lakh per month manages to save barely ₹20,000. The story, shared online by a user about his cousin, highlights how even high salaries in India's tech capital can be quickly consumed by everyday expenses.

According to the post, the young software professional moved to Bengaluru for his first job, believing he had achieved financial success. However, within six months, he realised that the city's high living costs significantly reduced his disposable income. Family and friends initially assumed he was doing extremely well, but the reality turned out to be far more complicated.

Rent emerged as the biggest expense. The man reportedly pays around ₹36,000 per month for a small apartment located close to his workplace — a



common choice among professionals trying to avoid long commutes in the city's heavy traffic. Groceries form another major component, costing roughly ₹13,000 to ₹15,000 monthly, reflecting the rising cost of food and daily necessities in urban areas.

Transportation also takes a substantial share of income. Due to congestion and limited public transport convenience,

the professional spends between ₹6,000 and ₹8,000 per month on cabs and auto-rickshaws. Lifestyle expenses add further pressure, with about ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 going toward online food orders, coffee, and weekend outings — costs that many young professionals consider part of maintaining a balanced social life.

After accounting for these recurring expenses and other routine bills,

only a small amount remains for savings at the end of the month. The post resonated widely online, as many users shared similar experiences of struggling to save despite earning what would be considered a high income in most parts of India.

Reactions, however, were mixed. Some commenters argued that careful budgeting and lifestyle adjustments could signifi-

cantly increase savings. Others maintained that Bengaluru's housing prices, traffic-related costs, and urban lifestyle make high expenses unavoidable, especially for newcomers seeking convenience and comfort.

The discussion reflects a broader reality: in major metropolitan hubs, salary figures alone do not determine financial security. High rents, transportation challenges, and lifestyle expectations can quickly erode income, leaving even well-paid professionals feeling financially stretched.

Ultimately, the viral post serves as a reminder that while Bengaluru offers lucrative career opportunities, achieving meaningful savings often requires disciplined spending, strategic housing choices, and long-term financial planning — especially for those living independently in one of India's most expensive cities.

"Too Comfortable In Germany": Indian-German Couple Moves To India For A New Life

An Indian-German couple has gone viral online after revealing why they chose to leave their stable life in Germany and relocate to India — not because of problems abroad, but because life had become "too comfortable." Their story, shared on social media, has sparked widespread discussion about what truly defines a fulfilling life.

According to the couple, Germany offered everything most people aspire to: financial security, social stability, efficient systems, and a high quality of life. However, over time, that very stability began to feel limiting. They said their daily routine had become repetitive, predictable, and emotionally unchallenging, making it seem as though life was running on autopilot.

In their post, the man, Deepesh Patel, explained that they were not leaving due to common complaints such as cold weather or bureaucracy. Instead, they wanted something entirely differ-



ent — uncertainty, excitement, and personal growth. Despite enjoying comfort and security, they began craving new experiences and a sense of transformation.

The couple also emphasized that they did not want to live with future regrets. They feared look-

ing back and wondering "what if" they had never taken a bold step outside their comfort zone. Ultimately, the desire for challenge outweighed the fear of failure, motivating them to make the move.

India, they said, felt like the perfect destina-

tion for reinvention. They were drawn to the country's vibrant culture, deep traditions, diversity, and dynamic energy. Unlike the predictability they experienced in Germany, India offered what they described as chaos mixed with creativity — an environment where

new perspectives and personal growth are constantly possible.

Their decision quickly attracted attention online. Many social media users praised the couple's courage, calling the move inspiring and refreshing. Some people who had returned to India after living abroad shared similar sentiments, saying they appreciated the country's liveliness, colours, festivals, and sense of community.

Others, however, expressed surprise at leaving a developed country for a more unpredictable environment, highlighting how differently people define happiness and success.

Overall, the viral story highlights a powerful idea: material comfort does not always guarantee fulfillment. For this couple, true satisfaction lay in embracing uncertainty, cultural richness, and the possibility of growth — even if it meant leaving behind a secure life in one of Europe's most stable nations.

Suryakumar Yadav Reveals Selection Difference With Gautam Gambhir In India's T20 Setup

India's T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav has revealed that he and head coach Gautam Gambhir did not initially agree on one player's inclusion in the national T20 squad, highlighting the honest discussions behind team selection. Despite the difference in opinion, Surya emphasized that the final decision was taken collectively, reflecting a healthy team environment.

Speaking about the selection process, Suryakumar said that debates between captain and coach are natural when building a competitive side. He noted that both he and Gambhir have strong cricketing instincts and want what is best for Team India. While they differed on one particular name, they discussed the options thoroughly before arriving at a consensus.

The Indian skipper stressed that such disagreements are professional rather than personal. According to him, open communication allows the team management to evaluate players from multiple perspectives — current form, role suitability, match conditions, and long-term planning. He added that the coaching staff and selectors ultimately work toward a common goal: creating a balanced squad capable of winning consistently.

Suryakumar also highlighted his positive working relationship with Gambhir, describing it as based on mutual respect and clarity. Since taking over as coach, Gambhir has brought a focused and aggressive mindset to the T20 setup, encourag-



ing players to express themselves while maintaining discipline. Surya said the coach's experience as a former international player has been invaluable in shaping strategies and handling pressure situations.

Importantly, the captain did not disclose the identity of the player over whom the disagreement occurred. However, he indicated that the chosen squad reflects collective thinking rather than individual preferences. The episode, he suggested, demonstrates how decisions

at the highest level of cricket often involve detailed discussions rather than unilateral calls.

Under Suryakumar's leadership, India's T20 team has been transitioning toward a new generation of players following the retirement of several senior stars from the format. The focus has been on building a fearless batting lineup, versatile bowlers, and strong fielding standards to remain competitive in global tournaments.

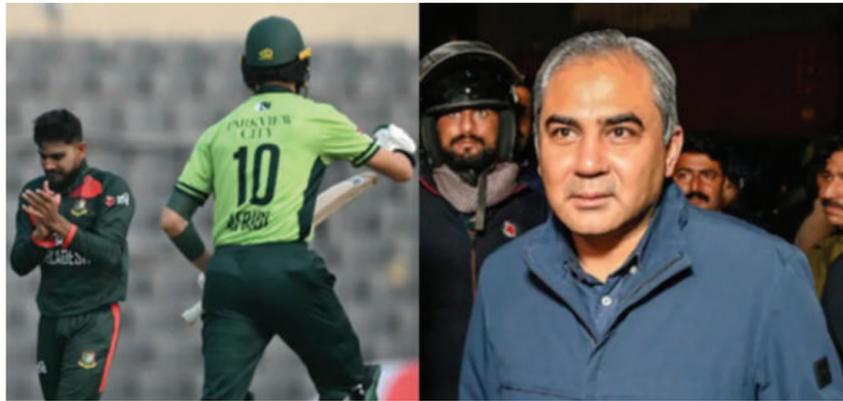
The revelation offers a rare glimpse into the inner work-

ings of team management, showing that even top leaders do not always see eye to eye. Instead, constructive debate appears to be an integral part of shaping a successful side.

Ultimately, Suryakumar's comments reinforce the idea that differences in opinion, when handled professionally, can strengthen rather than weaken a team. By combining diverse viewpoints, India aims to assemble the strongest possible T20 squad as it prepares for upcoming international challenges.

"Will You Steal ICC Trophy Now?"

Ex-Star Tears Into Pakistan After Bangladesh Shock



Pakistan cricket is facing intense criticism after suffering a humiliating ODI series defeat to Bangladesh national cricket team, with former wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal launching a scathing attack on the team and cricket administration.

Pakistan lost the three-match series 2-1, continuing a disappointing run that began with an early exit from the T20 World Cup. The defeat has been widely described as a new low for the team, raising serious questions about its rebuilding process and overall direction.

Akmal did not hold back in his criticism. Taking aim at both the players and the leadership, in-

cluding Pakistan Cricket Board chief Mohsin Naqvi, he delivered a sarcastic remark that quickly went viral. He questioned whether the team would now try to "steal" an ICC trophy since they were unable to win matches on the field, reflecting deep frustration among former players and fans.

The decisive third ODI was closely contested but ultimately ended in heartbreak for Pakistan. Despite a brilliant century from Salman Ali Agha, the team fell short while chasing a competitive target. Agha's dismissal late in the innings triggered a collapse, and Pakistan were eventually bowled out, allowing Bangladesh to clinch

the series.

The loss is particularly damaging because it comes at a time when Pakistan is attempting to rebuild with a relatively new squad. Expectations were high that fresh faces would signal a turnaround after recent disappointments, but the results have instead intensified scrutiny of team selection, strategy, and leadership.

Critics argue that Pakistan's performances have been marked by inconsistency, fragile batting, and a lack of composure under pressure. The inability to close out matches—even when individual players perform well—

has become a recurring theme.

Akmal's comments echo a broader sentiment within Pakistan's cricket community. Many former players have publicly expressed concern that the team is drifting without a clear plan. Some have even warned that Pakistan risks falling behind emerging cricket nations if urgent reforms are not implemented.

The series defeat is also significant because Bangladesh has historically struggled against Pakistan in international cricket. Losing to them in a bilateral series underscores how competitive the global game has become and how far Pakistan's standards may have slipped.

For the Pakistan Cricket Board, the challenge now is to restore confidence among supporters while stabilizing the team ahead of future tournaments. This could involve changes in leadership, improved domestic structures, or a renewed focus on player development.

As criticism continues to mount, the pressure on players and administrators alike is intensifying. Whether Pakistan can regroup and regain its stature in world cricket remains uncertain, but the backlash following this defeat makes one thing clear—patience among fans and former stars is rapidly running out.

"Goal Is To Win The Trophy": RR Star Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Sets Big Target For IPL 2026

Teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has set his sights firmly on team success ahead of IPL 2026, declaring that his primary goal is to help Rajasthan Royals lift the trophy this season.

The young opener, who recently played a key role in India's Under-19 World Cup triumph, shared his ambitions during the BCCI Naman Awards ceremony in New Delhi. While expectations around him are sky-high after his record-breaking performances, Sooryavanshi emphasized that personal milestones are secondary to the franchise's success.

He said his focus is on contributing as much as possible to the team's victories. According to him, strong individual performances matter only if they help Rajasthan Royals win matches and ultimately secure the championship.

Sooryavanshi's rise has been nothing short of extraordinary. At just 14, he has already become the youngest player to debut in the IPL and the youngest centu-



riion in the league's history, announcing himself as one of cricket's most exciting prospects. His fearless batting style and ability to score quickly have made him a key player in RR's plans for the upcoming season.

Despite the hype, the youngster has shown maturity beyond

his years. He stated that he is not concentrating on setting personal records or chasing individual achievements. Instead, he wants to follow the team's process, play his role effectively, and help build winning momentum throughout the tournament.

Interestingly, Sooryavanshi

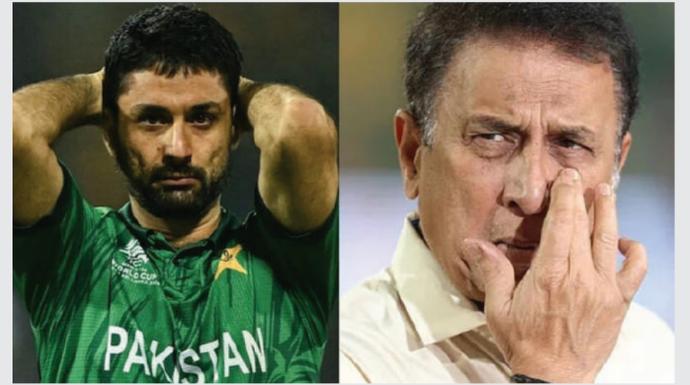
has also expressed a desire to challenge one of the IPL's most iconic records — the highest individual score in the league. However, he reiterated that such achievements would only be meaningful if they contribute to team success.

Rajasthan Royals, champions in the inaugural IPL season, have been eager to reclaim the title after several inconsistent campaigns. With a blend of experienced players and emerging talents like Sooryavanshi, the franchise hopes to mount a serious challenge in IPL 2026.

The youngster's confidence and clarity have impressed fans and experts alike. His approach reflects a team-first mindset rarely seen at such a young age, suggesting he could play a crucial role in RR's campaign.

As the new season approaches, all eyes will be on the teenage prodigy to see whether he can translate promise into match-winning performances. If he succeeds, Rajasthan Royals' long wait for another IPL trophy could finally come to an end.

Gavaskar Slams Abrar Ahmed Deal, Warns Of Fan Boycott For Sunrisers Franchise



Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar has strongly criticized an Indian-owned franchise's decision to sign Pakistani spinner Abrar Ahmed for an overseas league, warning that the move could trigger massive protests and even a fan boycott.

The controversy erupted after Sunrisers Leeds — a team linked to the owners of Sunrisers Hyderabad — signed Abrar during The Hundred auction in England. The franchise reportedly paid a substantial fee for the mystery spinner, making him one of the most talked-about picks. However, the acquisition sparked outrage among sections of Indian fans due to longstanding political tensions between India and Pakistan.

Gavaskar took a firm stand, arguing that Indian entities should refrain from signing Pakistani players. He said that payments made to such players eventually flow into their home country's system, which could indirectly contribute to activities harmful to India. His remarks reflected the deep sensitivities surrounding sporting ties between the two nations, especially after past conflicts.

Pakistan cricketers have not participated in the Indian Premier League since its inaugural season in 2008, following the Mumbai terror attacks later that year. Since then, Indian franchises have generally avoided signing Pakistani players even in overseas competitions. The Sunrisers' decision therefore broke an unwritten pattern, intensifying the backlash.

Gavaskar also warned that fans might express their anger through demonstrations at matches involving the team. He suggested that crowds could stay away from stadiums to show disapproval, potentially hurting the franchise both financially and reputationally. The reaction, he implied, could overshadow on-field performance regardless of how strong the squad is.

The signing has already generated heated debate on social media, with supporters and critics clashing over whether sport should remain separate from politics. Some argue that international leagues are meant to unite players across borders, while others believe national sentiment cannot be ignored.

Meanwhile, cricket authorities in India have clarified that they cannot intervene because The Hundred is an English tournament, not governed by the Indian board. This means the final decision rests with the franchise itself.

Abrar Ahmed, a highly rated T20 bowler, was signed purely for his cricketing abilities, according to team management. Yet the controversy highlights how geopolitical tensions can spill into global sports, turning routine player transfers into national flashpoints.

Ultimately, the episode underscores the complex relationship between sport, politics, and public sentiment in South Asia — where even a single signing can ignite debate far beyond the boundary ropes.

RCB Cleared To Host IPL 2026 Matches At Chinnaswamy Stadium



The Royal Challengers Bengaluru have received official permission to host their home matches of IPL 2026 at the iconic M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, bringing relief to fans after months of uncertainty. The approval was confirmed by the Karnataka State Cricket Association following a detailed review by government authorities.

The clearance comes after a thorough assessment by an expert committee appointed to evaluate the stadium's readiness. Officials examined safety arrangements, infrastructure improvements, emergency response systems, and crowd management plans before granting the final nod. The review was necessary because large-scale events at the venue had been under scrutiny after a tragic stampede during last year's victory celebrations, which resulted in casualties and injuries.

Since that incident, authorities had restricted major gatherings at the stadium until necessary upgrades were completed. Over the past several months, organizers have implemented a series of measures designed to ensure a safer experience for spectators. These include improved entry and exit procedures, better barricading, enhanced surveillance, and stronger coordination between security agencies and event staff.

According to officials, the committee concluded that the venue now meets the required standards to host high-profile sporting events. The approval allows Bengaluru to once again stage IPL matches at its historic cricket

ground, which is widely known for its vibrant atmosphere and batting-friendly pitch.

As per the schedule, the stadium will host five of RCB's seven home league matches this season, while the remaining two fixtures will be played at an alternate venue in Raipur. Among the matches planned in Bengaluru are several marquee encounters, including the tournament opener featuring RCB and Sunrisers Hyderabad. A highly anticipated clash against Chennai Super Kings is also set to take place at the venue.

The return to Chinnaswamy Stadium is a significant boost for both the franchise and its supporters. Playing at home offers RCB a familiar environment and strong crowd backing, which can be crucial in a competitive tournament like the IPL. For fans, it means the revival of the electrifying match-day experience that the stadium is famous for.

Officials emphasized that strict monitoring will continue throughout the tournament to ensure compliance with safety protocols. Authorities and organizers are determined to prevent any repeat of past incidents while delivering a smooth and enjoyable event.

With all permissions secured and preparations in place, IPL cricket is set to return to Bengaluru in full force. The decision marks the restoration of one of the league's most iconic venues and promises packed stands, high energy, and thrilling T20 action for the 2026 season.

Salman Khan's War Drama Gets New Title "Matrubhumi," Sparks Buzz Online



Bollywood superstar Salman Khan has stirred significant discussion on social media after changing the title of his upcoming war drama. The film, which was earlier announced as "Battle of Galwan," will now be released under the new title Matrubhumi.

Salman Khan personally unveiled the new title by sharing a striking poster on social media. In the image, the actor appears intense and battle-worn, with visible injuries and blood stains on his body. He is shown gripping a barbed barricade, as if standing firm to prevent enemies from advancing. The dramatic visual is accompanied by the powerful caption, "Let the war rest in peace," further fueling curiosity about the film's tone and storyline.

Earlier, the makers had announced April 10 as the film's release date. However, the newly released poster does not mention any release date, leaving fans confused and speculating about a possible postponement. The absence of an official update has only added to the buzz surrounding the project.

The film is inspired by the 2020 Galwan Valley clash between Indian and Chinese troops in Ladakh. The confrontation, which occurred in the Galwan Valley region, drew global attention as Indian soldiers displayed extraordinary courage under extreme conditions. The

movie aims to dramatize those events and highlight the bravery and sacrifices of the Indian armed forces.

Directed by Apoorva Lakhia, the film is expected to focus heavily on patriotism and the emotional cost of war. It will portray the determination, heroism, and resilience of soldiers defending the nation's borders. The project is being produced under the banner of Salman Khan Films.

Actress Chitrangda Singh stars opposite Salman Khan, adding further star power to the film. Given the subject matter and the actor's massive fan base, expectations are already high.

The earlier title had reportedly attracted controversy, with criticism emerging from Chinese state-linked media outlets. The change to "Matrubhumi," which translates to "Motherland," appears to shift the focus more toward patriotic sentiment rather than a specific historical confrontation.

Overall, the film has generated strong audience interest well ahead of its release. The title change, the intense first poster, and the missing release date have all contributed to heightened anticipation. As discussions continue online, fans are eagerly waiting for an official announcement about when this high-profile war drama will finally hit theatres.

Sai Pallavi To Play Madhubala? Buzz Around Biopic Of Legendary Star Gains Momentum



Acclaimed South Indian actress Sai Pallavi, known for her natural performances and minimal reliance on glamour, is once again in the spotlight amid reports that she may portray legendary actress Madhubala in an upcoming biographical film. The news has sparked excitement across film circles, though no official confirmation has been made yet.

Sai Pallavi has built a strong reputation in the South Indian film industry through her expressive acting and relatable screen presence. Over the years, she has expanded her popularity beyond regional cinema, establishing herself as a pan-India star. She has also begun making inroads into Bollywood, appearing in projects alongside prominent actors. She reportedly worked in the film "Ek Din" opposite Aamir Khan's son, and is also part of the ambitious epic Ramayana starring Ranbir Kapoor.

Her recent Telugu release Thandel performed well, further strengthening her position as one of the most sought-after actresses in the country. With multiple offers coming from Hindi cinema as well, her career trajectory continues to rise.

According to industry buzz, a grand biopic based on Madhubala's life is currently in development. Widely regarded as one of the most beautiful and talented actresses in Indian cinema history, Madhubala's life story — marked by immense success as well as personal struggles — offers rich cinematic material.

Reports suggest that Sai Pallavi has been approached to portray the iconic star on screen.

The project is said to be planned by celebrated filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali, known for his visually spectacular films and emotionally powerful storytelling. His past blockbusters include Padmaavat and Gangubai Kathiawadi, both noted for grand production values and strong performances.

Earlier, names like Kiara Advani and rising star Aneet Padda were reportedly considered for the role. However, insiders claim that Bhansali believes Sai Pallavi's grace, innocence, and natural acting style make her particularly suited to capture Madhubala's charm and emotional depth.

Interestingly, Sai Pallavi had once stated in an interview that she was not keen on acting in biopics, regardless of how big the project might be. This has created uncertainty about whether she will accept the offer if it is formally made.

While an official announcement is still awaited, fans are already enthusiastic about the possibility. Many believe that an actress of Sai Pallavi's calibre portraying a timeless icon like Madhubala could result in a truly special film.

For now, all eyes remain on whether Sai Pallavi will give her nod to what could become one of the most anticipated biographical films in Indian cinema.

Pawan Kalyan Shares Candid Views On Movie Ticket Price Hike Ahead Of "Ustaad Bhagat Singh" Release

Actor-politician Pawan Kalyan has voiced his clear opinion on the ongoing debate over rising cinema ticket prices during the pre-release event of his upcoming film Ustaad Bhagat Singh. The movie is set for a grand theatrical release on March 19 as a Ugadi festive special, and anticipation among fans is already high.

Speaking at the event, Pawan Kalyan emphasized the cultural importance of cinema in India. He described entertainment as the "soul of the nation," stating that films are deeply woven into the country's culture and everyday life. According to him, neither Telugu audiences nor Indian viewers as a whole can be separated from cinema, as it remains one of the most powerful and accessible forms of mass entertainment.

Addressing criticism over increasing ticket prices, the star pointed out that watching a film in theatres is not compulsory. He stressed that it is entirely the audience's choice whether to watch a movie or not. No one is being forced to visit theatres, he said, adding that viewers today have multiple options. They can either enjoy the cinematic experience on the big screen or wait to watch the film later on digital streaming platforms.

Pawan Kalyan also highlighted the financial realities of filmmaking. Large-scale productions require enormous investment



from producers, he noted, which is why they sometimes request a moderate increase in ticket prices. He insisted that such hikes should not be viewed as exploitation of audiences but rather as a necessity to sustain big-budget cinema. Having worked in the industry for decades, he said he understands the effort and risk involved in mounting large projects.

He further explained that higher ticket prices also benefit

the government through tax revenue. Approximately 18 percent of every ticket goes to the government as GST, he said. If official prices remain low, it could encourage black-market sales, where tickets are sold illegally at inflated rates and the extra money goes to middlemen instead of public revenue.

The actor also addressed industry dynamics, clarifying that he harbors no jealousy toward the success of other stars. He

said he genuinely wishes for everyone to succeed and urged the entire film fraternity to support each other's releases. According to him, the growth of the film industry depends on unity among producers, actors, governments, and audiences alike.

Pawan Kalyan's remarks have since gone viral on social media, sparking fresh discussion about ticket pricing, audience choice, and the economics of big-budget filmmaking in India.

March Second Half Set For Box Office Fireworks With Major Pan-India Releases

The summer season has always been a crucial period for the Telugu film industry, as family audiences flock to theatres during holidays. Producers and stars often target this window for releasing their biggest films, hoping to capitalize on the surge in footfall. While January witnessed a few major releases that energized the box office, February remained relatively quiet. Now, all eyes are on March, especially its second half, which is shaping up to deliver a wave of high-profile films across languages.

The early weeks of March saw mostly small and medium-budget movies hitting screens. However, the latter half of the month is dominated by big-ticket pan-India projects expected to reignite theatrical business. One of the most anticipated releases is Toxic, starring Kannada superstar Yash. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, the action drama reportedly revolves around the dark world of the drug mafia. Industry insiders suggest the film will feature grand visuals, intense action, and a gripping narrative, contributing to the massive expectations surrounding it nationwide.

Adding to the excitement, Bol-



lywood actor Ranveer Singh will also arrive on the same day with his spy thriller sequel Dhurandhar 2. Directed by Aditya Dhar, the film promises high-octane action sequences and a fast-paced storyline typical of the espionage genre. With two large-scale films releasing simultaneously, trade analysts predict a fierce box office clash that could dominate headlines and drive audience interest.

The excitement does not end

there. On March 26, Telugu cinema's "Power Star" Pawan Kalyan will return to the big screen with Ustaad Bhagat Singh. The film is directed by Harish Shankar, marking their reunion after the blockbuster Gabbar Singh, which remains one of the biggest hits of Kalyan's career. Fans are eagerly awaiting this collaboration, expecting a mass entertainer packed with action, drama, and powerful dialogues. Trade experts believe that the

arrival of these major releases could inject fresh energy into the box office after a sluggish period. With multiple big stars, diverse genres, and pan-India appeal, the latter half of March has the potential to draw large crowds back to theatres.

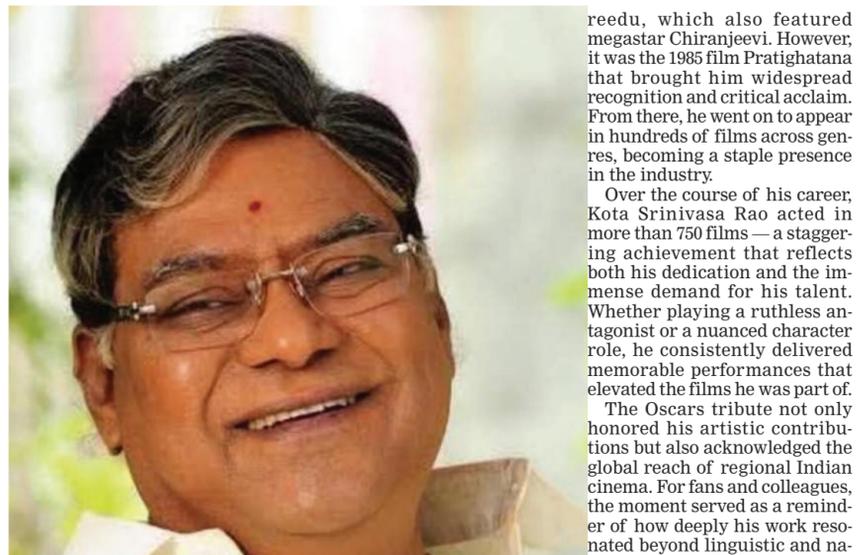
If audience response matches the pre-release hype, the month could mark a strong start to the summer season, setting the tone for the blockbuster months ahead.

Oscars Pay Emotional Tribute To Veteran Actor Kota Srinivasa Rao

The Academy Awards ceremony, regarded as the most prestigious event in global cinema, witnessed a deeply emotional moment this year as the Academy paid tribute to legendary film personalities who passed away in the previous year. As part of its traditional "In Memoriam" segment, the Oscars honored artists from across the world, remembering their invaluable contributions to the film industry.

Among the names featured was iconic Telugu actor Kota Srinivasa Rao, a towering figure in Indian cinema. His inclusion alongside international legends made the moment especially significant for Indian audiences, who expressed pride and emotion at seeing one of their own recognized on such a global platform. The tribute list also included several other prominent Indian personalities, highlighting the global impact of Indian cinema.

Kota Srinivasa Rao was widely regarded as one of the finest character actors in Telugu films. With a career spanning more than four decades, he became synonymous with versatility, effortlessly portraying villains, comic roles, and powerful sup-



porting characters. His distinctive voice, expressive acting, and commanding screen presence earned him immense respect from both audiences and filmmakers.

The veteran actor passed away on July 13, 2025, in Hyderabad

due to age-related health issues. He was 83 years old at the time of his death. His passing marked the end of an era for Telugu cinema, leaving behind a legacy that few actors can match.

Kota began his film journey with the movie Pranam Kha-

redu, which also featured megastar Chiranjeevi. However, it was the 1985 film Pratigatana that brought him widespread recognition and critical acclaim. From there, he went on to appear in hundreds of films across genres, becoming a staple presence in the industry.

Over the course of his career, Kota Srinivasa Rao acted in more than 750 films — a staggering achievement that reflects both his dedication and the immense demand for his talent. Whether playing a ruthless antagonist or a nuanced character role, he consistently delivered memorable performances that elevated the films he was part of.

The Oscars tribute not only honored his artistic contributions but also acknowledged the global reach of regional Indian cinema. For fans and colleagues, the moment served as a reminder of how deeply his work resonated beyond linguistic and national boundaries.

For many Indians, seeing Kota Srinivasa Rao remembered on the Oscars stage was a proud and poignant moment — a fitting farewell to a legendary actor whose performances will continue to live on in the hearts of audiences for generations.