

BUZZ POINTS

37 Automatic Testing Stations to Be Set Up - Ponnamb Prabhakar



PAGE 02

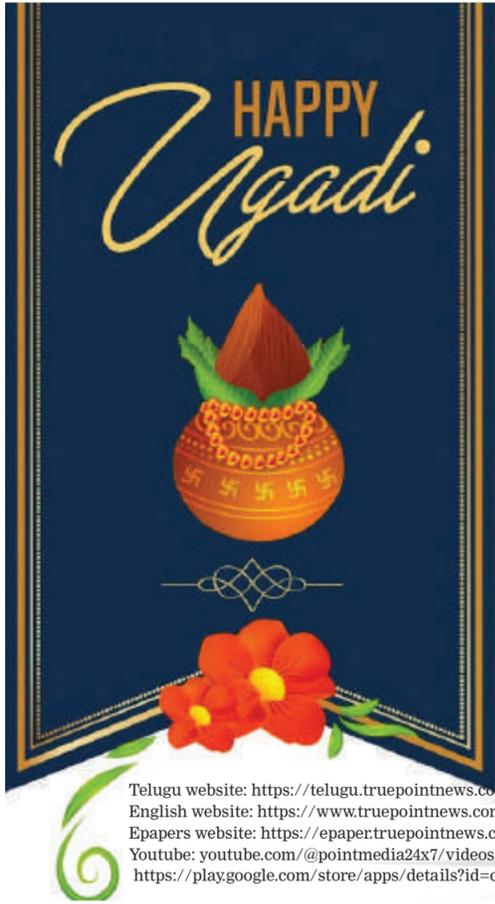
Telangana to Set Up Special Nodal Agency for Flood Prevention



PAGE 03

Road Safety Awareness Program Held at Tech Mahindra University

PAGE 04



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Revanth Reddy Urges KCR to Attend Assembly, Offers Vision for Telangana

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy urged BRS president and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) to attend the Assembly sessions and offer constructive suggestions.

Revanth Reddy expressed disappointment that the main opposition party did not respond meaningfully to the Governor's speech.

The Chief Minister said that irrespective of being in power or in opposition, leaders should maintain responsibility and respect for democratic values.



some leaders continue to display arrogance and behave in a confrontational manner. He reiterated his invitation to KCR to attend the Assembly and contribute ideas for the state's progress.

Highlighting Telangana's development history, Revanth Reddy credited former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao for enabling

global IT companies to establish operations in Hyderabad through progressive policies. He noted that the foundation for HITEC City was first laid during the tenure of P.V. Narasimha Rao and Nedurumalli Janardhan Reddy.

sized that development is a collective effort across governments.

The Chief Minister also warned about emerging challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), stating that technological advancements could impact employment opportunities.

Revanth Reddy further stated that the government is working on restoring lakes in Hyderabad, removing encroachments from drainage channels, and addressing flood-related issues.

On environmental initiatives, he announced plans to introduce 3,000 electric buses in Hyderabad to reduce pollution.

The Chief Minister concluded that the government remains committed to sustainable growth, infrastructure development, and forward-looking policies for Telangana's future.

Narmetta Oil Palm Factory Set for Inauguration on March 22



Narmetta | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The state government is gearing up for the grand inauguration of the Narmetta Oil Palm Factory on March 22, with extensive arrangements underway at the factory premises.

As part of the celebrations, the government will organize a Farmers' Festival, transforming the factory area into an exhibition and interaction hub.

The festival will feature 150 stalls representing agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and allied sectors.

The Farmers' Festival will continue until March 22, operating daily from 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

On March 22 at 4 PM, the Chief Minister will officially inaugurate the Narmetta Oil Palm Factory and dedicate it to farmers.

Additionally, from this platform, the government plans to release Rythu Bharosa funds, further strengthening its commitment to farmer welfare.

The Minister also stated that, following requests from farmers and public representatives, the government is prepared to undertake maize procurement in the current season as well.

With large-scale participation and multiple agricultural initiatives planned, the Narmetta event is expected to emerge as a landmark development for the region's farming community.

KTR Alleges ₹1.5 Lakh Crore Scam in Musi Project

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

BRS working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) has alleged that there is large-scale corruption involved in the implementation of the Musi River rejuvenation project.

Addressing the issue, KTR questioned the sudden escalation in project estimates and sought clarity on the detailed planning, cost breakdown, and execution strategy.



The BRS leader expressed concern over the impact of demolition drives being carried out in the Musi catchment areas. He alleged that several residential structures are being re-

moved and questioned the criteria being followed for such actions. According to him, the government should ensure fair compensation and proper rehabilitation before proceeding with large-scale demolitions.

KTR also criticized the ruling party for what he described as inconsistent statements regarding project funding and international support.

Reiterating his party's stance, KTR said that the BRS supports genuine river restoration and environmental protection initiatives. However, he maintained that development projects must be implemented with transparency, accountability, and public consultation.

sponsibly and that any irregularities should be thoroughly investigated.

The issue has sparked a political debate in the state, with opposition leaders calling for a detailed discussion in the Assembly.

Meanwhile, the government has maintained that the Musi rejuvenation project is aimed at improving urban infrastructure, reducing pollution, preventing flooding, and restoring the river's ecological balance.

The controversy is expected to continue in the coming days as discussions intensify over the scale, cost, and implementation of the Musi River project.

37 Automatic Testing Stations to Be Set Up - Ponnam Prabhakar

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In the Legislative Council, Minister for Transport Ponnam Prabhakar responded to a question raised by MLC Naveen Kumar regarding the establishment of Automatic Testing Stations (ATS) in the state.

The minister stated that the government has proposed setting up 37 Automatic Testing Stations, one in each district headquarters across the state. Administrative approval was issued through GO No. 28 dated September 30, 2024, by the TR&B Department. He informed the House that the ATS process is currently in the final stages of implementation.

Clarifying the operational model, the minister said that all ATS units will function entirely under government ownership, with no private involvement. He emphasized that the stations are designed to improve transparency and efficiency in vehicle testing.

Highlighting environmental initiatives, Ponnam Prabhakar said that the government collected 68.11 crore as green tax in 2024-25 and 71.14 crore in 2025-26, and these funds are being utilized by the department. He added that while revenue is generated through green tax, the government is also encouraging electric vehicles by providing 100 percent tax exemption to promote environmental protection.

The minister said the government is successfully implementing the scrappage policy, and currently three registered vehicle scrapping facilities are operating in the state. To encourage scrapping of old vehi-



cles, the government has introduced liability waivers and tax concessions.

He further stated that the transport department has implemented over 50 reforms after the formation of the Praja Palana government. One major reform includes introducing automatic driving test systems to ensure transparency in issuing driving licenses using new technology.

Referring to digital integration, the minister said that the state has joined the Vahan portal, aligning with other states in the country, and will soon integrate with the Sarathi portal for improved serv-

es. He questioned why the previous government did not join these national platforms despite most states participating.

Ponnam Prabhakar added that manual testing and issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) continue without difficulty, as necessary approvals have been obtained from the Centre. He emphasized that the government is focused on providing improved public services and reducing inconvenience by initiating vehicle registration at showrooms.

He also noted that the government has introduced a new transport logo and transitioned from

“TS” to “TG.” Road safety remains a top priority, with increased awareness programs and enhanced driver training initiatives.

Drivers recruited for RTC are receiving six months of training through the Police Recruitment Board before joining service. The government is also implementing the scrappage policy with incentives for vehicle owners and plans to establish additional ATS units in phases based on land availability.

The minister concluded that the transport department is committed to modernization, transparency, and public convenience.

Irrigation Sector Likely to Get ₹11,500 Crore for Works



Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The state government is expected to allocate around ₹11,500 crore in the upcoming budget specifically for irrigation project works, according to information from the finance department. Officials indicated that this amount will be dedicated solely to construction activities and not for repayment of loans, interest, employee salaries, or maintenance expenses.

Sources said that major projects, including Kaleshwaram and other irrigation schemes, have previously relied on borrowed funds through corporations such as the Kaleshwaram Corporation and the Irrigation Development Corporation. The government has been prioritizing repayment of these loans to reduce the financial burden on the state exchequer. In the previous year, while about ₹12,534 crore was allocated for project works, a significant portion was also set aside for debt servicing, salaries, and maintenance. Reports indicate that more than ₹35,000 crore was spent toward loan repayments, which irrigation officials claim helped save nearly ₹5,000 crore annually in interest costs.

Since the Congress government assumed office, around ₹17,000 crore has been spent on pending irrigation bills, including ₹6,900 crore cleared for older dues. Although the government has set priorities to complete certain key projects, progress has been slowed

in some areas due to land acquisition challenges, which remain a major concern.

Recognizing the importance of land acquisition, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy recently announced that an additional ₹5,000 crore would be provided separately until June to accelerate project works. It is yet to be clarified whether this amount will be included within the irrigation budget allocation or provided as a supplementary grant. An official decision is expected on the 20th of this month.

According to irrigation department estimates, approximately ₹44,632 crore would be required over the next three years to bring 16 lakh acres of additional ayacut under cultivation. For the year 2026-27 alone, funds worth about ₹28,078 crore are needed to complete works covering 4.71 lakh acres. However, engineering proposals totaling over ₹80,000 crore for various projects were later revised and reduced to around ₹42,000 crore before being submitted to the government, including provisions for loan repayments.

Despite significant spending on infrastructure, officials acknowledge that land acquisition delays continue to hinder full utilization of irrigation facilities. As the budget announcement approaches, clarity is awaited on the total allocation for the irrigation sector and how much will be directed exclusively toward new works.

No Shortage of Urea for Yasangi Farmers: Minister Tummala in Council

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao informed the Legislative Council that the government has ensured smooth supply of urea during the ongoing Yasangi season, preventing any inconvenience to farmers. He stated that urea purchases this season have increased compared to the previous year, reflecting both higher demand and timely supply management.

Responding to questions raised in the Council, the Minister said that as of March 18, farmers have purchased 10.73 lakh metric tonnes of urea this Yasangi season, compared to 10.24 lakh metric tonnes during the same season last year. This marks an increase of 30,000 tonnes, he noted.

To avoid long queues and inconvenience at fertilizer centers, the government introduced a Fertilizer Booking App, he explained. Through this system, farmers can book urea in advance and collect it from the selected dealer at their convenience. The booked stock is reserved for 24 hours at the concerned center. The Minister claimed that Telangana is the only state in India implementing such a system to ensure transparent and convenient fertilizer distribution.

Tummala also clarified that during the previous Kharif season, the government had prepared in advance by allocating 1,100 crore to MARKFED for buffer stock arrangements. However, due to inter-



national market conditions and production disruptions at Ramagundam Fertilizer Plant and Nagarjuna Fertilizers, expected supplies were affected during April, May, and June. Despite these challenges, he said the state government continuously pressured the Centre to secure additional allocations beyond the state's quota.

He further stated that farmers received 15,000 tonnes more urea in the current Kharif season compared to 2024, and so far, 30,000

tonnes more have been supplied during the ongoing Yasangi season than the total consumption of last year's Yasangi.

Highlighting the success of the booking system, the Minister said that through the Fertilizer App, 20.74 lakh farmers have purchased 88.35 lakh urea bags so far. Additionally, 17,926 tenant farmers and 23,087 NDS farmers have benefited from the platform.

Despite opposition concerns over the app, he said the growing num-

ber of bookings shows that farmers have welcomed the system. The government, he added, remains committed to ensuring timely fertilizer supply in line with increasing demand and will continue implementing more efficient measures in the future.

The Minister also mentioned that awareness programs are being conducted on the responsible use of urea, as excessive usage can lead to environmental and agricultural concerns.

MP Vamsi Krishna Seeks Pension Hike for Retired Singareni Workers

New Delhi | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Peddapalli Member of Parliament Gaddam Vamsi Krishna met the Coal Mines Provident Fund (CMPF) Commissioner and Coal Controller Sajeesh Kumar N. in New Delhi on Wednesday, urging immediate steps to enhance pensions for retired Singareni coal workers under the CMPF Scheme, 1998.

During the meeting, the MP highlighted the financial difficulties faced by retired employees of Singareni, stating that the current pension amounts are insufficient to meet their basic needs. He emphasized that many former coal workers are struggling to manage daily expenses due to the limited pension benefits provided under the existing scheme.

Vamsi Krishna requested the authorities to consider a prompt revision of pension amounts to ensure that retired workers can lead a dignified and secure life after years of service in the coal sector. He underlined that improving pension benefits would provide much-needed relief to thousands of beneficiaries and their families.

According to sources, the CMPF



Commissioner and Coal Controller responded positively to the concerns raised during the discussion. They reportedly assured the MP that the matter would be examined carefully in accordance with established rules and procedures. Officials indicated that appropriate measures would be considered after a detailed review of the proposal.

The meeting concluded in a constructive and cordial atmosphere, with hopes that the concerns of retired Singareni workers would receive due attention. The discussions are expected to pave the way for further deliberations on pension enhancement and related welfare measures.

Retired coal employees and work-

er representatives have long been demanding improvements in pension benefits, citing rising living costs and medical expenses. The latest initiative by the MP has brought renewed attention to the issue at the national level.

Further developments are awaited following the official review by the concerned authorities.

Vakiti Srihari Slams BJP Over Telangana Fund Allocation



Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Minister Vakiti Srihari on Tuesday expressed strong criticism of the BJP's approach towards Telangana, alleging that the state has been treated unfairly in central fund allocations. Speaking in the Assembly, he questioned why Telangana was not receiving financial support on par with other states.

He said the Centre has been allocating higher funds to some states, including Andhra Pradesh, while Telangana's share remains comparatively low. "What wrong has Telangana done to deserve this discrimination?" the Minister asked, urging the central government to ensure equitable distribution of resources among all states.

Vakiti Srihari stated that if the Centre releases adequate funds to Telangana, the state government is ready to extend full cooperation in development initiatives. He emphasized that collaborative efforts between the state and the Centre would accelerate progress across sectors and benefit the people directly.

Highlighting his personal journey, the Minister said he feels proud to be entrusted with a department related to his background. "From childhood, I have worked in this profession. It is a matter of happiness that I have

been given the Fisheries Department," he said. He added that he is committed to working hard for the development of the sector and improving the livelihoods of those dependent on it.

Srihari described the allocation of the Fisheries portfolio to him by the Congress party as historic, stating that it is perhaps the first time in independent India that a fisherman has been given responsibility for the Fisheries Department. He thanked the party leadership for the opportunity and expressed confidence in strengthening the sector through innovative policies and welfare measures.

The Minister also commented on the Musi River rejuvenation project, stating that opposition parties appear uncomfortable with the initiative. He said the government is undertaking the Musi cleanup with the objective of improving living conditions for the poor. According to him, no citizen should be forced to live in polluted or unhygienic conditions.

Vakiti Srihari reiterated that the government's focus is on inclusive development and environmental restoration. He added that welfare-oriented governance and proper fund allocation from the Centre are essential to ensure balanced growth in Telangana.

BRS Demands Immediate Maize Procurement and Relief for Farmers



Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Alleging negligence by the Congress government, BRS MLAs and MLCs staged a protest from Gun Park to the Assembly demanding immediate action to support maize farmers in the state.

Harish Rao said that following repeated appeals by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao to shift from paddy cultivation and adopt crop diversification, farmers cultivated maize in nearly 8 lakh acres across the state.

According to the BRS leader, maize has been arriving in markets for the past 15 days, yet procurement centers have not been established. As a result, farmers are forced to sell their produce to middlemen at prices ranging between ₹1,600 and ₹1,700 per quintal, while the minimum support price (MSP) is ₹2,400 per quintal, causing significant losses.

He questioned the government's intentions, asking whether it was benefiting farmers or middlemen. He demanded clarity on why procurement centers remain closed despite the arrival of the crop in large

quantities. Harish Rao alleged that the delay is causing severe financial hardship to farmers.

The BRS leader also highlighted damages caused by unseasonal rains and hailstorms in several districts. He said maize, mango, and other crops were extensively damaged, particularly in areas where harvested produce was left to dry in market yards and open spaces.

Criticizing the government's budget announcements, Harish Rao said that while the Congress made strong promises regarding crop insurance schemes, they have not been implemented effectively. He alleged that neither crop insurance nor input subsidy has been provided to farmers over the past two years.

He urged the state government to immediately collect reports from all districts regarding crop damage, conduct swift enumeration, and release input subsidy payments without delay to support affected farmers.

Demanding urgent action, the BRS called for the immediate opening of procurement centers and purchase of maize at the MSP of ₹2,400 per quintal. The party also requested the Agriculture Minister to take necessary steps to safeguard farmers from further losses and ensure timely government intervention.

The protest concluded with leaders reiterating their commitment to stand by farmers and press for prompt relief measures.

Moinabad Farmhouse Case Takes Major Turn; Attempt to Murder Charges Filed



Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Moinabad farmhouse drug party case involving former BRS MLA Pilot Rohit Reddy has taken a serious turn after police registered attempt to murder cases against him and two others. The incident, which initially began as a narcotics-related investigation, escalated following allegations of gunfire when police attempted to enter the premises.

According to officials, during the raid at the farmhouse, suspects allegedly opened fire, prompting authorities to include sections related to attempt to murder in the case. Based on the developments, police booked Pilot Rohit Reddy, his brother Ritesh Reddy, and Delhi-based businessman Namit Sharma under serious charges.

The case has triggered widespread political reactions across the Telugu states. Taking the matter seriously, the BRS leadership issued a show-cause notice to Rohit Reddy, stating that his actions had brought disrepute to the party. The party directed him to submit an explanation within seven days and asked him to stay away from party activities until further notice. The leadership also warned that failure to provide a satisfactory response could lead to expulsion.

Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed under the orders of the DGP, is handling the probe. Officials confirmed that the SIT plans to file a charge sheet within three months as part of the ongoing investigation.

In another development, drug test results reportedly showed that several individuals linked to the case tested positive for substances including cocaine and MDMA, according to SIT findings. Among them was Eluru TDP MP Putta Mahesh Kumar. While the MP was granted station bail in the drug-related matter, Rohit Reddy, Ritesh Reddy, and Namit Sharma are currently in judicial custody at Chanchalguda Jail under a 14-day remand in connection with the firing incident.

Following the controversy, the TDP leadership also issued a notice to MP Putta Mahesh Kumar, directing him to stay away from party programs pending further clarification.

The farmhouse episode has now become a major political and legal issue, placing pressure on leaders from both parties as investigations continue. Authorities have stated that all angles, including drug possession and alleged firing, are being thoroughly examined as part of the probe.

Mahalakshmi Scheme Strengthens RTC - Ponnam Prabhakar

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar informed the Legislative Council that the government's flagship Mahalakshmi Scheme, which provides free bus travel for women, has significantly strengthened the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (RTC) and enhanced women's mobility across the state.

Responding to questions raised by MLC Addanki Dayakar and other members in the Council, the minister said that from December 9, 2023, to February 28, 2026, a total of 279.97 crore women passengers have availed free travel under the scheme. He stated that the government has reimbursed RTC with substantial financial support to ensure smooth implementation.

According to the minister, the government paid ₹3,866.30 crore in 2024-25 and ₹2,913.82 crore up to February 26, 2026, towards the scheme's implementation. He clarified that the government is committed to compensating RTC regularly and



maintaining its financial stability.

Ponnam Prabhakar said that since the launch of free travel for women within 48 hours of the formation of the Praja Palana government, RTC's occupancy rate increased from 69 percent to 98 percent, reflecting higher passenger usage and improved service demand. He added that women are

increasingly using RTC services for employment, education, and daily travel, contributing to better connectivity across urban and rural areas.

The minister emphasized that the government is operating additional buses to meet rising passenger demand, particularly in agricultural regions, remote villages, and busy urban routes.

New routes have been introduced based on requests from public representatives to ensure wider accessibility.

Highlighting welfare measures, he noted that the government has provided 3,038 new jobs in RTC, compared to none during the previous decade. Additionally, 2,708 new buses have been procured, whereas no buses

were purchased earlier. The minister also mentioned that 600 buses have been allocated to women self-help groups, generating monthly support of ₹70,000 for beneficiaries.

He further stated that 1,132 compassionate appointments were completed, and infrastructure development worth ₹100 crore is underway at bus stations. New bus depots have been established in Eturnagaram (Mulugu district) and Peddapalli. The government has also reduced financial liabilities, including decreasing CCS arrears from ₹664 crore to ₹300 crore and PF dues from ₹1,350 crore to ₹600 crore.

Ponnam Prabhakar said RTC is progressing toward women's empowerment, improved employee welfare, and operational stability. He urged the House to recognize the efforts of drivers and conductors who transport nearly 60 lakh passengers daily across the state.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening RTC and expanding public transport services for inclusive growth.

Telangana to Set Up Special Nodal Agency for Flood Prevention

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

State Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Captain N. Uttam Kumar Reddy announced that the government will establish a special nodal agency to prevent and manage floods more effectively in Telangana. He said the initiative aims to implement advance planning and adopt modern technology to reduce flood intensity and minimize damage during the monsoon season.

The Minister made the announcement while addressing the Regional-Level Training Program on Floodplain Zoning held at the Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development Institute, Jubilee Hills, organized by the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Krishna and Godavari Basin Organisations.

Officials from the CWC, representatives of the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) and Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), the Polavaram Project, disaster management authorities, as well as experts from IITs, NITs, and Osma-



nia University participated in the event. The message of CWC Chairperson Anupama Prasad was read out during the session.

Speaking on the occasion, Uttam Kumar Reddy stressed that flood disasters are often caused not only by natural calamities but also by human errors. He cited the severe floods of September 2024, which caused widespread destruction across the state. Recalling his visit to Khammam district during the crisis, the Minister

said the swelling of the Munneru River led to water levels reaching nearly 36 feet, inundating residential colonies and submerging homes up to rooftops.

He noted that over 110 villages were affected, with residents taking shelter on hills, rooftops, and elevated areas awaiting rescue. The floods claimed 29 lives, caused losses estimated at ₹5,438 crore, damaged roads stretching over 1,023 kilometers, and affected 257 streams and

tanks. Additionally, around 20 lakh acres of crops were submerged. He described the disaster as one of the worst in the past three decades in the region.

The Minister emphasized that many recent flood incidents are aggravated by encroachments on natural drainage channels, which obstruct water flow and increase damage. He called for collective efforts to protect rivers, describing them as "mother-like lifelines."

He urged experts to leverage advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to develop sustainable flood mitigation strategies. The government will implement CWC-recommended Floodplain Zoning, including Protected Zones, Regulatory Zones, and Warning Zones, which he said support sustainable development rather than hinder it.

Highlighting river rejuvenation efforts, the Minister termed the Musi River Rejuvenation Project as one of the largest urban river restoration initiatives in the country. He noted that Phase-1 plans were released on March 13, 2026, in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, and that CWC guidelines are being fully integrated into the project framework.

He concluded by stating that the Krishna and Godavari rivers play a crucial role in Telangana's development and reaffirmed the government's commitment to flood prevention and river conservation.

Chamala Raises Key Farm Issues in Lok Sabha

New Delhi | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Bhongir Lok Sabha MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy participated in the Agriculture Demands for Grants discussion in the Lok Sabha after the suspension imposed on him was lifted. Speaking in the House, he strongly highlighted several concerns related to farmers and sought greater central support for the agricultural sector.

Chamala stated that nearly 50% of India's population depends on agriculture, yet the sector contributes only 16-18% to the country's GDP. He described this as a structural imbalance and said it reflects the need for stronger policy interventions and increased investment in agriculture.

The MP criticized the 2026-27 Union Budget, saying it does not sufficiently support farmers. He questioned why corporate loans amounting to nearly 16 lakh crore were reportedly written off, while similar relief has not been extended



to farmers. He asked what fault farmers have committed to face such limitations in support and whether their voices are being ignored at the national level.

Chamala also raised concerns regarding the non-implementation of the Swaminathan Committee recommendations, particularly the demand for a legally guaranteed Mini-

mum Support Price (MSP) for agricultural produce. He questioned why the central government has not taken steps to provide statutory backing to MSP despite long-standing demands from the farming community.

He further asked why the government is entering into trade agreements, including with the United States, when farmers are

facing financial difficulties. According to him, agricultural interests must be prioritized in all national and international policy decisions.

Referring to the proposed Seeds Bill 2025, Chamala urged the Centre to consider amendments proposed by Telangana, including provisions for compensation for crop losses and support for

seed production. He emphasized the need for sustainable measures to ensure quality seed availability for farmers.

The MP also called for the establishment of an Oil Palm Regional Research Centre in Telangana to provide scientific assistance to oil palm growers. He stressed the importance of central cooperation in strengthening seed development and agricultural research.

Additionally, he pointed out that under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, an agricultural university should be established in Telangana and urged the Centre to fulfill this provision.

Chamala concluded by stating that the agricultural sector requires urgent reforms and enhanced central assistance. He emphasized that agriculture plays a crucial role in employment generation and national development, and therefore the Union Budget should reflect a stronger farmer-centric approach.

ABVP Leaders Arrested During Protest at Osmania University



Osmania University, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Tension prevailed at Osmania University (OU) on Tuesday after members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) staged a protest demanding the release of pending fee reimbursement and scholarship dues. The protesting students were detained by police and shifted to the Osmania University Police Station.

The ABVP organized a demonstration on the main road inside the university campus, urging the state government to clear outstanding dues and allocate 15% of the budget to the Education Department in the upcoming assembly budget session. Leaders alleged that nearly two years after the formation of the current government, pending student dues amounting to approximately ₹9,000 crore have not been released.

Speaking on the occasion, ABVP student leaders expressed strong dissatisfaction over the delay in fee reimbursement and scholarship payments. They stated

that students across the state are facing financial difficulties due to the non-release of funds and demanded immediate action from the government.

The leaders also criticized the functioning of the Education Commission constituted by the government, alleging that it was acting against student interests. They claimed that if there were any attempts to abolish the fee reimbursement scheme, the organization would launch intensified protests.

Police officials stated that the protest was dispersed to maintain law and order, and the detained students were taken into custody as a precautionary measure. Further discussions between university authorities and student representatives are expected.

ABVP leaders reiterated their demand for full implementation of fee reimbursement and timely release of scholarship funds, warning that continued neglect of student issues could lead to larger statewide agitations in the coming days.

Road Safety Awareness Program Held at Tech Mahindra University



Quthbullapur, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

As part of the "Arrive Alive Campaign-2026" in Bahadurpally, a road safety and traffic awareness program was organized for students at Tech Mahindra University under the supervision of the Jeedimetla Traffic Division. Traffic ACP Venkata Reddy attended the event as the chief guest.

During the session, ACP Venkata Reddy educated students on the importance of defensive driving, pedestrian safety, and the proper use of helmets and seat belts. He emphasized that following traffic regulations can significantly reduce road accidents and save lives.

The officer also highlighted the dangers of overspeeding, drunk driving, and wrong-side driving. Through informative video presentations, he explained the serious consequences of traffic viola-

tions and how negligent behavior on the roads can lead to fatal accidents. Students were urged to develop responsible driving habits and promote road safety awareness among peers and family members.

Jeedimetla Traffic Circle Inspector Narasimha Rao, along with traffic personnel, faculty members of Tech Mahindra University, and a large number of students, participated in the program. Officials stated that such awareness initiatives are being conducted regularly to strengthen road discipline and encourage safe driving practices.

The program concluded with an interactive session, where students clarified their doubts regarding traffic rules and road safety measures. Authorities reaffirmed their commitment to continuing similar campaigns across educational institutions to create a safer traffic environment.

Bahujan Student Groups Extend Support to MLA Mandula Samuel

Osmania University, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Bahujan student organizations have expressed solidarity with Tungaturthi MLA Mandula Samuel, condemning the alleged attack on his residence. Leaders of the groups stated that political differences should not lead to violent actions.

Addressing a press conference near the Arts College at Osmania University, Jangili Darshan, State President of the Dalit Bahujan Student Union, criticized the incident and called it inappropriate. He said that although MLA Samuel had previously made certain remarks, he later expressed regret during a press meeting at Gandhi Bhavan and withdrew his comments. Despite this, attacking his house with eggs and tomatoes was not justified, he added.

Darshan questioned the role of BJP leaders in connection with earlier incidents, including the death of a two-year-old child in Nagarkurnool district, asking where they were at that time. He stated that Bahujan student organizations stand firmly in sup-



port of MLA Mandula Samuel.

He further warned that if similar confrontational actions were taken, the situation could escalate, urging all political groups to maintain restraint and uphold democratic values. The leaders emphasized that disagreements should be addressed through dialogue rather than protests involving violence.

The student representatives appealed to authorities to ensure peace on campuses and across the state, and to prevent any further incidents that could disturb public order. They reiterated their commitment to democratic principles and social justice while maintaining their support for the MLA in this matter.

Foreign-Linked Drug Network Busted in Quthbullapur

Quthbullapur, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a major crackdown on narcotics trafficking, the Excise Task Force (DTF) under the Medchal District Excise Department busted a drug racket operating in Quthbullapur. Acting on credible intelligence, officials conducted a targeted raid that led to the seizure of significant quantities of illegal drugs and the arrest of one suspect.

During the operation, authorities confiscated approximately 76.77 grams of cocaine and 200 grams of OG Kush (high-grade hybrid cannabis). A Ford EcoSport car, allegedly used for transportation and distribution of the drugs, was also seized. Officials confirmed that one individual was taken into custody in connection with the case.

The arrested accused has been identified as Injoth Singh Nagpal (27), a businessman from the Yaprul area of Secunderabad. After being produced before the court, he was remanded to judicial custody. He was later shifted to Cherlapally Jail, officials said.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused sourced cocaine from a Nigerian individual known as "Abduzu," reportedly operating from the Dombivli area of Mumbai. Additionally, the OG Kush was allegedly procured from a person named "Navi," believed to be based in Pattaya, Thailand. Both



individuals are currently absconding, and efforts are underway to trace them.

Authorities further stated that the accused used the Telegram messaging application to coordinate drug transactions. The network reportedly followed the "dead drop" method, where drugs are concealed at predetermined locations to avoid direct contact between buyers and sellers. This technique is increas-

ingly being used by traffickers to evade surveillance.

Excise Superintendent Fayyazuddin confirmed that the operation was carried out based on reliable information and forms part of ongoing efforts to curb drug-related activities in the district. He added that investigators are examining international connections and digital communication trails to uncover the wider network.

Quthbullapur police officials are conducting a detailed investigation to identify additional links and possible accomplices in the case. Authorities indicated that further arrests may follow as the probe progresses.

The successful operation highlights intensified enforcement actions against drug trafficking networks with foreign connections operating in the region.

Lalaguda Railway Degree College Celebrates 49th Annual Day with Grandeur

Hyderabad, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The 49th Annual Day celebrations of Lalaguda Railway Degree College were held in a grand manner on Wednesday at the college premises. The event showcased the academic excellence and artistic talents of students, with active participation from senior officials of the South Central Railway, faculty members, and a large number of students.

The celebrations began traditionally with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp followed by a prayer. The campus was beautifully decorated with lights and floral arrangements, creating a festive atmosphere. The event highlighted the institution's commitment to holistic education and overall student development.

College Principal Dr. Sushil Tukaram Ambadkar presented the annual report, outlining the outstanding achievements of students during the previous academic year. He emphasized that the college re-



mains dedicated to providing holistic education and nurturing both academic and extracurricular talents.

The Principal Chief Personnel Officer of South Central Railway and College Chairman Siddharth

Kati attended the event as the chief guest. He appreciated the students' performance and commended the discipline maintained within the institution. He also encouraged students to continue striving for excellence in their respective

fields.

Deputy Chief Personnel Officer (IR) Jai Shankar Chavan and Deputy Chief Officer (Schools) Malathi attended as distinguished guests and motivated the students with their inspiring remarks.

On this occasion, the guests released the college annual magazine titled "Udayani 2025-26." Medals and certificates were presented to students who excelled in academics, sports, cultural activities, and other fields.

The cultural program was a major highlight of the event, featuring dance performances, speeches, and artistic presentations by students. The performances reflected creativity, teamwork, and confidence, earning applause from the audience.

The program concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Chemistry Lecturer and Academic Coordinator L. Govind, marking the successful completion of the celebrations.

Tribal Groups Protest Over Attack on Woman Sarpanch's Family in Osmania University



Osmania University, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Tribal student organizations strongly condemned the attack on the family of a woman sarpanch from Anki Ronipalli village in Nagarkurnool district. The incident has triggered widespread outrage, with tribal groups alleging a deterioration in law and order in the state.

Members of various tribal associations staged a protest near the Arts College at Osmania University, demanding strict action against the perpetrators. During the demonstration, leaders expressed serious concern over what they described as an attack on democracy in Telangana. They stated that violence against an elected representative and her family was unacceptable and shameful.

The tribal leaders alleged that law and order has significantly deteriorated since the Congress government came to power in the state. They claimed that the attack on a woman public representative belonging to a tribal community reflects administrative failure and called for immediate

intervention by authorities.

Protesters demanded that the Director General of Police (DGP) take swift action and ensure stringent punishment for those responsible. They emphasized that protecting elected representatives, especially women from marginalized communities, is the government's responsibility.

Speakers at the protest, including Dr. Karate Raj Nayak and Rajesh Nayak, criticized the incident and urged the administration to restore confidence among tribal communities. They stated that such attacks undermine democratic values and create fear among grassroots leaders.

The organizations warned that if immediate action is not taken, they would intensify their agitation in the coming days. They also called for enhanced security measures for women representatives and stronger enforcement of law and order across the state.

Police officials are expected to investigate the incident, and further details are awaited. The protest concluded peacefully, with participants submitting their demands to the authorities.

Special Cleanliness Drive Conducted in Gajularamaram Circle



Quthbullapur, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

As part of the ongoing 99-day Public Governance Progress Plan, the 13th day activities were conducted with enthusiasm in Gajularamaram Circle. A special cleanliness drive was organized at the Shapur Nagar Market and Ushodaya Colony Vegetable Market, focusing on maintaining hygiene standards in busy commercial areas.

Officials carried out detailed inspections in the weekly markets, including mapping of market zones and monitoring sanitation practices in vegetable and fruit stalls. Special emphasis was placed on proper waste management to ensure cleaner surroundings and improved public health conditions.

Gajularamaram Circle Deputy Commissioner Sreepad Rameswar directed shopkeepers to mandatorily install twin bins for effective segregation of waste. He instructed sanitation staff to ensure strict implementation of cleanliness measures across all market areas.

The drive was conducted under the supervision of the Deputy

Commissioner in coordination with sanitation officials and field staff. Authorities closely monitored compliance to ensure that hygiene standards were maintained throughout the markets.

During the inspection, action was taken against establishments that failed to follow cleanliness guidelines. Four shops were fined, and a total penalty of ₹4,100 was collected from the violators. Officials stated that strict enforcement will continue against those neglecting sanitation rules.

Authorities emphasized that the initiative aims to enhance awareness about cleanliness among traders and the public, while safeguarding community health. They added that maintaining hygienic market environments is essential for preventing the spread of diseases and ensuring a safe shopping experience for residents.

Sanitation officers participated actively in the program, and officials confirmed that similar inspections and awareness drives will continue in the coming days as part of the broader governance plan.

Brahmin Representatives Submit Representation to Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Representatives of various Brahmin organizations met IT and Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu on Wednesday and submitted a detailed memorandum seeking the establishment of the Telangana Brahmin Welfare Council with the appointment of a chairman and members, along with allocation of adequate funds for welfare activities.

The delegation, led by Basavaraju Srinivas, Chief Coordinator of Brahmin Organisations for Social Service (BASS), met the Minister at his office in the Assembly premises. They urged the government to address their concerns and ensure comprehensive support for the welfare and development of the Brahmin community in the state.

During the meeting, representatives Nandiraju Lakshminarayana, Annavajula Suryaprakash, Niranjan Desai, Mangu Raghava Rao, Pramod, and Y. Srinivasa Rao explained their demands in detail to the Minister. They emphasized the need for stronger representation and institutional support for the community in various government initiatives.

Among their key demands were inclusion of Brahmins in devasthanam governing bodies, protection of temple assets, and regulari-



zation of temple priests' (archakas) jobs. They also requested the expansion of the Dhoopa Deepa Naivedyam scheme to all temples with increased funding support.

The delegation further sought special allocation for priests and economically weaker Brahmin families under the Indiramma housing scheme, as well as the introduction of a pension facility for retired priests, including extending bene-

fits to those who have already retired.

They also proposed the establishment of a Brahmin Credit Society with dedicated financial support, assistance for higher education, and the provision of self-employment loans for unemployed youth from the community.

After receiving the memorandum, Minister Sridhar Babu assured the delegation that he would

bring their requests to the attention of the Chief Minister. He stated that the government would examine the proposals in accordance with policy guidelines and take appropriate action.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with the representatives expressing hope that their long-pending demands would receive due consideration from the government.

Governor's Address Is a 'Declaration of Unfulfilled Promises': Eleti Maheshwar Reddy

Hyderabad | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

BJP Legislative Party leader Eleti Maheshwar Reddy on Tuesday alleged that the state government made the Governor deliver misleading statements during the recent Assembly session. Speaking during the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the Governor's Address, he described the speech as a "declaration of unfulfilled promises."

He criticized the government for what he termed as self-praise without presenting a clear roadmap for development. According to him, the address lacked direction and concrete plans for economic growth and governance reforms.

Eleti Maheshwar Reddy claimed that despite the state being burdened with heavy debt, the government is projecting ambitious goals such as transforming Telangana into a three trillion-dollar economy. He questioned the feasibility of such claims and demanded clarity on how this target would be achieved.

Highlighting financial concerns, he said that GST collections in the



state have reportedly declined by 5 percent, indicating what he described as poor fiscal management. He alleged that the state is witnessing uncontrolled borrowing and financial instability, call-

ing it a period of excessive debt accumulation.

The BJP leader also criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's administration, stating that its policies have become harmful to farm-

ers. He alleged that the government has failed to provide compensation for crop losses in North Telangana, despite repeated demands from affected farmers.

He further pointed out that farmers are still waiting for the implementation of the Rythu Bharosa scheme, urging the government to fulfill its assurances without delay. According to him, agricultural welfare should be the top priority, especially when farmers are facing financial distress.

Eleti Maheshwar Reddy emphasized that governance should focus on transparency, accountability, and economic stability rather than political rhetoric. He urged the state government to present a realistic development strategy and address the concerns of farmers and the public.

The debate in the Assembly witnessed sharp exchanges, reflecting continued political differences between the ruling and opposition parties over governance, financial management, and welfare commitments.

Telangana HC Orders Status Quo on Velugumatla Lands



Velugumatla (Khammam), March 18 | TPN Bureau

The Telangana High Court has directed authorities to maintain status quo on the disputed Bhoodan lands in Velugumatla village of Khammam district, offering temporary relief to residents who approached the court challenging demolition actions in the area.

The petitioners informed the court that they had constructed houses on plots allotted by the Bhoodan Yagna Board and claimed that the structures were removed without prior notice. They argued that they possessed valid documents, including pattas issued by the concerned authorities, and contended that due process was not followed before taking action. The petitioners sought protection of their possession and requested the court to restrain further demolitions until the dispute was resolved.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the High Court ordered that the status quo be maintained with respect to the land in question. The bench stated that no further changes should be made to the site until further orders. The matter has been posted for detailed hearing to examine the legality of the actions taken by the authorities and the documentary evidence submitted by the petitioners.

The Velugumatla Bhoodan lands

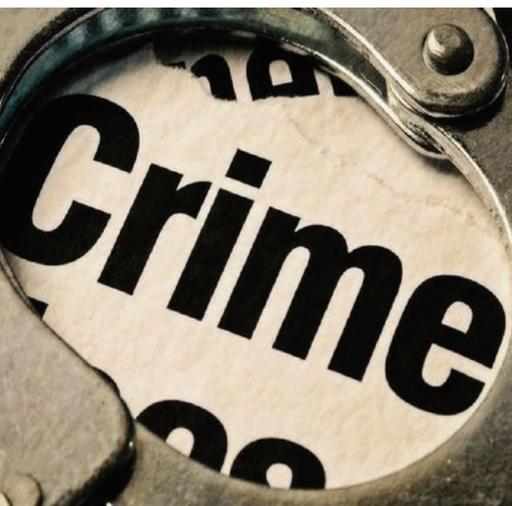
have been subject to prolonged disputes involving residents and revenue officials. While villagers maintain that the land was allotted under the Bhoodan framework, authorities have stated that certain parcels were identified during inspections as encroachments or irregular holdings. Officials have previously claimed that action was initiated based on administrative directions and findings related to land records.

The issue has sparked concern among local residents, who have called for clarity on land ownership and protection of families residing in the area. Some affected individuals have demanded rehabilitation measures and compensation in case the land is found to belong to the government or the Bhoodan Board.

Legal experts observe that the High Court's direction to maintain status quo is a precautionary measure to preserve the existing condition of the property while the court examines the merits of the case. The interim order ensures that no further demolition or alteration takes place until the next hearing.

The case will continue to be heard in the coming days, when the court is expected to review submissions from both the petitioners and the state authorities before issuing further instructions.

Hanumakonda Father, Daughter Burnt to Death; Husband Suspected



Hanumakonda | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a shocking incident, a father and his daughter were burnt to death under suspicious circumstances in Hanumakonda district on Wednesday early morning. The incident occurred around 4 a.m. at a residence in Kadipikonda, Kazipet mandal.

The deceased have been identified as Rajashekhar (54) and his daughter Rajashri (24). According to initial reports, the duo sustained severe burn injuries inside the house and died on the spot. Police said the case came to light after neighbours noticed the fire and alerted authorities.

Family members have alleged that Rajashri's husband is suspected to be involved in the incident. Preliminary information suggests the fire may have been linked to a fam-

ily dispute. Police have taken the suspect into custody for questioning and are investigating all possible angles.

Officials visited the scene shortly after receiving information, collected evidence, and shifted the bodies to a nearby hospital for post-mortem examination. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway to determine the exact cause of the fire and establish responsibility.

The tragic incident has created shock and tension in the locality, with residents demanding strict action if foul play is confirmed. Authorities have assured a thorough inquiry and said that appropriate legal steps will be taken based on the findings.

Further details are expected as the investigation progresses.

YouTuber Vaishnavi Murder Case: Husband Arrested



Jagtial | March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a tragic and shocking development, police have arrested Haribabu, the husband of popular YouTuber Vaishnavi, in connection with her murder in Jagtial district. The case has sent shockwaves across the region, with authorities confirming that the investigation is ongoing.

According to details shared by the Korutla Circle Inspector, Vaishnavi was the daughter of Durga Prasad and Rani, residents of Madapur village in Korutla mandal. She had gained recognition through her videos on YouTube and had built a growing online presence over time.

Police said that Vaishnavi and Haribabu developed a friendship a few months ago, which gradually turned into a romantic relationship. However, the marriage faced serious opposition due to disputes over dowry demands. Haribabu's family allegedly insisted on dowry, while Vaishnavi's parents stated that they were financially unable to meet such demands.

The disagreement between the families reportedly led to tension. At one point, Haribabu allegedly attempted suicide after the marriage proposal faced resistance. After recovering, he went ahead with the marriage against family objections. The couple got married on May 29 last year at the outskirts of Venkata Puram village and later began living at Haribabu's residence.

Police stated that even after the wedding, harassment related to dowry allegedly continued. Although Vaishnavi's parents had already provided assistance by purchasing two acres of land worth approximately ₹5 lakh, additional demands were reportedly made. In recent months, Vaishnavi is said to have faced continued pressure and harassment from her husband and in-laws.

Officials confirmed that Vaishnavi was four months pregnant at the time of the incident. Despite her condition, the alleged harassment did not stop. On Tuesday, Haribabu allegedly killed his wife and fled the scene.

Family members discovered Vaishnavi lying unconscious and immediately shifted her to the Government Hospital in Korutla. Medical staff examined her and declared her dead on arrival.

Following a formal complaint from Vaishnavi's parents, police registered a case and launched a detailed investigation. Haribabu was subsequently arrested in connection with the murder. Authorities are examining all aspects of the case, including allegations of dowry harassment and domestic violence.

Police have assured that strict action will be taken based on the evidence gathered during the investigation. The incident has once again highlighted concerns over dowry-related harassment and the safety of women in marital homes.

"Safe Food Revolution" in Secunderabad Streets



Medchal, March 18, 2026 | TPN Bureau

In a significant step towards promoting public health and hygiene, a large-scale Food Safety Training and Certification program was successfully conducted for over 500 street food vendors in the Secunderabad Parliamentary Constituency on Tuesday. The initiative aims to ensure that delicious street food is served with guaranteed safety standards.

The training program was organized under the supervision of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) South Regional Office. Officials stated that food vendors are not merely business operators but hold a major responsibility in providing safe and hygienic food to thousands of consumers every day. They emphasized that maintaining cleanliness directly contributes to protecting public health and preventing food-borne illnesses.

Food safety expert Dr. Anjaneyulu Chaganti provided practical guidance to the vendors, explaining essential hygiene practices required at the field level. He advised food handlers to wash their hands regularly, wear head coverings while preparing or serving food, and ensure that food is protected from flies, dust, and other contaminants. He also highlight-

ed the importance of maintaining clean utensils, storage areas, and cooking environments.

At the conclusion of the program, each trained vendor was provided with special training kits, along with food hygiene kits and certification documents. Officials noted that the certification would help improve customer confidence and enhance trust in street food businesses.

Several participants expressed happiness over the initiative, stating that while they previously focused mainly on taste, the training helped them understand how to serve food safely and hygienically. They said the knowledge gained would strengthen their reputation and build greater customer trust.

Prominent officials who attended the event included Hyderabad District Collector Harichandana Dasari, Additional Collector Kadhiraavan Palani, FSSAI Telangana Director Balunayak Kethavat, and retired FSSAI Deputy Director Vijay Kumar.

Authorities stated that similar awareness and certification drives will continue to encourage safe food practices across urban markets, contributing to a healthier and more responsible food culture in the region.

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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Parliament Panel Divided Over VBSA Bill That Could Reshape Higher Education

A parliamentary panel has witnessed sharp disagreements over the proposed Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 (VBSA Bill), a major reform measure that could fundamentally transform India's higher education system. Critics argue that the legislation may undermine the federal structure of the Constitution by concentrating too much authority in the hands of the central government.

The Bill proposes creating a powerful apex regulator — the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan — to oversee universities and colleges across the country. If implemented, it would replace key existing bodies such as the University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical Education, and National Council for Teacher Education, consolidating their responsibilities into a single unified framework.

Supporters of the proposal argue that this restructuring would reduce regulatory overlap, streamline governance, and improve the quality and global competitiveness of Indian higher education. The reform is also intended to align institutions with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020, encouraging autonomy, innovation, and



stronger accreditation systems.

However, several panel members and education experts have raised serious concerns. A key issue is that education falls under the Concurrent List of the Constitution, meaning both the Centre and the states share responsibility. Critics fear that a centralized regulator could weaken the authority of state governments over universities, potentially sidelining regional priorities and diversity in academic policies.

Funding mechanisms have also become a contentious point. Some observers worry that if financial

control remains heavily centralized, state-run institutions — especially those in rural or less developed areas — could face disadvantages compared to centrally supported universities.

The Bill has been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee for detailed scrutiny. This panel is expected to examine the provisions thoroughly, consult stakeholders, and recommend changes before the legislation moves forward.

Supporters maintain that a single regulator is essential to eliminate bureaucratic duplication and create a transparent,

outcome-driven system. Opponents, however, argue that without strong safeguards for states and institutions, the reform could lead to excessive centralization and reduced academic autonomy.

As deliberations continue, the VBSA Bill has emerged as one of the most consequential education reforms in recent years. Its final shape will play a crucial role in determining whether India moves toward a centralized governance model for higher education or adopts a balanced approach that preserves federal principles while pursuing national standards.

“Can’t Dictate Hearing Schedule”: Supreme Court Pulls Up Bengal In I-PAC Raid Case

The Supreme Court of India has strongly rebuked the West Bengal government in connection with the controversial I-PAC raid case, stating that parties cannot dictate when the court should hear a matter. The sharp observation came during a hearing on a petition filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The case relates to raids conducted earlier this year at the offices of the Indian Political Action Committee, a political consultancy firm associated with the ruling Trinamool Congress. The ED has alleged that state authorities, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, interfered with the investigation while searches were underway as part of a money-laundering probe.

During the proceedings, lawyers representing the state sought additional time to file a detailed response to fresh allegations made by the central agency. They argued that the ED's latest affidavit contained new claims



that required careful examination before a reply could be submitted.

However, the court declined the request for adjournment. The bench made it clear that it would proceed with the hearing based on the material already on record and that the judiciary's schedule cannot be dictated by any party. It emphasized that



court proceedings are not meant to become a contest over securing delays.

The ED opposed the state's plea, describing it as a tactic to stall the case. According to the agency, sufficient time had already been available to prepare a response, and further delay would hinder the investigation into a serious matter.

The central agency has also accused the state leadership of gross abuse of power, alleging that the Chief Minister entered the premises during the search operation with security personnel and removed potentially important material, thereby obstructing the probe.

Despite the state's argument that it felt disadvantaged without filing a complete reply, the court maintained that the hearing would continue. It noted that the rejoinder had been on record for days and that all relevant issues could still be addressed during the proceedings.

The case has sparked significant political and legal debate, as it involves questions about the powers of central investigative agencies, alleged interference by a state government, and the broader balance within India's federal structure. The Supreme Court's firm stance indicates its intention to move forward without allowing procedural delays to stall the matter.

Kharge's “Married Modiji” Remark On Deve Gowda Leaves PM Modi Laughing



A light-hearted moment in Parliament grabbed national attention when Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge made a witty remark about former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda that even drew laughter from Narendra Modi.

The comment came during Kharge's farewell speech in the Rajya Sabha, where he was reflecting on long-standing relationships with fellow political leaders. Speaking about Deve Gowda, with whom he has shared decades of political association, Kharge delivered a humorous analogy comparing political alliances to a romantic relationship. He said that Gowda had “dated” and “loved” their side but eventually “married” Modi — a remark that instantly triggered laughter across party lines.

Prime Minister Modi, who was present in the House, was seen smiling and laughing along with other members, turning what is usually a tense political arena into a rare moment of camaraderie.

Kharge's quip was widely interpreted as a playful dig at the shifting political alignments of Deve Gowda and his party, which

has at different times allied with both the Congress and the BJP. By framing it as a humorous personal story rather than a direct political attack, Kharge managed to lighten the mood while still conveying his point.

The joke came as Kharge spoke about his long association with senior leaders whose terms in the Upper House are ending. He noted that he had known Deve Gowda for more than five decades and had worked closely with him over the years, making the remark sound more nostalgic than confrontational.

Such moments of humour are relatively rare in today's highly charged political environment, making the exchange stand out. Observers noted that the incident showcased a softer side of parliamentary proceedings, where ideological rivals can still share a laugh.

Overall, Kharge's spontaneous one-liner not only amused the House but also highlighted the fluid nature of Indian politics, where alliances evolve over time. The clip of the exchange quickly circulated online, becoming one of the most talked-about political moments of the day.

BJP Finalises Assam Poll Strategy, PM Modi To Address Key Rallies



The Bharatiya Janata Party has finalized its seat-sharing strategy for the upcoming 2026 Assam Legislative Assembly election as it gears up for a high-stakes battle in the northeastern state. The ruling alliance, led by the BJP, is aiming to retain power for a third consecutive term and has begun intensifying its campaign across constituencies.

As part of the plan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to address three major public rallies in April, just days before polling. These events are seen as crucial to energizing party workers and consolidating voter support in key regions. His visits are likely to focus on development achievements, welfare schemes, and national security themes, which have been central to the party's campaign messaging.

According to reports, the BJP will contest the majority of the seats, while its allies — including Asom Gana Parishad and Bodoland People's Front — will fight in selected constituencies as part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). This coordinated approach is designed to avoid vote division and maxi-

mize the alliance's chances across Assam's diverse political landscape.

The state's political environment has also witnessed shifting alliances and defections ahead of the polls, further intensifying the contest. Leaders from opposition parties have joined the BJP, strengthening its organizational base while weakening rivals. Meanwhile, opposition parties are attempting to consolidate their own support through alliances and targeted campaigning.

Polling for all 126 assembly seats is scheduled for April 9, with results to be declared in early May. The election will determine whether the incumbent government under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma secures another term or faces a challenge from opposition coalitions.

With high-profile rallies, strategic seat allocation, and aggressive outreach efforts, the BJP is positioning itself strongly for the upcoming vote. The participation of the Prime Minister is expected to play a decisive role in shaping the campaign's momentum during the final stretch.

DGCA's New Passenger Rules: Free Seats, Families To Sit Together On Flights



India's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has introduced major passenger-friendly rules aimed at improving comfort, transparency, and affordability in air travel. The new directives primarily address seat allocation practices, an issue that has long triggered complaints from flyers.

Majority of Seats Must Be Free

Under the revised guidelines, airlines must provide at least 60 percent of seats on every flight without charging any seat-selection fee. The move is intended to prevent airlines from imposing excessive add-on charges and to ensure passengers are not forced to pay extra just to secure a basic seat. This is expected to benefit budget travelers in particular.

Families and Groups To Be Seated Together

Another important provision requires airlines to seat passengers traveling under the same Passenger Name Record (PNR) together, preferably in adjacent seats. Families and groups often faced situations where they were split across the aircraft unless they paid additional fees for preferred seating. The new rule aims to eliminate that inconvenience.

Special Protection for Children

The regulator has also reinforced that

children must be seated with at least one parent or guardian traveling on the same booking, without any extra cost. This measure prioritizes both safety and comfort for families flying with minors.

More Transparency and Passenger Support

Beyond seating, airlines have been directed to maintain transparent policies regarding the carriage of sports equipment, musical instruments, and pets. They must also clearly communicate passenger rights, especially during delays, cancellations, or disruptions, and display this information prominently for travelers.

Why These Changes Matter

The reforms come after widespread criticism of airlines charging extra for basic services and separating families during travel. By standardizing seat allocation practices and improving transparency, authorities aim to make flying more consumer-friendly and accessible.

Overall, these new rules represent a significant step toward strengthening passenger rights in India's rapidly growing aviation sector. If implemented effectively, they could reduce hidden costs, improve the travel experience, and ensure families can fly together without paying additional fees — a long-standing demand among air travelers.

Vijay Rejects Alliance Offer of 50–90 Seats, Deputy CM Post: TVK Leader



Actor-politician Vijay and his party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) have reportedly turned down a major alliance proposal ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, according to senior party leader Aadhav Arjuna. The disclosure has sparked intense political discussion across the state.

Speaking at a party meeting, Arjuna revealed that an unidentified political party approached TVK with a highly attractive offer to form an alliance. The proposal allegedly included contesting between 50 and 90 Assembly seats along with a top leadership role — in some versions even a Chief Minister or Deputy Chief Minister position. Despite the scale of the offer, Vijay declined it, emphasizing that political authority should come directly from the people rather than negotiated deals.

Arjuna stated that Vijay is unwilling to compromise the party's independence for positions of power. According to him, the TVK chief believes leadership roles must be earned through electoral victory and public trust, not through pre-poll arrangements driven by political strategy.

Although the party that made the offer was not officially named, remarks

about not yielding to external pressure led to speculation that a national party may have been involved. Nonetheless, TVK leadership has made it clear that it prefers to contest the elections independently rather than as a junior partner in a coalition.

The upcoming Assembly election will mark TVK's major electoral debut, making Vijay one of the most prominent new entrants in Tamil Nadu politics in recent years. Established parties appear to be taking his political rise seriously, as reflected in the scale of the reported proposal.

Tamil Nadu has long been dominated by traditional Dravidian parties, and Vijay's decision signals an attempt to position TVK as a fresh alternative in the state's political landscape. By refusing alliances, he is projecting confidence that the party can build its own support base.

Whether this bold strategy will translate into electoral success remains uncertain, but it has already altered pre-election dynamics and heightened public interest. Vijay's move underscores his ambition to emerge not merely as a political participant but as a decisive force in the state's future governance.

Russian Oil Tanker Reverses Course, Now Headed to India

A Russian oil tanker that was originally en route to China has reportedly made a dramatic U turn and is now heading toward Indian waters, underscoring shifting energy trade flows as global markets adjust to geopolitical tensions and supply uncertainties.

According to maritime tracking data and industry observers, the vessel altered its course after indications that demand dynamics and pricing conditions in Asia had shifted. While its initial destination was China — traditionally one of Russia's largest crude buyers — the tanker is now steering toward India, where refiners have been increasing purchases of discounted Russian crude amid competitive pricing and flexible terms.

The unexpected redirection highlights India's growing role as a key destination for Russian energy exports. Indian refiners have been actively sourcing crude from Russia, driven in part by attractive discounts compared with other grades available in the global market. This trend has helped fuel rising bilateral trade, even as Western nations have im-



posed sanctions and restrictions on Russian energy shipments following geopolitical conflicts.

Industry analysts note that changes in tanker routes can reflect broader market signals, including refinery demand, freight costs, and geopolitical developments that affect where crude is most competitively priced. The decision to redirect the tanker suggests that Indian buyers are currently willing to secure cargoes that

might otherwise have gone to China, which remains a dominant force in global energy consumption.

The move also comes amid heightened scrutiny of shipping patterns and payment mechanisms involving Russian oil, as buyers navigate complex regulatory environments. Some importers have adjusted their logistics and contractual arrangements to align with sanctions regimes while maintaining steady

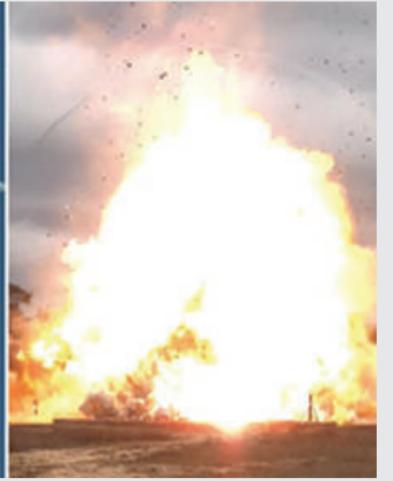
supplies.

For India, the rerouting could help ensure continued inflows of crude at competitive rates, supporting refinery output and domestic energy needs. Local refiners rely on a mix of grades to optimise production and manage costs, and access to discounted Russian barrels has been a key factor in recent procurement strategies.

The tanker's course reversal may also signal subtle shifts in regional energy preferences, with Indian demand possibly outpacing that of other Asian buyers for specific cargoes. Market watchers will likely track similar movements in shipping data to gauge how global crude flows evolve in response to pricing disparities and geopolitical realities.

In summary, the tanker's decision to abandon its original sail plan to China and instead steer toward India reflects the fluidity of today's oil markets. Driven by competitive pricing, demand variations, and geopolitics, such shifts underscore India's emerging importance as a major destination in the global energy landscape.

US Military Strikes Iranian Missile Sites Near Strait of Hormuz With Heavy Bunker Buster Bombs



In one of the most significant escalations in the Middle East conflict, the United States military conducted airstrikes on Iranian missile sites near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, deploying some of its most powerful conventional munitions to neutralise threats to international shipping and maritime security.

According to military statements, US forces targeted Iranian coastal missile facilities and launch infrastructure believed to house anti ship cruise missiles and other weapons that posed a risk to vessels transiting the vital oil corridor. To penetrate fortified underground positions, the US used 5,000 pound "bunker buster" bombs — high yield deep penetrator ordnance designed to destroy hardened targets that standard bombs may not reach.

The operation marks a major effort to reopen the Strait of Hormuz for safe international navigation. The waterway is one of the world's most important maritime choke points for ener-

gy transport, and Iran's deployment of missiles, naval mines, and drones had effectively disrupted commercial traffic, contributing to volatility in global oil markets.

Officials said the strikes were carried out by aircraft equipped to deliver the heavy penetrators on designated Iranian military sites along the coastline. These munitions are specifically engineered to burrow through earth or reinforced bunkers before detonating, making them suitable for targeting concealed or deeply buried weapon positions.

The use of such powerful conventional weapons underscores the seriousness with which the United States views threats to commercial shipping and regional stability. The presence of Iranian missile systems near the strait had deterred many international partners from attempting to move through the waterway, compounding economic and strategic pressures.

This military action comes amid broader escalation in the Iran Israel US

conflict, which has seen a series of high profile strikes, counter strikes, and losses on both sides. In recent days, clashes have expanded across multiple fronts, involving missile barrages, drone strikes, and diplomatic condemnations.

Regional tensions have also contributed to rising global energy prices, as instability around the Strait of Hormuz raises fears of sustained disruptions to crude oil exports. Ensuring freedom of navigation through the strait is a key priority for many governments and commercial interests, given its role in facilitating roughly a fifth of global oil shipments.

The decision to employ heavy bunker busting ordnance reflects an effort to systematically dismantle Iran's ability to project missile threats in the Gulf. However, the broader conflict remains fluid, with ongoing military activity and the potential for further escalation as international and regional actors respond to recent developments.

Iran's Leadership Structure Faces Uncertainty After Key Assassinations

Iran's political hierarchy has been shaken by a series of targeted killings of senior officials amid the ongoing conflict with Israel and the United States. The most recent high-profile death is that of Ali Larijani, Iran's top security official and a veteran political figure. Larijani's role had been central in shaping Iran's wartime strategy and serving as a bridge between political and security establishments.

Despite these losses, Iranian authorities maintain that the political system remains intact and will not be destabilised. Senior government ministers have emphasized that institutional frameworks are strong enough to withstand leadership shocks.

The conflict's toll on Tehran's leadership is part of a broader pattern of targeted strikes. Prior to Larijani's death, the country lost other senior figures, including for-



mer top military leaders and advisers. These cumulative losses have sparked questions about who remains in the inner circles of power and who could serve as interlocutors in any diplomatic outreach from the United States and other international actors.

ment and senior clerics to the new leadership.

However, the deaths of multiple senior policy-makers — particularly those known for pragmatism or diplomatic experience like Larijani — have raised doubts about who could engage in negotiations with the US or other external parties. Without seasoned negotiators remaining in Tehran's leadership, diplomatic channels are limited, making de-escalation talks more challenging.

In summary, Iran's leadership continues to operate under strain, maintaining institutional continuity even as key figures are killed. The loss of individuals with experience and cross-border diplomatic recognition complicates the landscape for potential talks with the United States, leaving the path to negotiation uncertain amidst ongoing hostilities.

Iran Mourns Security Chief Larijani, Warns US and Israel



Iran is in mourning and issuing stern warnings following the death of Ali Larijani, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, who was killed in a military strike attributed to Israel and possibly the United States. Iranian officials hailed him as a key national figure and vowed that those responsible would face consequences, highlighting rising tensions in the Middle East.

Before his death, Larijani had warned that attacks on Iranian leaders by foreign forces would only make the country "stronger," signaling defiance toward both the United States and Israel. His remarks underscored determination amid escalating hostilities.

Larijani's assassination has been met with widespread condemnation within Iran. Senior leaders have vowed "severe revenge," portraying his death as martyrdom that will strengthen national resolve. He was regarded as a central architect of

Iran's security policies, making his loss particularly significant.

His killing comes amid a series of high-profile losses for Iran's leadership during ongoing conflict with Israel. The attacks have triggered military responses from Iran, heightening tensions across the region and raising concerns over potential further escalation.

International reactions have varied. Russia condemned the strikes, describing them as the "murder" of sovereign leadership and called for an immediate ceasefire and a return to diplomatic talks, reflecting broader global concern over the intensifying violence.

Larijani's death marks a major turning point in the conflict, removing one of Iran's most senior security officials during a critical period. As Iran pledges retaliation and regional tensions rise, the situation remains highly volatile, with the risk of further military escalation.

About 90 Ships Have Crossed the Strait of Hormuz Despite War



Rising tensions from the ongoing conflict involving Iran, the United States and Israel have put the strategic Strait of Hormuz — a key global oil chokepoint — under intense strain. Yet, maritime movements continue in the area despite the widespread disruption.

Recent maritime data shows that around 90 vessels, including approximately 16 oil tankers, have successfully transited the narrow waterway since the beginning of March. These transits have taken place even as regional hostilities have severely curtailed general shipping traffic, highlighting selective passage rather than widespread closure.

The ships that made the crossing were able to move through the strait during the early part of March, indicating that Iran — which exercises control over the waterway — continues to allow certain vessel movements. This has enabled exports totaling millions of barrels of crude oil, most of which are being shipped out despite the conflict's pressure on global

energy flows.

Iran's continued exports through Hormuz come at a time when much wider maritime traffic has been halted or sharply reduced due to security risks, including missile and drone threats in the region. Insurance costs for vessels in the area have spiked, and many international carriers have avoided the corridor altogether.

The continued flow of oil tankers, even amid risk, underscores the strait's importance to energy markets and Iran's reliance on its exports — especially to buyers in Asia — to sustain revenue and supply. While overall traffic volumes remain far below normal pre conflict levels, the fact that dozens of ships have crossed since early March indicates a limited but notable continuation of commercial activity in one of the world's most critical maritime routes.

The situation remains fluid, with broader shipping patterns and oil export dynamics likely to evolve as the regional conflict continues and as international responses to the crisis unfold.

Iran's Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib Reportedly Killed in Israeli Strike



Israel has claimed that its military killed Iran's Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib in overnight strikes, marking a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict between the two countries. Israeli officials stated that Khatib was "eliminated" in the offensive, though Iran has not yet officially confirmed his death.

According to Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given the military broad authority to target senior Iranian figures, and further operations could continue without additional political approval. Officials have indicated that more significant military actions may follow, though details remain sparse.

If confirmed, Khatib's death would be the third high-ranking Iranian official reportedly killed by Israel in just a few days. Ear-

lier, Israel said it had targeted Iran's top security official, Ali Larijani, and the commander of the Basij paramilitary force, General Gholam Reza Soleimani, in successive strikes.

The reported assassination comes amid a widening regional conflict. Iran has responded with missile attacks toward Israel and neighboring Gulf states, prompting alerts and interceptions in countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. The tensions have also affected global oil markets, causing a surge in prices.

Civilian casualties have been reported in Lebanon, where Israeli airstrikes targeted infrastructure linked to Hezbollah and other groups. Authorities there have reported dozens of civilian deaths and hundreds of injuries.

Global powers have expressed concern over the escalating violence. NATO has deployed air defense systems in nearby regions, and diplomatic efforts are underway to prevent further escalation. Meanwhile, Russia and other international actors have condemned the strikes.

Despite Israel's claims, Tehran has been slow to respond or confirm the deaths of its senior officials, making independent verification difficult amid the ongoing conflict.

In summary, the reported killing of Esmail Khatib, along with other senior Iranian figures, represents one of the most serious tactical escalations in the Iran-Israel conflict to date. The situation remains highly fluid, with tensions and military actions continuing to rise across the region.

Sensex, Nifty Extend Winning Streak for Third Day as Rupee Hits Record Low

Indian benchmark equity indices continued their upward march for a third straight session on March 18, supported by broad-based buying across sectors and encouraging global cues. Despite the strong performance in equities, the Indian rupee weakened further, sliding to a new record low against the US dollar.

The BSE Sensex surged 633 points, or 0.83 percent, to close at 76,704. The NSE Nifty 50 also advanced by 197 points, gaining 0.83 percent to settle at 23,777. During the day, the Nifty briefly crossed the 23,850 mark, reflecting sustained investor optimism and steady demand for stocks.

Buying interest was visible across the market spectrum. Not only did large-cap stocks move higher, but mid-cap and small-cap segments also delivered strong gains, indicating improving risk appetite among investors. The Nifty Midcap 100 index jumped around 2 percent, while the Nifty Smallcap 100 rose about 1.6 percent, outperforming the frontline indices.

In contrast to the buoyant eq-



uity market, the currency market remained under pressure. The Indian rupee depreciated sharply, breaching the 92.50 mark for the first time and closing at an all-time low of 92.63 per US dollar. The decline reflects continued strength in the dollar and persistent global uncertainties, which have weighed on emerging-market currencies.

Among individual stocks, several heavyweight and technology names led the rally. Jo

Financial Services, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Eternal, and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the top gainers on the Nifty. Meanwhile, some defensive and energy stocks lagged behind, with Coal India, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, Cipla, and Sun Pharma ending the session in negative territory.

Banking stocks also contributed to the market's rise. The Nifty Bank index climbed roughly 0.82 percent, supported by gains in major financial

stocks. Strength in the banking sector often signals confidence in economic growth prospects, adding further support to the broader market rally.

Overall, the three-day advance suggests that market sentiment has improved after recent volatility. Positive global trends, selective institutional buying, and renewed interest in mid- and small-cap stocks helped sustain the upward momentum.

However, the sharp fall in the rupee highlights underlying macroeconomic concerns. The divergence between a rising stock market and a weakening currency underscores the complex environment facing investors. While equities reflect optimism about growth and earnings, the currency's decline points to external pressures such as capital flows and global economic uncertainty.

In the near term, markets are likely to remain sensitive to international developments, currency movements, and policy signals, making volatility a key theme even as the broader trend remains positive.

Urban Company Shares Hit 20% Upper Circuit After ₹632 Crore SBI MF Stake Buy



Shares of Urban Company witnessed a sharp surge on March 18, hitting the 20 percent upper circuit during intraday trading after SBI Mutual Fund acquired a substantial stake in the home-services platform. The strong rally reflected renewed investor confidence driven by the entry of a major domestic institutional investor.

The stock rose to an intraday high of ₹131.44 on the NSE after opening nearly 3 percent higher. The surge followed reports that SBI Mutual Fund purchased shares worth around ₹632 crore across the NSE and BSE, indicating a significant vote of confidence in the company's growth prospects.

The spike in trading activity coincided with the expiry of the mandatory lock-in period for pre-IPO investors. With the restriction lifted, early shareholders became eligible to sell their holdings, resulting in large block deals in the market. Several global investors took this opportunity to offload shares, generating substantial volumes on the exchanges.

On the previous trading session, multiple institutional investors collectively sold shares worth over ₹700 crore through block deals. While such large exits typically put downward pressure on stock prices, the simultaneous entry of SBI Mutual Fund absorbed the supply and boosted sentiment, triggering aggressive buying.

The mutual fund is believed to have acquired close to a 4 percent stake through these transactions, purchasing millions of shares at an average price of about ₹110 each. The move represents one of the notable institutional investments in a recently listed technology-driven services company.

Urban Company, known for providing on-demand home services such as beauty treatments, home cleaning, appliance repairs, and wellness services, had debuted strongly on the stock exchanges following its initial public offering. The IPO had attracted robust demand from investors, leading to a premium listing.

Despite the positive market reaction, the com-

pany operates in a competitive and rapidly evolving digital services space. Like many platform-based businesses, it continues to focus on scaling operations while working toward sustainable profitability. Strong revenue growth has been accompanied by margin pressures, making long-term execution a key factor for investors.

The sharp rally underscores how institutional participation can significantly influence stock performance, particularly in companies with relatively limited trading history. Large purchases by well-known fund houses often signal confidence in a firm's fundamentals and future potential.

Overall, the upper-circuit move highlights strong market optimism toward Urban Company following the ownership reshuffle triggered by the lock-in expiry. Investors will now watch closely to see whether the momentum sustains in the coming sessions as the company navigates growth challenges and competitive pressures.

Paramount Must Prepare for Relentless Challenges Ahead

Paramount Global finds itself at a critical crossroads, confronting a series of battles that could shape its future in the rapidly evolving media and entertainment landscape. From corporate restructuring to industry consolidation and political scrutiny, the company faces mounting pressures on multiple fronts, making resilience and strategic clarity more important than ever.

The most immediate challenge stems from large-scale mergers and acquisitions reshaping the global media industry. Paramount's aggressive expansion strategy, including potential combinations with other major studios, has sparked anxiety among employees, creators, and regulators. Such consolidation may strengthen market position but often brings fears of layoffs, reduced competition, and diminished creative diversity.

Financial pressures add another layer of complexity. Like many legacy media companies, Paramount has struggled with declining traditional advertising revenues and the high costs of competing in the streaming era. Massive investments are required to produce premium content, maintain technology platforms, and attract subscribers in a crowded market dominated by global giants. Heavy debt burdens and fluctuating



profitability further constrain flexibility, forcing difficult decisions on cost-cutting and restructuring.

Political and regulatory risks also loom large. Media conglomerates increasingly operate under intense scrutiny from governments and watchdogs concerned about market dominance and influence over public discourse. Any major deal must navigate antitrust reviews and potential legal challenges, prolonging uncertainty and delaying strategic execution.

Inside the organization, morale issues cannot be ignored. Employees worry about redundancies, shifts in editorial direction, and loss of institutional identity following mergers. Historically, large corporate integrations often result in overlapping roles being eliminated and operations centralized, fueling apprehension across newsrooms and production units.

At the same time, Paramount must reinvent itself technologically. The entertainment industry is undergoing a seismic shift to-

ward digital distribution, artificial intelligence, and personalized viewing experiences. Companies that fail to innovate risk losing relevance, yet transformation demands enormous capital and organizational change.

Despite these obstacles, opportunities exist. Paramount possesses valuable intellectual property, established brands, and a global audience base. Strategic partnerships, technological upgrades, and a renewed focus on high-quality storytelling could help the company regain momentum. However, success will depend on balancing growth ambitions with financial discipline and stakeholder confidence.

Ultimately, Paramount's journey resembles a prolonged campaign rather than a single decisive battle. Each challenge—financial, competitive, political, or cultural—requires careful navigation. The company's ability to adapt while preserving creative strength will determine whether it emerges stronger or becomes another casualty of industry disruption.

In an era defined by relentless change, Paramount must be prepared to fight not one war but many, sequentially and sometimes simultaneously. The outcome will shape not only the company's destiny but also the broader future of global media.

India's Shrinking Forex Buffer Fuels Calls for Softer Rupee Defence

India's foreign exchange reserves are facing mounting pressure as the central bank continues to intervene to support the weakening rupee. The sustained defence of the currency has steadily reduced the country's financial cushion, prompting economists to suggest that authorities may need to allow the rupee to depreciate more gradually rather than exhaust reserves.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been actively selling US dollars in the market to curb sharp declines in the rupee, which is trading near record lows. However, this strategy has led to a noticeable drop in foreign exchange assets. Excluding gold, India's reserves now cover about 8.7 months of imports — the lowest level in three years — raising concerns about the economy's ability to withstand prolonged external shocks.

One major factor behind the pressure is the rising import bill, especially due to elevated global crude oil prices. As a large oil-importing nation, India requires substantial dollar outflows to meet energy needs. Higher oil prices widen the trade deficit, increase demand for dollars, and intensify downward pressure on the rupee, forcing the central bank to intervene more frequently.

Economists warn that contin-



ued aggressive intervention could reduce the RBI's capacity to respond to future crises. Some experts argue that exchange rates should act as natural shock absorbers, allowing the currency to weaken when external conditions deteriorate. A gradual depreciation could ease pressure on reserves while helping the economy adjust to global developments.

Recent figures show that India's forex reserves have declined from last year's peak, though they remain substantial by historical standards. Gains in gold holdings have partially offset the fall in foreign currency assets, but the

overall trend underscores the cost of defending the rupee during periods of volatility.

Analysts also caution against trying to maintain a specific exchange-rate level. If underlying economic fundamentals shift — such as persistent high oil prices or capital outflows — defending a fixed rate becomes increasingly expensive and difficult. In such circumstances, allowing controlled depreciation may prove more sustainable.

Another concern is the central bank's forward commitments, which reduce the amount of reserves effectively available for im-

mediate intervention. Some experts believe India may ultimately need a significantly larger reserve buffer to maintain strong protection against global financial turbulence.

In essence, India faces a delicate balancing act. Stabilizing the rupee helps contain imported inflation and market volatility, but excessive intervention risks eroding the reserves needed for long-term economic security. Policymakers must now weigh the benefits of defending the currency against the need to preserve financial resilience in an uncertain global environment.

Rupee Falls to Record ₹92.63 as Importers Rush to Buy Dollars



The Indian rupee plunged to a new all-time low of ₹92.63 against the US dollar on March 18, pressured by heavy demand for the greenback from importers and persistently high global oil prices. The sharp decline came despite efforts by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to stabilize the currency, underscoring ongoing weakness in the foreign exchange market.

For most of the trading session, the rupee moved within a relatively narrow range after opening slightly stronger. However, in the final hour, dollar demand surged as importers — especially oil marketing companies — rushed to cover their positions ahead of an upcoming market holiday. This sudden spike in demand pushed the currency to its weakest level on record.

The rupee closed at ₹92.63 per dollar compared with ₹92.37 in the previous session, after touching an intraday low of ₹92.64. The domestic

currency has repeatedly hit record lows in recent sessions, reflecting sustained pressure from both domestic and global factors.

Elevated crude oil prices remain a key concern for India, which imports a large majority of its energy requirements. Higher oil costs increase the country's import bill, widen the current account deficit, and boost demand for dollars, all of which exert downward pressure on the rupee.

Global geopolitical tensions have further driven up energy prices, amplifying stress on emerging-market currencies. The rupee has weakened noticeably in recent weeks as uncertainty in international markets has intensified.

Traders indicate that the RBI has been intervening in both domestic and offshore markets to curb excessive volatility and slow the pace of depreciation. While these measures have helped prevent abrupt swings,

they have not been sufficient to reverse the broader weakening trend.

Market participants are now closely watching the ₹93 per dollar level, widely viewed as a critical psychological threshold. If oil prices remain high and dollar demand continues to strengthen, analysts believe the rupee could approach or even cross this mark.

Uncertainty surrounding global monetary policy also continues to influence currency movements. Higher interest rates in the United States typically strengthen the dollar and attract capital flows away from emerging economies, adding further pressure on the rupee.

Overall, the currency's record fall reflects a combination of strong dollar demand, rising import costs, geopolitical risks, and global financial uncertainty. Unless these external pressures ease, the rupee is likely to remain volatile, with the risk of further depreciation in the near term.

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.

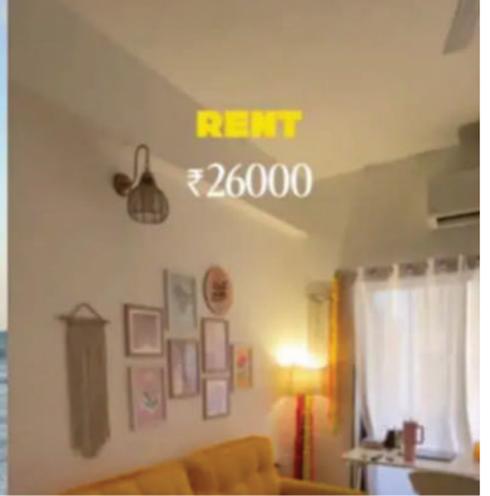
Ultimately, the viral video serves as a reminder that art can emerge anywhere — even in the most ordinary situations. For a brief moment at Jodhpur Airport, travellers were not just passengers rushing to catch flights but an audience brought together by the timeless power of folk music.

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.

Jasprit Bumrah Set to Lose ₹2 Crore After BCCI Scraps Top Contract Tier

India's premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah is set to face a ₹2 crore reduction in his annual earnings following a major overhaul of central contracts by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

The board has abolished the elite Grade A+ category, which previously represented the highest pay bracket in Indian cricket's retainership system. Players in this tier earned about ₹7 crore annually. With the removal of this category, the new top level is Grade A, which carries an annual retainership of around ₹5 crore.

Bumrah, who was earlier part of the A+ group, has now been placed in Grade A, effectively resulting in a ₹2 crore annual pay cut despite remaining one of India's most important players across formats.

Only three cricketers currently occupy the new top bracket: Jasprit Bumrah, Shubman Gill, and Ravindra Jadeja.

Why BCCI Made This Change

The restructuring reflects changing dynamics in Indian cricket. The A+ category had typically been reserved for players active across all formats and central to the team's plans. With retirements of senior players, workload management concerns, and increasing format specialization, the board chose to eliminate the tier entirely.

This decision has created an unusual situation where a player of Bumrah's stature, still an



automatic selection when fit, faces reduced earnings without any drop in performance or importance.

Board May Consider Compensation

There are indications that the board is examining ways to address the situation. Officials are reportedly aware that reducing the salary of one of India's leading match winners could be viewed as unfair, and alternative compensation options may be explored.

Revised Contract Structure

Under the new system:
Grade A: ₹5 crore annually
Grade B: ₹3 crore annually
Grade C: ₹1 crore annually

Previously, Grade A+ stood above these at ₹7 crore.

Bigger Picture

The move signals a transitional phase in Indian cricket, as the team evolves with new leadership, emerging talent, and shifting priorities. While Bumrah's pay reduction has drawn the most attention, the restructuring could influence how top players are rewarded in the future.

In essence, the loss is not linked to form or selection issues but purely to the removal of the highest salary bracket itself. How the BCCI balances financial policy with recognition of elite performers will remain a key talking point among fans and players.

Afghanistan's Allah Ghazanfar Sends Emotional Message To India After Deadly Strikes

Young Afghanistan spinner Allah Ghazanfar has issued an emotional appeal to India following devastating air strikes in Kabul that were blamed on Pakistan, expressing grief over civilian casualties and calling for support during the crisis.

The strikes reportedly hit a major drug rehabilitation hospital in the Afghan capital, killing hundreds of people and injuring many more. The facility was known for treating poor patients who could not afford private medical care, making the attack particularly shocking for ordinary citizens. Afghan authorities said large portions of the 2,000-bed centre were destroyed, though Pakistan denied deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure.

Reacting to the tragedy, Ghazanfar condemned the attack and highlighted the suffering of common people. He noted that many victims were vulnerable patients with limited resources, stressing that targeting such a place was devastating



for Afghan society.

Importantly, the cricketer singled out India in his message, describing the country as a close friend of Afghanistan and expressing a desire for stronger engagement and support. His remarks reflected long-standing ties between the two nations, especially in devel-

opment, humanitarian aid, and cricket.

The appeal was not only directed at India but also at the broader international community, urging global attention to the humanitarian impact of the escalating conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many Afghan public figures, includ-

ing other athletes, have voiced outrage over civilian deaths and called for accountability.

Ghazanfar, considered one of Afghanistan's rising cricket talents, is also set to feature in major international leagues, which has amplified the reach of his message. His statement underscores how sports figures increasingly use their platforms to speak out on political and humanitarian crises affecting their countries.

The incident comes amid sharply rising tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with both sides accusing each other of aggression and cross-border militancy. Civilian casualties and damage to critical infrastructure have intensified fears of further escalation and humanitarian distress.

In essence, Ghazanfar's message conveyed grief, solidarity, and a plea for international support, particularly from India, at a time when Afghanistan faces one of its most severe crises in recent years.

SRH Confirm Pat Cummins To Miss Initial IPL 2026 Matches, Name New Captain

Sunrisers Hyderabad have confirmed that captain Pat Cummins will miss the opening matches of the IPL 2026 season due to injury, forcing the franchise to appoint a temporary leader for the early phase of the tournament.

In Cummins' absence, wicket-keeper-batter Ishan Kishan has been named interim captain. The team has also appointed star opener Abhishek Sharma as vice-captain for the initial games.

Cummins, Australia's pace spearhead and SRH's regular skipper, is currently recovering and is expected to join the squad only after regaining full fitness. Team management indicated that he will miss a few games at the start of the season but is likely to return once cleared.

Big Leadership Opportunity for Ishan Kishan

The appointment marks a major leadership milestone for Ishan Kishan, who has emerged as one of India's most dynamic T20 batters. Although relatively new to the franchise, he brings captaincy experience from domestic cricket, where he has led his state side in major tournaments.

SRH's decision reflects confidence in younger Indian players to guide the team during a crucial early stretch. With a strong batting lineup featuring aggressive top-order options, Kishan's



attacking approach is expected to shape the team's style of play.

Abhishek Sharma Named Deputy

Abhishek Sharma, one of SRH's most consistent performers in recent seasons, will serve as Kishan's deputy. His elevation to vice-captain signals the franchise's growing reliance on young core players and leader-

ship depth.

Impact on SRH's Campaign

The absence of Pat Cummins, a world-class fast bowler and experienced leader, is a significant setback for the 2016 champions. His contribution with both the ball and tactical decision-making has been central to SRH's plans. However, the team hopes the new leadership combination

can maintain momentum until his return.

In summary, Sunrisers Hyderabad will begin IPL 2026 under a fresh leadership setup, with Ishan Kishan captaining and Abhishek Sharma assisting him, while Pat Cummins focuses on recovery. The early matches will be crucial in determining how well the team adapts to this temporary change at the helm.

"If Anyone Should Have Angst With Gautam Gambhir, It's Me": R Ashwin on Retirement



Former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has addressed speculation surrounding his retirement and the role of head coach Gautam Gambhir, stating that he holds no resentment toward the coach despite public narratives suggesting otherwise.

Ashwin revealed that he realized his international career was nearing its end during India's 2024 tour of Australia, when younger spinner Washington Sundar was selected ahead of him for a Test match. That decision, he said, made it clear that the team management was looking toward the future, prompting him to step aside after the series.

Responding to criticism that Gambhir may have forced senior players into retirement, Ashwin dismissed the claim. He remarked that if anyone had a reason to feel upset, it would be him — yet he does not harbor any bitterness. Instead, he expressed respect for Gambhir's philosophy and leadership style.

Ashwin praised the coach for prioritizing the team above individual reputations, noting that Gambhir consistently credits collective effort rather than star performances. He emphasized that Indian cricket is larger than any single player or small group of players, and decisions must ultimately serve the team's long-term interests.

The veteran off-spinner also reflected on his years alongside senior figures such as Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, highlighting the strong bond within the dressing room. According to him, the group never blamed one another during difficult phases and remained united in their goal of winning for the country.

His comments come amid a transitional period in Indian cricket, with several experienced players stepping away and younger talent taking on bigger roles. While some fans viewed the exits as abrupt, Ashwin suggested they were part of a natural evolution rather than the result of conflict or pressure.

By publicly supporting Gambhir, Ashwin sought to quell speculation about internal discord. He portrayed the coach as someone committed to building a cohesive, forward-looking side — even if that means making tough decisions about senior players.

In essence, Ashwin's remarks underline acceptance rather than resentment. Despite being one of the most affected by selection changes, he framed his retirement as a personal realization and a necessary step for the team's future, reinforcing the idea that Indian cricket's success depends on collective strength rather than individual longevity.

"Call Me": Lalit Modi's Message To Kavya Maran Sparks Buzz After Abrar Ahmed Row



Fugitive businessman and former IPL chairman Lalit Modi has stirred fresh controversy after posting a pointed message seemingly directed at Kavya Maran following backlash over signing Pakistani spinner Abrar Ahmed in The Hundred league auction.

The controversy began when the Sunrisers' sister franchise in England purchased Abrar Ahmed for about £190,000 (roughly 2.3 crore). The move triggered strong reactions from sections of Indian fans, as Pakistani players have not participated in the IPL since 2008 due to political tensions.

Amid the uproar, Lalit Modi posted a cryptic message on social media that many interpreted as advice to the franchise's leadership. He suggested that investing a large amount in a Pakistani player when public sentiment was sensitive could create perception issues, adding that he knew "a thing or two about managing optics and building empires" and urging them to "call me."

Although he did not mention Kavya Maran or the franchise directly, the timing, fee amount, and reference to a Pakistani player made the intended target clear to observers. The message quickly went viral, intensifying debate

around the signing.

The situation had already escalated before Modi's intervention. The signing drew heavy criticism online, and the franchise's social media account was reportedly suspended temporarily amid the backlash.

The episode highlights the complex intersection of sport, business, and geopolitics. While The Hundred is an English domestic competition where franchises can sign players of any nationality, Indian-owned teams often face scrutiny at home when engaging Pakistani athletes due to long-standing tensions between the two countries.

Lalit Modi's involvement added another layer to the controversy, given his own contentious history with Indian authorities and cricket administration. His public suggestion that he could help manage the fallout has been viewed by some as provocative and by others as opportunistic.

Overall, the incident has kept the spotlight firmly on the Sunrisers franchise and its leadership, turning what would normally be a routine overseas league signing into a wider public debate about politics, perception, and the global nature of modern cricket.

From Bank Employee to Pan-India Director: The Inspiring Journey of Lokesh Kanagaraj



Making a mark in the film industry without any background or connections is extremely difficult. Yet Lokesh Kanagaraj has proven that talent, perseverance, and passion can overcome all barriers. Rising from humble beginnings, he is today one of the most sought-after directors in Indian cinema, with top stars across industries eager to work with him.

Lokesh made his directorial debut with *Maanagaram*, a gritty urban thriller that earned strong critical acclaim. Although the film was appreciated for its storytelling and realistic treatment, it did not become a major commercial success. As a result, opportunities did not come easily, and he had to struggle for a considerable period, facing rejections while continuing to pursue his dream.

His career took a dramatic turn with *Kaithi*, starring Karthi. The action thriller became a massive box-office blockbuster and was widely praised for its gripping narrative, intense screenplay, and innovative presentation. The film's success instantly propelled Lokesh into the spotlight, making him one of the most talked-about directors in South Indian cinema.

From that point onward, there was no looking back. Known for his distinctive

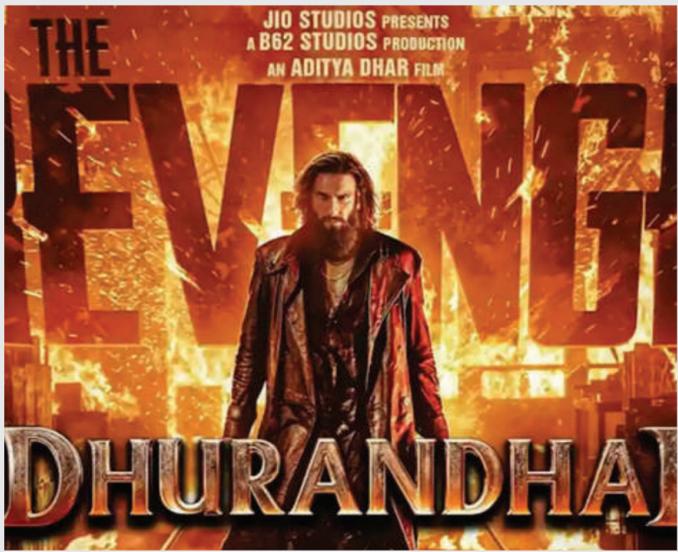
filmmaking style, high-intensity action, and strong storytelling, Lokesh began delivering one major project after another. His films are not just action spectacles but are also recognized for their solid narratives and interconnected cinematic universe, which has further enhanced his reputation as a modern filmmaker.

Interestingly, before entering the film industry, Lokesh worked as a bank employee. However, driven by his passion for cinema, he made the bold decision to quit his stable job and focus entirely on filmmaking. That risk ultimately transformed his life and career.

Today, his popularity extends far beyond Tamil cinema, with leading actors from Kollywood, Tollywood, and even Bollywood expressing interest in collaborating with him. Several of his upcoming projects are already surrounded by huge expectations, and industry buzz suggests that Allu Arjun may soon team up with him for a film.

Lokesh Kanagaraj's journey stands as a powerful reminder that success in cinema does not always depend on lineage or influence. With determination, hard work, and unwavering belief in one's vision, it is possible to rise from an ordinary background to become a pan-India phenomenon.

'Dhurandhar 2' Trimmed by Over Six Minutes for Indian Release



The makers of *Dhurandhar 2* have made significant edits to the film's Indian version following directives from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). According to recent reports, the domestic release will run more than six minutes shorter than the version being screened internationally.

The official certification process required several cuts and modifications before approval was granted. Most of these changes focus on reducing the intensity of violent sequences. Scenes featuring highly graphic visuals — including moments described as “eye-smashing” and depictions of beheading followed by physical actions — were either shortened or altered to make them less disturbing for Indian audiences.

In addition to trimming action sequences, the CBFC also recommended certain factual corrections. One notable change involves the adjustment of demonetisation dates displayed in the film's subtitles. This modification was made to ensure historical accuracy and prevent confusion among viewers.

As a result of these revisions, the Indian theatrical version will have a slightly reduced runtime compared to its overseas counterpart. Such edits are not uncommon for big-budget action thrillers, particularly those containing intense violence or sensitive content. However, these decisions often trigger debate among fans, many of whom prefer experiencing the film in its original, uncut form.

Despite the alterations, the filmmakers have expressed confidence that the core narrative, emotional weight, and cinematic impact of the movie remain unaffected. They maintain that the essential storytelling elements are intact and that audiences will still receive the full intended experience.

With anticipation already sky-high for *Dhurandhar 2*, the difference between the Indian and international versions has added another layer of curiosity. It now remains to be seen how viewers in India respond to the censored cut and whether the trimmed content will influence the film's reception compared to audiences abroad.

Rakshita Defends 'KD: The Devil' Song Amid Ongoing Controversy

The controversy surrounding the song “Sarke Chunar” from the upcoming Kannada film *KD: The Devil* continues to intensify, with strong reactions from both critics and supporters. The song has drawn criticism from some viewers who claim that its lyrics and visuals are vulgar and inappropriate. In response to the backlash, the family of director Prem has spoken out, with his wife and former actress Rakshita offering a firm defense.

Rakshita argued that songs of this nature are not new to Indian cinema and pointed out that similar content has existed in films for decades. She questioned why this particular song has attracted such intense criticism now, suggesting that the controversy has been amplified largely due to social media. According to her, online platforms often magnify issues beyond their actual scale, turning them into major debates.

She also noted that modern audiences regularly watch films featuring graphic violence, intense action, and explicit themes without raising comparable objections. Targeting a single song while ignoring other forms of provocative content, she said, reflects a selective approach to criticism. Rakshita emphasized that it is unfair to single out one creative element and use it to attack the filmmaker personally.

The former actress expressed particular distress over what she described as personal attacks on her husband. She stated that filmmaking involves immense effort, dedication, and financial risk, and that audi-



ences should recognize the hard work behind a project before passing judgment. Personal criticism, she said, crosses a line and can be deeply hurtful to those involved.

Rakshita also highlighted the challenges faced by the Kannada film industry, especially when it comes to securing theatrical releases. She explained that bringing a Kannada film to theaters

requires significant struggle and perseverance, making it all the more discouraging when controversies overshadow the work.

The debate has sparked mixed reactions across social media. While many users have supported Rakshita's stance and called for creative freedom, others continue to defend the criticism, arguing that filmmakers must be mindful of public sensibilities.

As the discussion continues, the “Sarke Chunar” controversy has become a broader conversation about artistic expression, cultural standards, and the influence of social media in shaping public opinion. Whether the debate will impact the film's release or reception remains to be seen, but it has already ensured that *KD: The Devil* remains firmly in the public spotlight.

Ram Gopal Varma's Explosive Review of 'Dhurandhar 2' Sparks Massive Buzz

Celebrated filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma has once again grabbed headlines with his trademark sensational comments, this time after watching the upcoming film *Dhurandhar 2* ahead of its release. Sharing his reaction on social media, Varma described the movie as the beginning of a “new cinematic order,” a statement that has quickly become a hot topic across the film industry.

The spy action thriller stars Ranveer Singh in the lead and is directed by Aditya Dhar. Even before Varma's comments, the film was surrounded by significant anticipation. However, his glowing review has taken the hype to an entirely new level. According to him, the movie excels in every aspect and promises audiences a completely fresh and powerful cinematic experience.

Varma went even further by claiming that the film's impact could be “100 times greater” than that of timeless classics



like *Sholay*. In a statement that stunned many, he said those legendary films might appear like television serials when compared to *Dhurandhar 2*. Such remarks, typical of Varma's provocative style, quickly went viral

and ignited debate among movie lovers.

He emphasized that the film's influence would extend far beyond box office collections. In his view, it has the potential to redefine cinematic grammar; au-

diene engagement, and psychological impact, setting entirely new standards for filmmaking. Varma suggested that the movie could fundamentally change existing film formats and storytelling approaches.

Praising director Aditya Dhar, Varma used hyperbolic language to express his admiration, joking that in the future the very spelling of the word “director” might begin with Dhar's name. He also made a striking remark that legendary Hollywood filmmakers like Steven Spielberg and Christopher Nolan should set aside their work and watch the film on its opening day.

Overall, Ram Gopal Varma's over-the-top review has dramatically amplified expectations surrounding *Dhurandhar 2*. Whether the film will live up to these extraordinary claims remains to be seen, but one thing is certain — Varma's endorsement has ensured that the movie is now one of the most talked-about upcoming releases.

Devi Sri Prasad Opens Up About Acting Debut in 'Ellamma'

Renowned music composer Devi Sri Prasad is all set to step in front of the camera as an actor, marking a new phase in his career. His acting debut comes with the upcoming film *Ellamma*, and his recent comments about the project have generated significant curiosity among fans.

In a recent interview, Devi Sri Prasad revealed that director Venu Yeldandi narrated the story to him, and within just five minutes he was completely convinced. He said the emotional depth of the narrative and its strong spiritual backdrop centered on a goddess immediately struck a chord with him. Because of this instant connection, he did not take much time to think and agreed to the project right away.

The composer-turned-actor also shared that he had received several acting offers in the past. However, none of those scripts impressed him enough or sparked the enthusiasm required to make his acting debut. He had been waiting patiently for a story that truly resonated with him, and he believes *Ellamma* arrived at exactly the right moment.

Reflecting on his career, Devi Sri Prasad pointed out an inter-



esting coincidence. His first film as a music director, *Devi*, also revolved around a divine theme. Now, his debut as an actor is happening through another film rooted in devotion and powerful emotions. He expressed happiness that both milestones in his professional journey share a similar spiritual connection, making them especially meaningful to him.

The recently released glimpse of *Ellamma* has already received a strong response on social media, further raising anticipation. The visuals hint at a film rich in emotion, faith, and intensity, and audiences are particularly eager to see how Devi Sri Prasad performs as an actor.

Having already established himself as one of the most successful and energetic composers in Indian cinema, Devi Sri Prasad is now embarking on a fresh creative journey. Fans are keen to discover whether he can replicate his musical success on screen as well. With a compelling story, spiritual theme, and his enthusiastic commitment, *Ellamma* is shaping up to be one of the most awaited projects marking his transition from music director to actor.