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# Vijay Proves Majority in Tamil Nadu Assembly, Wins Floor Test with Support of 144 MLAs

Chennai, May 13|TPN Bureau

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Wednesday comfortably won the crucial floor test in the State Assembly, securing the support of 144 legislators and reaffirming support for the ruling Tamil Nadu Dravidian Munnetra Kazhagam (TMK) government.

The trust vote marked a significant political victory for Vijay, whose party had emerged as the single largest force in the recent Assembly elections but had initially fallen short of the majority mark.

Support for the government quickly consolidated after several parties, including the Indian Union Muslim League, Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Indian National Congress extended backing to the Vijay-led administration, taking the tally to the required majority mark.

The numbers further tilted in favour of the government after divisions surfaced within the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). While party chief Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced that all 47 AIADMK



MLAs would oppose the motion, senior leader SP Velumani broke ranks and reaffirmed support for Vijay along with 21 legislators aligned with his faction.

Following the vote, the final tally stood at 144 in favour of the government, well above the 117 votes required to prove majority in the House.

The floor test became necessary after Vijay was sworn in as Chief Minister on May 10 following an invitation from

Governor RV Arlekar to form the government. With Vijay vacating the Tiruchirappalli (East) seat and Assembly Speaker J. C. D. Prabhakar ineligible to vote, the effective strength of TMK in the House stood reduced, making outside support crucial.

Addressing the Assembly after the victory, Vijay asserted that his government would remain "secular in governance" and said it would not indulge in "horse-trading." "This gov-

ernment will function with the speed of a horse," he remarked, while assuring continuity of all existing welfare schemes in the State.

Meanwhile, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) staged a walkout during the proceedings. Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin criticised the alliance backing TMK, claiming smaller parties supported Vijay only to avoid the imposition of President's Rule in Tamil Nadu.



# RBI Governor Warns of Possible Fuel Price Hike as Gulf Conflict Pressures Oil Markets

Mumbai, May 13|TPN Bureau

Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday warned that prolonged geopolitical tensions in West Asia could eventually lead to higher fuel prices in India, as the government may find it difficult to indefinitely absorb the impact of rising global crude oil prices.

Addressing the 12th High-Level Conference on the International Monetary System, jointly organised by the International Monetary Fund and the Swiss National Bank, Malhotra said the Centre has so far shielded consumers from the sharp rise in international crude prices by reducing duties and limiting increases in regulated fuel and gas prices.

He noted that petrol and diesel retail prices have largely remained stable despite volatility in global energy markets triggered by the ongoing conflict in West Asia. However, he indicated that if the crisis continues, the government may eventually have to pass on a portion of the burden to consumers.

"The conflict has already continued for nearly 75 days. Over time, some of the increased costs may need to be transmitted," the RBI Governor observed, signalling the possibility of fuel price revisions in the coming months.

Malhotra also highlighted the government's fiscal consolidation efforts, noting that the fiscal deficit, which had surged to 9.2 per cent of GDP

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# Union Cabinet Hikes MSP for 14 Kharif Crops, Clears Rail, Coal and Aviation Projects

New Delhi, May 13|TPN Bureau

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a series of major policy decisions, including a substantial increase in Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for 14 Kharif crops for the 2026-27 marketing season, a 37,500-crore coal gasification scheme, a semi high-speed rail corridor in Gujarat and the expansion of Nagpur airport infrastructure.

Announcing the decisions after the Cabinet meeting, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the revised MSPs were aimed at ensuring better returns for farmers while strengthening agricultural production and rural incomes.

Among the revised MSPs, Sunflower Seed registered the highest absolute increase of 622 per quintal, taking its MSP to 8,343 per quintal. Cotton (Medium Staple) saw an increase of 557, raising its MSP to 8,267 per quintal. Nigereed and Sesamum also received

significant hikes of 515 and 500 respectively.

Paddy, the principal Kharif crop, witnessed a moderate increase of 72 per quintal, with the MSP fixed at 2,441 for the Common variety and 2,461 for Grade A paddy.



The government stated that MSPs for all notified Kharif crops have been fixed at least 50 per cent above the cost of production, in line with the policy announced in 2019. It also projected annual procurement of around 824.41 lakh metric tonnes during the Kharif marketing season.

In another key decision, the Cabinet approved a 37,500-crore Coal Gasification Scheme aimed at reducing dependence on imported natural gas, methanol and ammonia while promoting cleaner use of domestic coal resources. The scheme targets creation of 100 million tonnes of coal gasification capacity by 2030 and will provide incentives for both public

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# Modi's Fuel-Saving Push Triggers Nationwide Convoy Cuts, Ministers Embrace Public Transport

New Delhi, May 13|TPN Bureau

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set off a nationwide campaign on fuel conservation, with Union ministers, chief ministers and governors across several States announcing sharp cuts in official convoys and promoting public transport, carpooling and electric vehicles in response to his recent appeal for responsible energy consumption.

In a symbolic yet significant move, the Prime Minister substantially reduced the size of his official convoy during recent visits to Gujarat and Assam while maintaining all mandatory Special Protection Group security protocols. He also directed officials to incorporate electric vehicles into his convoy wherever feasible without making fresh purchases.

The initiative followed Modi's address at a BJP rally in Hyderabad, where he issued what has come to be known as



his "seven appeals" to the nation. Stressing the need for fuel conservation amid global uncertainties, he urged citizens to cut down petrol and diesel consumption, prefer metro rail and public transport, adopt work-from-home practices, reduce foreign travel and avoid extravagant overseas weddings.

"Patriotism is not only about sacrificing one's life at the border, but also about living responsibly in everyday life," the Prime Minister said.

Senior Union ministers swiftly followed suit. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reduced their convoys by nearly half, while Health Minister JP. Nadda also downsized his fleet. Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari announced he would travel by bus during his Maharashtra tour on May 14 and 15 and directed authorities to reduce convoy vehicles by 50 per cent.

In Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered an immediate 50 per cent reduction in official vehicle fleets used by ministers and bureaucrats. He also encouraged legislators to use public transport at least once a week and promoted cycling, electric vehicles and virtual meetings. Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak echoed the call, saying "national interest is paramount."

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced restrictions on the use of official vehicles and appealed to residents to increasingly rely on buses and metro rail services. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav suspended vehicle rallies and directed ministers to minimise convoy strength.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma ordered cuts in unnecessary security and convoy vehicles, while the Maharashtra government under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis began reviewing proposals to halve ministerial convoy fleets and tighten the use of government aircraft.

In Gujarat, Governor Acharya Devvrat declared he would use trains and state-run buses for travel within the State instead of helicopters and flights. Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Singhvi also cancelled a planned trip to the United States following the Prime Minister's appeal to reduce foreign travel. Governors and ministers in Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand similarly announced measures ranging from halving convoys to promoting video conferencing and electric vehicles.

Himachal Pradesh Governor Kavinder Gupta even declared Lok Bhawan a "Fuel Conservation Zone," banning official vehicles using imported fuel on Sundays. The coordinated campaign is being projected by the BJP-led governments as a national movement aimed at conserving fuel, reducing dependence on imports and strengthening economic self-reliance amid continuing global energy uncertainties.

# Atchannaidu Steps In, AP Govt Freezes Shrimp Feed Price Hike

Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday stepped in to halt the proposed increase in shrimp feed prices following widespread protests from aquafarmers, with Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu warning feed manufacturers against burdening farmers during a difficult phase for the aquaculture sector.

Expressing serious concern over the financial strain on thousands of aqua farmers, the minister conducted a video conference with representatives of shrimp feed manufacturing companies, farmer associations and senior officials. He made it clear that the coalition government would not tolerate unilateral price hikes imposed without consulting stakeholders.

Atchannaidu said the aquaculture industry was already



facing multiple challenges and cautioned companies against "doing business over the hardships of farmers." He stressed that protecting farmers' interests remained the government's foremost priority.

Following the minister's intervention, the Shrimp Feed Manufacturers Association informed the government in writing that the implementation of the revised feed prices had been suspended with immediate effect.

# Centre Raises Gold Import Duty to 15%; Jewellery Prices Set to Rise Amid Forex Concerns

New Delhi, May 13|TPN Bureau

The Union government on Wednesday sharply increased import duties on gold and silver to 15 per cent from 6 per cent, in a move aimed at curbing rising imports of precious metals and easing pressure on India's foreign exchange reserves amid the continuing West Asia crisis.

The Finance Ministry announced revisions in the social welfare surcharge (SWS) and the agriculture infrastructure and development cess (AIDC) on gold and silver imports with immediate effect from May 13. The decision comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to citizens to postpone gold purchases for a year as part of broader austerity measures to conserve foreign exchange.

The revised notification also increased customs duties on jewellery "findings" — small



components such as hooks, pins and clasps used in jewellery manufacturing. Gold and silver findings will now attract 5 per cent customs duty, while platinum findings will face a 5.4 per cent levy.

In addition, concessional duty provisions for imports of spent catalysts and ash con-

taining precious metals for recycling have been revised. Such imports will now attract a concessional customs duty of 4.35 per cent, subject to specified conditions. The government has also increased the duty on gold imported from the United Arab Emirates under the fixed-quantity

# Naidu Urges 'My Nation-My Responsibility' Spirit; Positions Amaravati as India's Quantum Hub

Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday called upon citizens to adopt the spirit of "My Nation-My Responsibility" amid global uncertainty arising from tensions in West Asia, while simultaneously outlining an ambitious vision to transform Amaravati into a global hub for quantum technology, healthcare and innovation.

Addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for the Bollineni Institute of Skill, Education and Research (BISER) at Nidamarru in Amaravati, Naidu urged people to follow Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advisory on responsible consumption and economic discipline.

The Chief Minister appealed to citizens to reduce petrol and diesel usage, encourage work-from-home practices and avoid

unnecessary expenditure, luxury travel and oversized vehicle convoys. He also advised people to prefer domestic tourism over foreign trips and exercise restraint in discretionary spending, including gold purchases.

Referring to global disruptions in fuel supplies and economic uncertainty, Naidu stressed the importance of energy self-reliance and called for accelerated adoption of green energy initiatives, including rooftop solar systems and decentralised power generation.

Highlighting Amaravati's emergence as a major technology destination, the Chief Minister announced that the capital city was evolving into a "Quantum Valley," attracting global companies such as IBM, Tata Consultancy Services and Larsen & Toubro. He said Andhra Pradesh would

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## 11 Fall Ill After Consuming Contaminated Food in West Godavari Village

**Bhimavaram, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Eleven persons, including a two-year-old child, were taken ill after allegedly consuming bajjis prepared with contaminated refined flour in Pippara village of Ganapavaram mandal in West Godavari district on Wednesday. According to preliminary reports, the maida used for preparing the fritters had reportedly been stored for nearly a year in sheds used by aqua farm workers and is suspected to have turned moldy. Officials clarified that the food was prepared at home and shared among family members and neighbours, and was not part of any commercial sale. Medical officials said some of the victims remain in critical condition. Five persons are undergoing treatment at Imperial Hospital, another five at

Bhimavaram Hospital, while a two-year-old boy is receiving treatment at Varma Hospital. Health department teams have been deployed at the hospitals to continuously monitor the condition of the affected persons. Authorities said the individual who prepared the food had also consumed it and subsequently fell ill. District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani visited the hospitals and interacted with the victims and their families. She instructed medical officials to ensure the best possible treatment and directed health authorities to closely monitor the situation. Officials have launched an inquiry into the incident, while food safety and health authorities are investigating the exact cause of the contamination.



## AP Cabinet to Discuss Austerity Measures, Clear 2 Lakh-Crore Investment Proposals

**Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau**

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, is scheduled to meet at the State Secretariat Today, with key discussions expected on austerity measures, work-from-home policies and major industrial investment proposals worth over 2 lakh crore. The meeting, slated to begin at 10.30 a.m., is expected to focus on the Centre's recent call for austerity and responsible consumption in the backdrop of global economic uncertainties and tensions in West Asia. The Cabinet is likely to deliberate on measures initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following which the Chief Minister is expected to issue directives to ministers and officials on fuel conservation, expenditure control and administrative efficiency. The Council of Ministers will also hold discussions on implementing "Work from Home" policies for employees across the State in suitable sec-

tors and departments. A major portion of the Cabinet agenda will centre around proposals cleared during the 17th meeting of the State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB). The Cabinet is expected to approve investments worth 2,01,023 crore across 25 projects aimed at boosting industrial growth and employment generation in Andhra Pradesh. Among the key proposals likely to receive approval is a 1 lakh-crore data centre project by Reliance Industries in Visakhapatnam. The Cabinet is also expected to clear a 51,000-crore solar power project in Sri Sathya Sai district and the 12,000-crore Hydro Energy Pumped Storage Project proposed by Adani Group in Kadapa district. In addition, the government is likely to approve a 2,500-crore two-wheeler manufacturing facility by Royal Enfield in Tirupati. The Cabinet is also expected to grant approvals for land allocations to several major organisations and infrastructure projects across the State.

## AP Govt Revives Journalist Awards After Eight-Year Gap

**Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau**

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to revive annual awards for journalists and media professionals for the year 2025-26, recognising outstanding contributions in the field of journalism after a gap of nearly eight years. Announcing the decision at a press conference on Wednesday, Alapati Suresh Kumar, Chairman of the C.R. Media Academy, said a four-member committee had been constituted to oversee the selection process. The committee includes former India Today editor A.A.V. Prasad, D.V.R. Murthy and retired High Court judge Justice Satyanarayana Murthy. K.S. Viswanathan, Director of the Information and Public Relations Department, will serve as Member-Convenor. Suresh Kumar said 12



awards would be presented under categories that existed during united Andhra Pradesh. The Lifetime Achievement Award will carry a cash prize of 3 lakh, while select major awards will offer 2 lakh each. Other categories will carry 1 lakh prizes. He clarified that

eligibility would be based on professional experience and not linked to accreditation status. Viswanathan said the government aims to issue the notification within a week and organise the awards ceremony in July.



## Advanced PET-CT Scan Facility at Guntur GGH

**Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau**

In a major boost to cancer treatment in Andhra Pradesh, the Coalition Government has established a state-of-the-art PET-CT scan facility at the Government General Hospital Guntur, making advanced cancer diagnostics available free of cost for poor and middle-class patients for the first time in a government hospital in the State. The Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan unit, imported from the United States at a cost of nearly 18 crore, is set to be formally inaugurated on Wednesday evening by Health Minister Satyakumar Yadav and Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhar. Describing the project as a milestone in public healthcare, Satyakumar Yadav said the Coalition Government was committed to ensuring world-class medical treatment for economically weaker sections. He noted that PET scan servicing, which generally cost up to 20,000 in private corporate hospitals, would now be provided entirely free at the Natco Cancer Centre located within Guntur GGH.

The government has also sanctioned advanced cancer treatment equipment worth 41 crore for the centre, including LINAC systems, HDR Brachytherapy units and CT simulators. Officials said the PET scan unit underwent successful trial operations, with nearly 50 patients already examined. The Natco Cancer Centre currently offers comprehensive oncology services, including Radiation Oncology, Surgical Oncology, Medical Oncology, Nuclear Oncology and Palliative Care. During the past year, the centre treated nearly 19,600 outpatients and over 6,900 inpatients, besides conducting chemotherapy, radiation therapy and cancer surgeries. Doctors said PET-CT technology plays a crucial role in detecting hidden cancer cells, accurately identifying the stage and spread of cancer and enabling highly precise radiation treatment without damaging surrounding organs. The facility is also expected to support diagnostics in Cardiology, Neurology and other super-specialty departments.

## RMC Alumni Fund 60-Crore MCH Block at Kakinada GGH

**Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau**

In a remarkable example of giving back to society, alumni of Rangaraya Medical College settled in North America have played a pivotal role in constructing a state-of-the-art Maternal and Child Health (MCH) block at the Kakinada Government General Hospital, contributing nearly 60 crore towards the project. Built at an overall cost of 98 crore in partnership with the Andhra Pradesh government, the five-storey MCH facility is now ready and expected to commence services shortly. The inauguration is scheduled for June 18, and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has agreed to participate in the event. Speaking after meeting Health Minister Satyakumar Yadav on Wednesday, Achanta Subbaraya Chowdary, Chairman of the MCH Building Committee for the Rangaraya Medical College Alumni of North America, said the project reflected the commitment



of former students towards strengthening public healthcare in Andhra Pradesh. Around 125 alumni who studied at the institution between 1958 and 2002 contributed financially towards the ambitious project, helping complete the modern healthcare facility with 465 beds and advanced infrastructure. While alumni donations accounted for nearly 60 crore, the State government contributed 11 crore for construction and another 27 crore for medical equipment. The hospital has been equipped with advanced medi-

cal systems, including laminar flow technology, to ensure high-quality treatment standards. One entire floor has been dedicated exclusively to neonatal care and wards for newborn infants. Officials said the facility would significantly improve maternal and child healthcare services in the region by offering modern treatment free of cost to mothers and infants. The project is also being hailed as a rare and inspiring example of alumni philanthropy transforming public healthcare infrastructure in the State.

## Lokesh Extends Wishes to Newlywed Couple

**Paderu, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Andhra Pradesh Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh on Wednesday attended the wedding ceremony of Kidari Sravan Kumar, Chairman of the State Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) and former minister, at Tummarametta near Paderu in Alluri Sitarama Raju district. Lokesh blessed the newlywed couple, Kidari Sravan Kumar and Sripriya, in the presence of public representatives, party leaders and well-wishers. The minister received a grand reception from leaders and cadres of the Telugu Desam



Party upon his arrival at Lagishapalli. Tribal residents from nearby villages gathered in large numbers to welcome him and submit petitions regarding local issues. During his visit, Lokesh interacted with local residents,

received representations and posed for photographs with party workers and supporters. He also greeted people waiting for him at Varthanapalli and Nakkalaputtu junctions while proceeding to the wedding venue.



## MoHUA Clears 1,501 Crore Urban Challenge Fund Projects for Visakhapatnam Infrastructure Push

**Visakhapatnam, May 13|TPN Bureau**

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has granted in-principle approval to three major Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) projects worth 1,501.03 crore for Visakhapatnam, marking a significant boost to the city's urban infrastructure development. GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg said on Wednesday. The National Apex Committee cleared proposals submitted by GVMC and GVSCCL, covering 24/7 drinking water supply, underground drainage, and automation of bulk water systems. The projects, supported under a blended financing model involving UCF grants, bank loans, and international funding, aim to modernize water and sanitation services in

the Madhurawada, East, and Bheemili zones. The approved works include a 658.61 crore underground drainage system with a 20 MLD sewage treatment plant, a 725.18 crore 24/7 smart water supply system with 37,407 AMI connections, and a 117.24 crore automation project using SCADA-based monitoring for 7,857 connections. Officials said the initiatives will introduce advanced infrastructure such as continuous pressurized water supply, district metering systems, and real-time monitoring. Commissioner Ketan Garg noted that this is one of the largest urban infrastructure investments secured for Visakhapatnam under central government schemes, expected to significantly improve civic services and reduce water losses.

# MSMEs Crucial for Achieving 20 Lakh Jobs Target: Lokesh

**Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Andhra Pradesh IT, Electronics and Education Minister Nara Lokesh on Tuesday said Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) would play a decisive role in achieving the State government's ambitious target of creating 20 lakh jobs, while asserting that Andhra Pradesh was rapidly emerging as one of India's leading investment destinations. Participating in an awareness seminar titled "SME IPO - Alternative Funding Option For Growth," jointly organised by the National Stock Ex-

change of India, AP MSME Development Corporation and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Lokesh said the government was moving forward with the vision of "Made in Andhra - Made for India - Made for World." Recalling his 'Yuvagam' padayatra, Lokesh said the target of creating 20 lakh jobs was inspired by real-life experiences during his 3,132-km journey across the State. He narrated the story of Padmavathi, a woman employed in a Kia ancillary unit near Penukonda, whose life changed after industrial investments created employment opportunities in the region.



"Before Kia arrived, she was a homemaker despite being educated. Today she earns 30,000 a month and supports her family independently. Sto-

ries like hers made me realise the transformative power of employment generation," he said. Lokesh stated that Andhra

Pradesh had secured investment commitments worth 23 lakh crore across 800 projects over the past 23 months, creating the potential for 24 lakh jobs. He said global companies such as Google, ArcelorMittal, Royal Enfield, Tata Consultancy Services and Cognizant were establishing operations in the State. He also revealed that the proposed AMCA fighter jet manufacturing project would come up in Puttaparthi in the Rayalaseema region. Explaining the "multiplier effect" of investments, Lokesh said Google's proposed data centre in Visakhapatnam had attracted ancillary industries such as Carrier Corporation,

which plans to invest in Sri City to support cooling infrastructure for large-scale data centres. The Minister outlined the government's "One Capital - Decentralisation of Development" strategy, aimed at transforming Andhra Pradesh's economy from \$200 billion to \$2.4 trillion by 2047 through sector-specific industrial clusters. He said Rayalaseema would focus on automobiles, renewable energy and horticulture; Coastal Andhra on compressed biogas and aquaculture; Amaravati on quantum technology; and North Andhra on pharma, IT, medical equipment and data centres.

Emphasising the importance of MSMEs, Lokesh said the government was shifting from "Ease of Doing Business" to "Speed of Doing Business" by simplifying approvals, subsidies and clearances through online systems. He called for the establishment of MSME parks in every Assembly constituency and urged officials to help at least 100 Andhra Pradesh-based companies get listed on the NSE within the next three months. "The nation's gaze is upon Andhra Pradesh. Entrepreneurs should dream big and transform local businesses into global enterprises," Lokesh said.

## RBI Governor Warns of Possible Fuel Price Hike as Gulf Conflict Pressures Oil Markets

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during the pandemic, has now been brought down to around 4.3 per cent. Emphasising India's economic dependence on the Middle East, he said nearly one-sixth of India's imports and exports are linked to the region. Around 40 per cent of India's remittances and fertiliser imports, along with almost 60

per cent of natural gas supplies, are also connected to West Asia, making the Indian economy particularly vulnerable to disruptions in the region. Given the uncertain global environment, Malhotra stressed that monetary policy must remain agile and responsive to rapidly evolving domestic and international developments

## Union Cabinet Hikes MSP for 14 Kharif Crops, Clears Rail, Coal and Aviation Projects

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and private sector participation.

The Centre said the initiative would strengthen India's energy security, reduce import dependence and encourage investment in the coal and chemical sectors. Coal gasification technology converts coal into synthetic gas used in fertilisers, chemicals, fuels and power generation.

The Cabinet also cleared the 20,665-crore Sarkhej-Dholera semi high-speed double railway line project under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan. The 108-km corridor in Gujarat is expected to improve connectivity to the Dholera Special Investment Region, being developed as a major industrial and manufacturing hub.

According to the government, the rail line will boost freight and passenger movement, improve logistics effi-

ciency and support economic activity across the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor region. The project is also expected to generate large-scale employment during the construction phase.

Additionally, the Cabinet approved the upgradation of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur as part of a broader push to strengthen aviation infrastructure in emerging economic centres.

The airport modernisation project aims to enhance passenger handling capacity, expand cargo infrastructure and strengthen Nagpur's role as a logistics and multimodal transport hub. Officials said the project would improve regional air connectivity and support industrial growth in central India while complementing the PM Gati Shakti initiative through better integration of air, rail and road networks.

## Naidu Urges 'My Nation-My Responsibility' Spirit; Positions Amaravati as India's Quantum Hub

continued

soon host India's first quantum computer, with a 133-qubit system expected to be operational by December.

Naidu assured investors and educational institutions that project approvals would be granted in "autopilot mode," while insisting that all projects must adhere strictly to execution timelines.

The Chief Minister said the BISER initiative, along with the proposed KIMS Hospitals healthcare project, would help create a major ecosystem for healthcare, education and skill development in Amaravati. The planned infrastructure includes a 500-bed super-speciality hospital, 250 medical seats, 1,000 non-medical seats and training facilities for another 1,000 healthcare professionals. The projects are expected to generate employment for nearly 5,000 people.

Praising KIMS chairman Dr Bollineni Bhaskar Rao for building a major healthcare network, Naidu said entrepreneurship was essential for economic growth and wealth creation. He expressed confidence that the proposed KIMS hospital would become operational by 2027. The Chief Minister also highlighted the State gov-

ernment's focus on industrialisation and youth employment, referring to recent mega projects involving Google and ArcelorMittal. He said Google's project could be completed before August 2028, while the first phase of the ArcelorMittal plant was expected to be operational by December 2028.

Observing that global demand for doctors, nurses and paramedical professionals was increasing rapidly, Naidu encouraged youth to learn foreign languages to improve overseas employment prospects. He also praised BISER's AI-based visual assistance technology for the visually impaired and announced plans to expand digital healthcare services through the Sanjeevani platform.

Reaffirming support to farmers who pooled land for Amaravati, Naidu said the capital city would be developed into a futuristic urban centre with large-scale infrastructure projects, including a 190-km Outer Ring Road, bridges, flyovers, airport expansion and advanced healthcare facilities. He added that Amaravati and Visakhapatnam would emerge as globally competitive cities, while Rayalaseema would evolve into a horticulture and technology hub.

## Atchannaidu Steps In, AP Govt Freezes Shrimp Feed Price Hike

continued

The association, however, explained that increasing raw material costs had compelled companies to consider revising prices. Respecting the government's directions, it agreed to defer the proposed hike for the time being. The minister announced that a joint meeting involving farmers, feed manufacturers and government officials would be held on May 15 to

work out a mutually acceptable solution that balances farmers' welfare with the long-term sustainability of the aquaculture industry. Reiterating the State government's commitment to the aqua sector, Atchannaidu assured farmers that their concerns would be addressed promptly and that all necessary support would be extended to safeguard livelihoods dependent on aquaculture

## Strengthen Institutions to Build Robust Economy, CM Tells Officials

Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed officials to strengthen institutional capacity and adopt data-driven governance systems to accelerate economic growth and realise the goals of "Swarna Andhra-2047."

During a review meeting of the Planning Department at the State Secretariat, the Chief Minister stressed that Andhra Pradesh must achieve a sustained growth rate of 15 per cent to transform into a globally competitive economy by 2047.

Naidu emphasised the importance of faster and more accurate data collection mechanisms and instructed officials to implement a structured three-month training programme for staff from the State level down to mandal administrations. He said the government would soon transition

towards fully data-driven governance with a focus on real-time economic monitoring.

The review meeting focused on Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) capacity building, AI-based economic analysis, district-level surveys, KPI auditing systems and training programmes for officials across the State.

Observing that current GSDP estimates are prepared only on a quarterly and annual basis, the Chief Minister said such traditional methods delayed timely policy interventions. He noted that excessive dependence on historical data limited the government's ability to respond quickly to changing economic conditions.

Naidu said the State required a modern system capable of tracking economic activity every month across districts and mandals to enable faster and evidence-based policymaking. He instructed officials to train government employees in understanding

GSDP methodologies and generating quicker, data-backed economic estimates.

As part of the capacity-building initiative, the Chief Minister directed that at least three officials from every Assembly constituency receive specialised training in economic analysis and governance systems.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that AI-based economic analysis tools were being developed for the agriculture, industrial and services sectors. Naidu further directed departments to identify and integrate currently untracked economic indicators to improve forecasting accuracy and strengthen governance planning.

The Chief Minister reiterated that technology-driven administration and institutional strengthening would play a critical role in achieving the State's long-term economic and development goals.

## Centre Raises Gold Import Duty to 15%; Jewellery Prices Set to Rise Amid Forex Concerns

continued

quota system that previously enjoyed concessional rates.

The hike is expected to push up domestic gold prices significantly, affecting jewellery buyers and the gems and jewellery industry. Industry representatives estimate that the combined impact of customs duty, GST and cess could increase gold prices by nearly 27,000 per 10 grams. Rajesh Rokde, chairman of the All India Gems and Jewellery Council, warned that the move could adversely impact business and potentially fuel smuggling and grey market activities. India, the world's second-largest con-

sumer of gold after China, recorded all-time high gold imports worth \$71.98 billion in 2025-26, a rise of over 24 per cent compared to the previous year. However, import volumes fell 4.76 per cent to 721.03 tonnes, reflecting the sharp increase in international prices. Gold prices rose from \$76,617 per kilogram in FY25 to nearly \$99,825 per kilogram in FY26. In the national capital, gold prices are currently hovering around 1.51 lakh per 10 grams.

Higher imports of the precious metal have added pressure on India's trade deficit and current account deficit. Gold now accounts for more

than 9 per cent of India's total imports, contributing to a trade deficit of \$33.2 billion during 2025-26. According to Commerce Ministry data, Switzerland remains India's largest source of gold imports with nearly 40 per cent share, followed by the UAE and South Africa. The government had reduced customs duty on gold to 6 per cent in the 2024-25 Union Budget to support the domestic jewellery industry and discourage smuggling. However, the latest decision signals a renewed focus on controlling imports and conserving foreign exchange amid global geopolitical uncertainties.



## Heatwave Tightens Grip on AP; Rayalapeta Sizzles at 43.7°C

Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau

Severe heatwave conditions continued to intensify across Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday, with Rayalapeta in Chittoor district recording the highest temperature in the State at 43.7 degrees Celsius.

According to the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA), extreme heat conditions prevailed in 143 mandals spread across 22 districts. APSDMA Managing Director Prakhari Jain advised people to remain cautious as temperatures, heatwaves and sultry weather conditions are expected to

worsen further over the next two days.

Officials said Today maximum temperatures are likely to hover between 43°C and 44°C in several regions. Heatwave conditions are expected in G.K. Veedhi of Alluri Sitarama Raju district and in Chintur, Kunavaram and Gurtedu areas of the Polavaram region.

Prakhari Jain said heatwave conditions are likely to persist in at least 16 mandals on Friday, with the possibility of severe heatwave conditions in isolated locations. He urged the public to avoid direct exposure to the sun during peak hours and take adequate pre-

cautions against dehydration and heat-related illnesses.

Meanwhile, under the influence of a low-pressure system, scattered rainfall accompanied by lightning is expected in parts of Rayalaseema over the next two days. Among other major temperature readings recorded on Wednesday were 42.6°C in Dornipadu of Nandyal district, 42.5°C in Nagaradana of Kurnool district, 42°C in Kalasapadu of YSR Kadapa district and 41.9°C in Kamham of Markapuram district. Temperatures also crossed 41°C in parts of Krishna, NTR, Anantapur, Palnadu, Sri Sathya Sai and Nellore districts.

## AP Gears Up for Local Body Polls; Election Notification Likely in September

Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission has begun preliminary preparations for conducting local body elections, with the notification likely to be issued in September and the entire electoral process expected to conclude by December this year.

Officials said efforts are underway to ensure that newly elected representatives in rural and urban local bodies as-

sume office by the beginning of the new year. Preparations related to reservations, voter lists and polling infrastructure are currently being expedited.

State Election Commissioner Anil Chandra Punetha recently held a review meeting with senior officials from the Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, Municipal Administration & Urban Development and BC Welfare departments to assess the progress of election-related arrangements. During the meeting, the SEC sought

the cooperation of all departments to complete the process within the proposed timeline.

Officials indicated that the report of the Dedicated Commission examining reservations for Backward Classes in local bodies is expected to be submitted to the government next month. Reservation quotas are likely to be finalised by July, after which the Election Commission will proceed with publication of voter lists and identification of polling stations. The voter list publication



## Naidu Reviews Cyber Crime Control Measures at Secretariat

Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed officials to strengthen coordination with banks and intensify public awareness campaigns to effectively curb the growing menace of cyber and financial crimes in the State.

During a high-level review meeting at the State Secretariat, the Chief Minister discussed the regulatory framework for tackling cyber crimes and reviewed measures to prevent fraudsters from misusing bank accounts. Deliberations were also held on the implementation of the "Golden Hour" concept for immediate response to cyber fraud complaints and the proposed AP Cyber Policy.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that the national cybercrime helpline 1930 had so far received nearly 9.29 lakh complaints from victims of cyber and financial frauds in Andhra Pradesh. They said investment fraud had emerged as the most significant category of financial crime in the State.

According to officials, victims in Andhra Pradesh have collectively lost around 652 crore to various cyber and financial scams, including phishing, vishing, online loan frauds, credit and debit card scams and so-called "digital ar-

rest" frauds. However, through coordinated efforts between the CID Cyber Crime Wing and banking institutions, authorities were able to safeguard more than 116 crore from reaching cyber criminals.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for proactive strategies to prevent cyber offences and directed officials to launch extensive awareness programmes among the public regarding online frauds and digital safety. He noted that the increasing frequency of cyber crimes required stronger preventive systems and faster coordination between law enforcement agencies and financial institutions.

Officials briefed the Chief Minister that the CID Cyber Crime Investigation Unit was functioning at the State level to monitor and investigate cyber and financial crimes. Director General of Police Harish Kumar Gupta informed the meeting that dedicated cyber police stations had been established in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Tirupati.

The review meeting was attended by Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, Home Secretary Kumar Viswajit, CID Chief Ravi Shankar Ayyanar, AP Forensics Advisor KPC Gandhi, IT Secretary Katamneni Bhaskar and senior officials from various banking institutions.



## Centre Clears 2,816-Crore Machilipatnam-Repalle Railway Line Project

Amaravati, May 13|TPN Bureau

The proposed Machilipatnam-Repalle railway line project connecting Krishna and Guntur districts has received administrative clearance, with works expected to begin shortly, according to Machilipatnam MP Vallabhaneni Balashowry.

The new broad-gauge railway line, to be developed at an estimated cost of 2,816 crore, will span 47.60 kilometres between Machilipatnam in Krishna district and Repalle in Guntur district. Balashowry said the project is targeted for completion within four years.

The MP stated that the final location survey has already been completed and the Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been prepared with approval from the Railway Board. He added that the project would include six railway stations, 70 bridges and 24 railway underbridges, besides modern electrification and signalling systems.

Balashowry said the railway line is expected to significantly

improve rail connectivity between coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh and boost economic activity, passenger movement and freight transportation in the region.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Railways has also approved a new weekly express service between Tirupati and Okha near Dwarka in Gujarat. Train No. 19559 Tirupati-Okha Weekly Express will depart from Tirupati every Thursday beginning May 14, while Train No. 19560 Okha-Tirupati Weekly Express has been operational since May 11. The train will pass through several stations in the Telugu States, including Basar, Nizamabad, Kamareddy, Bolarum, Kachiguda, Mahabubnagar, Gadwal, Kurnool City, Dhone, Tadipatri, Kadapa, Rajampet and Renigunta.

Railway officials said the service would improve connectivity between Andhra Pradesh and western India, particularly benefiting pilgrims and long-distance passengers travelling to Dwarka and Tirupati.





### Healthy Aging Key to Happy Life, Says Dr. Samaram

Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau
Noted physician Dr. Samar-am on Wednesday stressed the importance of elderly health-care awareness...

He advised senior citizens to follow a nutritious diet rich in proteins, fruits, milk and leafy vegetables while reducing oil and salt intake...



### VMC Commissioner Orders Fast-Track Completion of Pulletikatta Drain Works

Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau
VMC Commissioner Dhyana-chandra on Wednesday directed officials to expedite the construction of the Pulletikatta drain and strengthen sanitation measures...

The Commissioner later visited the Autonagar Garbage Transfer Station and ordered officials to ensure timely transportation and disposal of waste from the facility...

### Mahila Samakhya Demands Immediate Arrest of Bandi Sai Bhagirath

Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau
Leaders of the Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samakhya on Wednesday demanded the immediate arrest of Bandi Sai Bhagirath, son of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar...

the accused had not yet been taken into custody. They also criticised alleged attempts to intimidate the victim and dilute the case through counter-allegations.

## Buttermilk Distributed to Thousands of Hanuman Devotees in Vijayawada

Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau

On the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti, buttermilk was distributed to nearly 5,000 devotees participating in the Hanuman Deeksha procession and Giri Pradakshina in the Vidyadhara-puram area of Vijayawada.

The service programme was organised at the Vidyadhara-puram Four Pillars Centre under the leadership of Vijayawada City Gowda Association president Veeranki Ramachandra Rao. Devotees passing through the route as part of their hill circumambulation were provided refreshments amid the intense summer heat.



Thousands of devotees attended the programme, which continued for several hours from 10.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Organisers said the initiative was aimed at offering relief and hospitality to devotees concluding their Hanuman Deeksha.

Several volunteers and local residents actively participated in the arrangements, including Mopidevi Seetharamaiah, G. Rambabu, N. Suresh, T. Ramana, Gowri Shankar, Badugu Ganesh, Gannavaram Srinu, Karimulla, Hari Babu, Sivakumar, Prasadu, Raju, Lokesh and Mujeeb, contributing to the smooth conduct of the programme.

## Central Cabinet Decisions to Boost Farmers, Industry and Infrastructure: P.V.N. Madhav

Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau

AP BJP Chief P. V. N. Madhav on Wednesday welcomed the major decisions taken by the Union Cabinet, stating that the Centre under Prime Minister Narendra Modi was giving top priority to the welfare of farmers, industrial growth and infrastructure development.

In a statement issued here, Madhav said the Cabinet's decision to allocate 2.60 lakh crore towards the implementation of Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Kharif crops would provide substantial relief and encouragement to farmers across the country. He said the Central Government remained committed to increasing farmers' incomes and strengthening the agricultural sector through sustained policy support.



ported fuels. According to him, the initiative would contribute to energy security and industrial expansion. Madhav further stated that the approval for the Sarkhej-Dholera semi high-speed railway corridor in Gujarat would significantly improve the country's railway infrastructure and logistics network.

He also hailed the decision to modernise Nagpur International Airport, saying it would improve passenger services and connectivity. The BJP leader said the Centre was moving ahead with a clear focus on economic growth, infrastructure expansion and farmers' welfare.

## Man Booked for Brutally Killing Stray Puppy

Ibrahimpattam, May 13|TPN Bureau

A shocking incident of animal cruelty has surfaced near Gurupriya Apartments in Ibrahimpattam, where a man allegedly beat a four-month-old stray puppy to death, triggering outrage among local residents and animal lovers.

According to locals, the incident occurred on the morning of May 10 when the accused allegedly chased the puppy, threw it to the ground and repeatedly attacked it with a thick stick. He later hurled a large stone at the animal, causing its death on the spot. Residents said the act left the neighbourhood disturbed and fearful.



CCTV footage related to the incident. A post-mortem examination of the puppy was conducted at Kothur under the supervision of veterinary officials.

Residents and animal rights activists demanded strict action against the accused under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). They urged authorities to ensure stringent punishment to prevent such incidents in the future.

## Youth Murdered After Drunken Altercation; Three Held Within 24 Hours

Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau

The Ajith Singh Nagar police in Vijayawada cracked a murder case within 24 hours and arrested three accused in connection with the killing of a youth following a drunken altercation in New RR Peta.

The deceased, identified as Meesala Kumar alias Ganji Kumar alias Krupara Rao (36), had reportedly gone to stay with his friend Pandi Prasad after a domestic dispute with his wife. Police

said an argument broke out between the two on May 12 after Kumar allegedly made derogatory remarks about Prasad's mother.

Harbouring a grudge, Prasad allegedly attacked Kumar later that night near Block RR-III-15 at KGF Apartments. According to police, Prasad, who was under the influence of alcohol, struck Kumar on the head with a stone slab, killing him on the spot.

After the murder, Prasad allegedly fled in an auto-rickshaw and approached his associates, Mindala Yesu alias Chinna Koththem and Gaddala Prashanth Kumar. Police said the duo helped him conceal evidence by changing his blood-stained clothes and cleaning the auto-rickshaw.

Acting on technical evidence and surveillance inputs, special teams led by Ajith Singh Nagar CI Dadi Chandrasekhar apprehended all three accused. Police conducted an inquest and shifted the body for post-mortem examination. The accused will be produced before the court.



## Beerappa Swamy Temple Consecration Held with Grandeur in Kakulapadu

Gannavaram, May 13|TPN Bureau

The consecration ceremony of the Sri Sri Sri Beerappa Swamy Temple at Kakulapadu village in Bapulapadu mandal was celebrated with religious fervour and grandeur on Wednesday, with BC Welfare Minister Savitha, Yarlagadda Venkatrao and Chintamani Prabhakar participating as chief guests.

The dignitaries offered special prayers to the newly consecrated deity, Sri Sri Sri Beerappa Swamy, and took part in traditional rituals and Navedam offerings. They also interacted with members of the Kuruma community, temple committee representatives and devotees during a felicitation programme organised on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Savitha said she felt blessed to offer prayers at the

temple, describing Beerappa Swamy as her family deity. She stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, the coalition government was committed to preserving the sanctity and development of temples across the state.

The minister announced that renovation works for BC hostels in the constituency would soon be taken up following a request from MLA Venkatrao. She also welcomed proposals to secure Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams support for constructing a Bhajana Mandapam at the temple.

MLA Venkatrao said his priority was to attract industries and create employment opportunities in the constituency. He added that CSR funds would be utilised for improving facilities such as RO water plants and restrooms in BC and SC hostels.



## NTR Police Distribute 'Cool Jackets' to Traffic Personnel Amid Summer Heat

Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau
NTR District Commissioner S. V. Rajasekhara Babu on Tuesday distributed "Cool Jackets" and "Cool Caps" to traffic police personnel serving under harsh summer conditions in the NTR Police Commissionerate limits, with support from the Rotary Club and Lions Club International.

The distribution programme was held at the Police Commissioner's Office as part of ongoing welfare measures for traffic personnel. Earlier, summer kits containing hats, water bottles, cooling glasses, neck cooling bands and bags were also distributed to provide relief from extreme heat conditions.

Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner said the department was implementing several technology-driven initiatives to improve traffic management and public safety in Vijayawada. He noted that over 10,873 surveillance cameras had been installed across the

district through public participation, with nearly 97 per cent currently functioning in real time.

Rajasekhara Babu stated that the use of Facial Recognition System cameras had helped police identify criminals and even trace a missing person after three years. He added that the "Astra" application introduced by the department enabled real-time monitoring of traffic congestion and reduced average waiting time at junctions from 20 minutes to just two minutes.

The Commissioner also announced plans for a dedicated citizen application and the expansion of the "E-Path" green corridor system for ambulances and emergency vehicles.

Traffic personnel and officers who displayed outstanding service were felicitated during the programme, while donors from the Rotary and Lions Clubs were honoured with shawls and mementoes.





## Drawing Competitions on Women's Empowerment Held in Tiruvuru

**Tiruvuru, May 13|TPN Bureau**  
Drawing competitions themed on "Women's Empowerment" were organised under the aegis of the Janavignana Vedika, Tiruvuru chapter, at the Sundarayya Vignana Kendram in NTR district. More than 50 students from various educational institutions participated enthusiastically in the competitions and showcased their artistic talent by highlighting the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality

through creative drawings. Leaders of the Janavignana Vedika and the United Teachers Federation (UTF) encouraged the participants and appreciated their awareness-oriented presentations. Among those who participated in the programme were M. Harikrishna, M. Rampradeep, B. Vijayakumar, S. Jaganmohana Rao, Surendra, Marayya, P. Venkataswamy, B. Durga Rao and R. Vinayakumar, along with several teachers and local organisers.



## TIDCO Beneficiaries to Receive Full Refunds: MLA Arani Srinivasulu

**Tirupati May 13|TPN Bureau**  
Tirupati MLA Arani Srinivasulu on Wednesday assured that all eligible beneficiaries of the AP TIDCO housing scheme would receive refunds of the amounts they had paid during the 2018-19 financial year. He was speaking after distributing refund cheques to beneficiaries at a programme held at the Tirupati Municipal Corporation office. The MLA stated that nearly 5 crore had been collected from 2,472 beneficiaries as their contribution towards the AP TIDCO double-bedroom housing scheme. However, he alleged that the previous government had cancelled the project without refunding the money collected from beneficiaries. Arani Srinivasulu said he had repeatedly raised the issue in the Assembly, following

which Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan approved the refund process. He added that the NDA alliance government had also allotted one cent of land to each beneficiary. Municipal Corporation In-charge Commissioner Sharada Devi stated that 1,890 beneficiaries were identified as eligible after removing duplicate entries. She said Aadhaar verification was underway and assured that refund amounts for all eligible beneficiaries across the three phases would soon be credited directly to their bank accounts. AP Greenery and Beautification Chairperson Sugunamma, Deputy Commissioner Amarayya, former Deputy Mayors, officials, and NDA alliance leaders participated in the programme.

## Fair Compensation for Displaced Farmers' Crops: Collector Vetriselvi

**Eluru, May 13|TPN Bureau**  
District Collector K. Vetriselvi has directed officials to ensure fair compensation for horticultural crops belonging to farmers displaced due to land acquisition for various development projects in the district. Chairing a district-level committee meeting at the Collectorate on Wednesday, the Collector stressed that compensation must be provided strictly as per government norms while safeguarding farmers from financial loss. She stated that special attention should be given to crops not covered under existing government regulations, including Dragon Fruit. Referring to the acquisition of 3.46 acres in Buttayagudem Mandal where Dragon Fruit cultivation was undertaken, the Collector said the district committee must determine a suitable compensation rate after conducting a detailed study. Officials were instructed to



consult authorities from districts such as Anantapur, Prakasam, and Palnadu, where Dragon Fruit cultivation is more prevalent, before finalising compensation rates. The Collector directed the committee to consider cultivation costs, market value, yield, and farmers' losses while fixing rates. She also instructed officials to conduct the land acquisition process transparently and complete housing construction for displaced families in Kudalipadu and Kunavaram villages at the earliest

# Nellore Gears Up for Grand TDP 'Mahanadu' on 400 Acres

**Nellore, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Nellore district is witnessing hectic activity as large-scale preparations gather pace for the Telugu Desam Party's prestigious three-day 'Mahanadu' scheduled to be held from May 27 to 29 at the IFFCO Kisan SEZ premises in Racharlapadu village of Kodavaluru mandal. Party leaders and cadres have launched extensive arrangements to transform the venue into a sprawling convention centre for what is expected to be one of the biggest political gatherings in the state.



Out of the 2,200 acres available within the SEZ premises, nearly 400 acres have been earmarked for the Mahanadu. Land that was until recently covered with dense vegetation and thorny bushes is being rapidly cleared and levelled using hundreds of excavators and tipper vehicles working round the clock.

Separate blocks are being prepared for delegate sessions, dining halls, parking areas, medical camps and VIP accommodation facilities. A massive ground is also being readied for the grand public meeting scheduled on the concluding day. Party leaders said all ar-

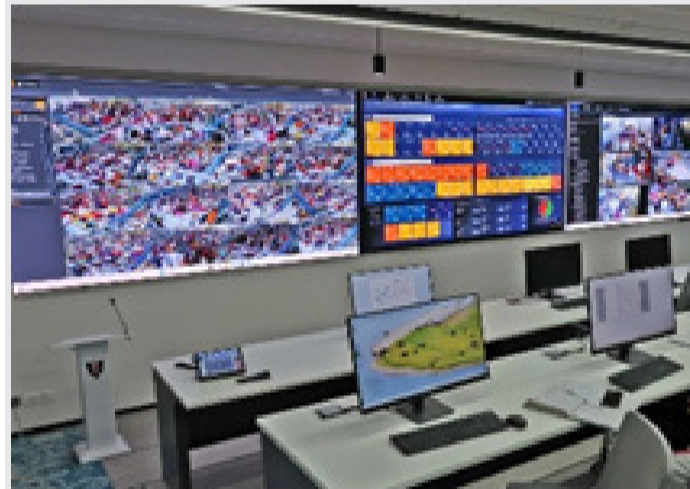
rangements are being made to accommodate lakhs of cadres and supporters expected to attend the event from across the state. Kovur MLA Vemireddy Prashanthi, who reviewed the preparations with committee members, said this would be the first Mahanadu after Nara Lokesh assumed charge as the TDP National Working President, making the event politically significant. She said state-level committees had already arrived in Nellore and preparations were progressing according to a meticulous plan. Prashanthi expressed confidence that the Mahanadu would usher in a new phase of development for the IFFCO

SEZ region and eventually help generate employment opportunities for local youth under the coalition government. Former minister and MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy described the event as historic, noting that it would be the first time in the party's history that Mahanadu was being organised in Nellore district. Recalling the enthusiasm witnessed during earlier party conventions, he said the energy among cadres this time appeared even greater. With vehicles, party flags and cadres flooding the district, a festive atmosphere has already begun to prevail across Nellore ahead of the mega political conclave.

## TTD Uses Integrated Command Control Centre for Faster, Hassle-Free Darshan

**Tirumala, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Amid the heavy summer rush of pilgrims to Tirumala, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is leveraging advanced technology through its Integrated Command Control Centre to ensure faster and more comfortable darshan for devotees. Officials said coordinated digital monitoring has significantly improved crowd management and reduced waiting time in queue lines. The Command Control Centre is continuously monitoring devotee movement at Vaidiktham Queue Complexes, Narayanagiri sheds, Annarasadam centres, parking areas, temple surroundings and major roads through hundreds of CCTV cameras installed across Tirumala. Based on real-time analysis of crowd density and queue flow, authorities are taking immediate measures to regulate devotee movement smoothly. TTD officials stated that special focus is being placed on ensuring queue lines do not extend beyond Narayanagiri



sheds. Additional staff are being deployed whenever required, while drinking water, milk, Annarasadam and medical services are being provided promptly to devotees waiting in queues. Digital crowd monitoring at Narayanagiri sheds and Vaidiktham complexes has enabled officials to release devotees in batches, ensuring orderly movement towards darshan without inconvenience. The temple administra-

tion noted that the use of modern crowd-management systems has helped maintain smooth operations despite the massive influx of pilgrims during weekends and holidays. TTD is currently facilitating darshan for more than 75,000 devotees daily, while over 85,000 devotees are being accommodated on weekends. On May 2, a record 91,005 devotees had darshan of Lord Venkateswara, officials added.

## MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar Offers Prayers at Dwaraka Tirumala Temple

**Eluru, May 13|TPN Bureau**  
Denduluru MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar visited the famed Dwaraka Tirumala Temple, popularly known as "Chinna Tirupati," on Wednesday along with his family to offer prayers to Lord Venkateswara Swamy.



The MLA, accompanied by his wife Radharani and family members, was accorded a traditional welcome by temple priests and officials upon arrival. The family participated in special rituals and Harathi services before having darshan of the deity. Prabhakar stated that he

prayed for the prosperity of the state, good health, happiness, and long life for the people. Following the darshan, Vedic scholars offered traditional blessings to the MLA and his wife inside the temple

premises. Temple authorities honoured the couple with Sessa Vastram, besides presenting Teertham, Prasadam, and a portrait of Lord Venkateswara Swamy.

## Free Blood Transfusions for Thalassemia Children at Eluru GGH

**Eluru, May 13|TPN Bureau**

District Red Cross Chairman Dr. MBSV Prasad said that blood transfusion treatments were successfully provided to ten children suffering from Thalassemia at the Red Cross Thalassemia Blood Transfusion Centre located in the Eluru Government General Hospital premises. He emphasized

that Thalassemia can be controlled effectively only through increased public awareness and preventive screening. Dr. Prasad advised that couples should undergo necessary blood tests before marriage to prevent the transmission of the disease to future generations. He noted that diagnostic facilities for Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Anemia are available at the Red Cross laboratory

and urged the public to make use of these services. He also appreciated Helapuri Lions Club members Bezawada Radhama and Rama Rao for arranging meals for Thalassemia children and their caregivers on Wednesday. Medical staff, including pediatric specialists and nursing personnel, participated in the programme and assisted in providing care to the children.



## Rajanagaram Roads Set for Major Upgrade Ahead of 2027 Pushkarams

**Rajamahendravaram, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Rajanagaram MLA Bathula Balamakrishna has initiated an ambitious plan to modernise major roads in the constituency with a focus on the 2027 Godavari Pushkarams. During a meeting with Roads and Buildings Department officials, including the Engineer-in-Chief, in Vijayawada on Wednesday, the MLA submitted proposals for 35 road development works across three mandals at an estimated cost of 277.75 crore.

He urged officials to grant immediate administrative and financial approvals to ensure

smooth travel facilities for devotees during the Pushkarams. The MLA also pressed for the speedy completion of pending projects, including the Kapavaram-Muggalla, Chinna-kondepudi-Chekurupalli and Rajanagaram-Gadarada roads being executed with New Development Bank assistance. Balamakrishna additionally sought funds for widening the Korukonda temple road and improving the Srirampuram-Rajamahendravaram Police Quarters road. Officials reportedly responded positively and assured swift action on approvals and fund release.



## Save for the Nation, Prepare for Economic Challenges: Prathi Venkata Subbarao

**Chirala, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Graduates' Association President Prathi Venkata Subbarao has called upon citizens to adopt a culture of savings and financial discipline in view of the uncertain global economic situation triggered by tensions in West Asia. Addressing an awareness seminar in Chirala on Wednesday, he warned that the prevailing war-like atmosphere could severely impact global transportation systems, imports, and commodity prices. He stated that disruptions in international trade may lead to shortages and a steep rise in the prices of imported goods, placing additional pressure on the Indian economy. In such circumstances, conserving for-

ign exchange reserves and reducing unnecessary expenditure become crucial responsibilities for every citizen, he observed. Subbarao urged people to minimize the use of luxury products and focus on savings to withstand any possible economic slowdown or recession in the coming months. He stressed that strengthening domestic industries and encouraging the use of indigenous products would help reduce dependence on foreign imports and improve economic stability. He further appealed to the public to remain financially cautious and contribute towards building a stronger national economy through responsible spending and disciplined saving habits.

## Tirupati to be Developed as Global Tourism Hub: Minister Kandula Durgesh

**Tirupati, May 13|TPN Bureau**

State Minister for Tourism, Culture and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh said that the coalition government is committed to transforming Tirupati into an "Iconic Global Tourist Hub" with international standards.

Chairing a review meeting with tourism officials from Tirupati, Chittoor, Annamayya and Nellore districts, the Minister directed officials to develop integrated tourism circuits connecting Tirupati with surrounding destinations. He also announced that tourism review meetings will be held once every three months to ensure better monitoring and accountability.

Durgesh instructed officials to expedite pending tourism projects, ensure timely execution of MoUs, and focus on land allocation for investors. He also reviewed land banks, existing tourism properties, and pending court cases related to tourism infrastructure. He emphasized developing



Annamayya district as an economic tourism zone and promoting coastal tourism in Nellore by attracting star hotels and resorts. Plans were also discussed to conduct the Horsley Hills Festival and organize the Mypadu Beach Festival in July, along with efforts to secure Blue Flag certification for Mypadu Beach. The Minister stressed tourist safety, cleanliness, and promotion of homestay and bed-and-breakfast models to boost local employment and cultural tourism. He warned that strict action would be taken against negligence in maintaining tourism assets.



## Two Janasena Veera Mahilas Join Congress in Parvathipuram

**Parvathipuram, May 13|TPN Bureau**

In a notable political development, two women activists from the Janasena Party, Gotapu Renuka and P. Chandrakala, joined the Congress Party on Wednesday in Parvathipuram. They were formally welcomed into the party fold under the leadership of DCC President Vangala Dalinaidu. Party leaders, including SC Cell President Kola Kiran Kumar and OBC Chairman Sirisipalli Sai Srinivas, ceremonially inducted them by draping the party scarf. The new entrants said they were im-

pressed by the Congress Party's ideology based on ethics, values, and its consistent fight against public issues, corruption, and irregularities.

DCC President Dalinaidu stated that the induction was carried out as per the directions of PCC President Y.S. Sharmila Reddy. He emphasized that women are given high respect and priority within the party and assured strong representation in upcoming local body elections.

Congress leaders from state and AICC levels also interacted with the new members and welcomed them into the party.



## TIDCO Housing Colonies to Get Full Civic Amenities Soon

**Kurnool, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Municipal Corporation Commissioner Challa Obulesu said that steps are being taken to provide all basic amenities in TIDCO housing colonies located on the city outskirts. He inspected the housing layouts on Wednesday along with TIDCO and municipal officials and interacted with residents regarding their issues.

The Commissioner directed officials to resolve pending civic works on priority and reviewed the status of housing construction and drinking wa-

ter supply. He announced that 500 houses will be made ready for allotment by the end of this month and urged beneficiaries to occupy the allotted houses without delay. He further stated that door-to-door drinking water supply will be completed within two months. In the meantime, water will be supplied twice a week, and streetlights will be repaired. He also instructed officials to ensure ration distribution, establish a ward secretariat, improve bus connectivity, and set up a primary school within the colony to support residents' needs.



## AITUC Demands Deletion of IFMS IDs of Retired APCOS Workers

**Vijayawada, May 13|TPN Bureau**

AITUC and Municipal Workers' Union General Secretary Budde Raja has urged Vijayawada Municipal Corporation officials to immediately delete the IFMS IDs of retired APCOS workers, stating that over 250 employees who retired in three phases last year are facing difficulties in accessing welfare benefits. Speaking at a corner meeting held at the Sanitary Office in Vinayaka Nagar, 12th Division on Wednesday, he alleged that despite repeated representations, the issue remains unresolved for several months. He said retired workers are unable to apply for gov-

ernment welfare schemes and pensions as their IFMS IDs remain active.

Budde Raja criticized the negligence of officials, stating that workers who served the municipality for decades are now being deprived of basic benefits. He pointed out that the retirees are from batches retired in March, September, and December of last year, and several months have already passed since the last retirement phase.

He demanded immediate corrective action, warning that continued delay would lead to further agitation. Union leaders SVS Chalam and others participated in the meeting.

# Minister Orders Major Reforms at Kurnool General Hospital

**Kurnool, May 13|TPN Bureau**

State Minister for Industries, Commerce and Food Processing T.G. Bharath Gupta has directed officials to ensure that the Kurnool Government General Hospital (GGH) provides satisfactory and high-quality medical services to the public. He chaired the Medical College and Hospital Development Committee meeting held at Kurnool Medical College on Wednesday. During the review, the Minister instructed officials to strengthen infrastructure and address key issues on priority. Taking note of reports regarding unauthorized collections at the mortuary, he ordered immediate regularization of staff through outsourcing and payment of salaries to prevent public inconvenience. He also directed phased replacement and repair of old air-conditioning units, restoration of oxygen plants, and installation of essential equipment including ventila-



tors, beds, and trolleys. The Minister emphasized cleanliness, CCTV surveillance, proper staffing, and strict AMC maintenance for hospital equipment. He ordered shifting of services from the old Sushruta Bhavan to the new IPD block and speeding up completion of the Vishram

Sadan for patient attendants. He further instructed removal of expired medicines and improved monitoring of hospital services through feedback systems. Officials were asked to ensure efficient functioning of all services and maintain public trust in the hospital system.

## EAPCET 2026 Conducted Peacefully at St. Ann's College

**Chirala, May 13|TPN Bureau**

The Andhra Pradesh EAPCET-2026 examinations were conducted peacefully at St. Ann's College of Engineering and Technology in Chirala under tight security arrangements. The exams, organized by JNTU Kakinada under APSCHE, began on Tuesday and will continue till Friday.

College Secretary Vanama Ramakrishna Rao and Correspondent Srimanthula Lakshmana Rao stated that the institution is serving as a key examination center this year. On the second day, a total of 1,087 students appeared for the Engineering stream exam.

According to Principal Dr. K.



Jagadeesh Babu, in the morning session 542 out of 595 candidates attended, while in the afternoon session 545 out of 595 appeared.

Considering the summer heat, the college management arranged drinking water and

buttermilk for both students and parents to ensure comfort. Officials said the examinations are being conducted smoothly without any disruptions, with proper coordination between invigilators and administrative staff.

## 40.58 Lakh CM Relief Funds Distributed to 61 Beneficiaries in Chirala

**Chirala, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Chirala MLA Madduluri Malakondaiah distributed Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques worth 40.58 lakh to 61 beneficiaries on Wednesday at the MLA Camp Office. The assistance was sanctioned on the directives of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for patients facing heavy medical expenses.

The MLA said the CMRF has become a lifeline for poor families struggling with costly treatment in corporate hospitals. He noted that, so far, nearly 9 crore has been disbursed to around 950 beneficiaries in the Chirala constituency.

Malakondaiah stated that the coalition government is committed to ensuring healthcare security for all poor families. He added that eligible pa-



tients who submit proper documents after treatment are being provided timely financial support without delay.

He also highlighted that government hospitals are being upgraded to provide corporate-

level medical services. Leaders including AMC Chairman Kouthavarapu Janardhan, Mandal Party President Ganji Purushottam, Town President Suresh, and others participated in the programme.

## Sanatana Dharma Cannot Be Eradicated: TTD Board Member Bhanu Prakash Reddy Slams Udhayanidhi Stalin

**Tirupati, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Trust Board member G. Bhanu Prakash Reddy strongly criticized DMK leader and former Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin over his remarks made in the Assembly regarding the eradication of Sanatana Dharma. Addressing a press conference in Tirupati on Wednesday, he termed the comments as "an unacceptable attack on Hindu beliefs" and said such views reflect a lack of understanding of India's cultural heritage. Bhanu Prakash Reddy stated that Sanatana Dharma has withstood centuries of foreign rule and continues to flourish across the country. He asserted that



no ideology or political statement can weaken or end the faith of millions of devotees. He further remarked that recent electoral setbacks should serve as a lesson for those making such controversial statements. Referring to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, he criticized his silence during the remarks made in the As-

sembly. He also pointed out that even Udhayanidhi Stalin's family members regularly visit temples, urging him to respect religious sentiments.

The TTD board member cautioned that continuing such statements could be politically damaging and called for restraint in public discourse on religious matters.



## Kuppam Set Target for 1 Million Litres Daily Milk Production by 2028

**Kuppam, May 13|TPN Bureau**

Chittoor District Collector Sumit Kumar has directed officials to prepare action plans aimed at achieving a daily milk production target of 1 million litres in the Kuppam constituency by 2028. He reviewed the performance of Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, and Animal Husbandry departments in a meeting held at the KADA office conference hall in Kuppam on Wednesday.

The Collector stressed strengthening fodder development through community fodder initiatives and encouraged farmers to adopt diversified

and high-value crops such as Dragon Fruit, Blueberry, millets, pulses, and groundnuts, while gradually reducing paddy cultivation. He also emphasized promotion of natural farming, floriculture, and silk production.

Special focus was laid on developing Kuppam as a "Silk Hub" by 2027 through expansion of reeling units and SHG-based silk production. He further directed officials to increase green cover and support backyard poultry farming for rural livelihoods. Senior officials from allied departments participated in the review meeting.



## Visakhapatnam Hosts NCAP Workshop on Air Quality and Heat Stress Mitigation

**Visakhapatnam, May 13|TPN Bureau**

A capacity-building workshop on the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and heat stress was held on Wednesday at Novotel, Visakhapatnam, jointly organized by GVMC, CSTEP Bengaluru, and Artha Global. The programme focused on scientific, data-driven, and sustainable approaches to address urban air pollution and rising heat stress. GVMC Additional Commissioner D.V. Ramanamurthy, speaking as chief guest, stressed the need for coordinated action to control emissions from industries and vehicles to transform Visakhapatnam into a climate-resilient city. APPCB officials noted that air quality has im-

proved, though AQI levels still occasionally reach 300.

Experts from CSTEP and partner agencies discussed emission inventories, air quality modelling, clean air action plans, and integrating heat risk assessments into urban planning. Sessions highlighted "Data to Action" frameworks and sector-specific mitigation strategies. Representatives from GVMC, APPCB, transport and industry sectors participated in group discussions on sustainable urban air quality management and climate adaptation. Officials emphasized stronger coordination and implementation of scientific monitoring systems to achieve long-term environmental goals for Visakhapatnam.

## Court Cancels Anantha Babu's Bail in Driver Murder Case

**Rajamahendravaram, May 13|TPN Bureau**

In a major setback to YSR Congress Party MLC Anantha Uday Bhaskar, popularly known as Anantha Babu, a special court in Rajamahendravaram on Wednesday cancelled the bail earlier granted to him by the Supreme Court in the sensational murder case of his former driver, Subrahmanyam. The court took the decision after allegations that the accused attempted to influence and intimidate witnesses were found to be credible during the investigation. With the cancellation of bail, Anantha Babu is expected to remain in judicial custody until completion of the trial. Police informed the court that the accused allegedly tried to influence four key witnesses through inducements and threats. Investigators also stated that witnesses had complained of intimidation and feared for their safety if they failed to testify in his

favour.

While granting bail earlier, the Supreme Court had imposed strict conditions prohibiting the accused from influencing witnesses or interfering with the investigation. However, following complaints regarding violation of these conditions, the Sarapavaram police in Kakinada arrested Anantha Babu again on April 24. Since then, he has been lodged in the Central Jail at Rajamahendravaram.

The special court reportedly expressed serious concern over the conduct of the accused while on bail and observed that his actions could obstruct the judicial process and compromise witness safety. Accepting the arguments of Special Public Prosecutor Muppalla Subbarao, the court noted that allowing the accused to remain free could result in tampering of evidence and intimidation of witnesses.

# Paradoxical Reality of Intersex Lives



The sleek, crystalline silhouette of the APCRDA headquarters in Rayapudi stands as a testament to the future of Amaravati—a rising "green capital" built on the promise of modernity. But last week, while visiting the Director and Commissioner of Municipal Administration, it wasn't the impressive architecture or the panoramic views of the new Andhra Pradesh that caught my breath. It was a simple, strategically placed sign between the traditional men's and women's restrooms: "Transgender."

In that minute detail, I saw something rare, even in the

bustling metropolises of Europe or the United States. It was a quiet, dignified endorsement of human identity, etched into the very blueprint of our state's futuristic vision. To many, it was just a doorway; to me, it was a bridge back to a memory from a train journey that had long haunted my conscience.

Some time ago, while travelling in a 3rd AC coach from Anantapur to Vijayawada, I found myself in a vibrant, unexpected microcosm of society. As a senior citizen, I occupied my usual side-lower berth, but I was surrounded. To my left and right were



nearly forty members of the transgender community, their sarees and churidars a sea of colour against the sterile train interior. For a moment, I felt like an alien in their world, observing the delicate "masks" of femininity they wore to navigate a world that often refuses to see them.

Their leader, a middle-aged woman with a regal, commanding presence, sat directly across from me. She carried herself like a queen among her subjects as they made their way toward a pilgrimage at the Kanaka Durga Temple. Curious and moved by their grace, I struck up a conversation with one of the younger members of the group.

I asked her about her life before the pilgrimage, specifically about her education. Her answer was a sharp reminder of how easily we let talent slip through the cracks of our systems. She had loved

school, she told me, but the journey ended abruptly in the fifth grade. As she entered adolescence, the simple, biological necessity of using a restroom became a gauntlet of discomfort and exclusion. Unable to find a safe space in the girls' toilet, and unwelcome in the boys', she simply stopped going.

That young girl's stolen future stands in stark contrast to the new "third toilet" at the APCRDA headquarters. Seeing that sign in Amaravati wasn't just about infrastructure; it was a call to action. If we are to build a truly "futuristic" society, we must start by ensuring that the "Inclusive Education" we speak of in policy papers translates into an ecosystem where every child—regardless of where they fall on the spectrum of gender, can walk into a school, use a restroom with dignity, and earn their place in the world.

The story of the third sign is, ultimately, the story of justice. It is time we write the rest of the chapters. The birth of a child is typically greeted with the binary question: "Is it a boy or a girl?" However, for approximately one in every 2,000 children, the answer is not so simple. These individuals are born with intersex traits—a term encompassing over 30 different conditions where a person's anatomy, reproductive organs, or genetics do not fit standard medical definitions of male or female. Despite being a relatively common phenomenon affecting millions globally, the intersex community has historically faced a world of secrecy, surgical intervention, and social erasure.

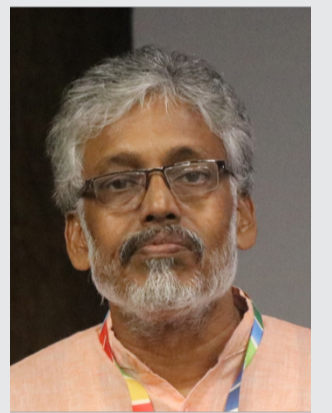
**'Nurture over Nature', the Medical Legacy of Secrecy**

For decades, the global treatment of intersex children was dictated by a "nurture over nature" theory developed in the 1950s at Johns

Hopkins University. This model argued that gender identity was learned and that children could be "assigned" a sex through aggressive surgeries and hormonal treatments to make them look typically male or female. But all who have gone through this inhumane process struggled all their lives with lost identity. This approach birthed a culture of profound secrecy.

Parents were often told to move to new towns, change the child's name, and destroy all records of their birth condition to ensure they never discovered the truth. Children grew up undergoing dozens of surgeries they didn't understand, often being told they were simply "fixing a leak". The result was frequently a childhood defined by medical trauma, frequent hospitalisations, and a deep, unexplained sense of being a "freak". Now in India, as the society grows and the medical facilities are also becoming

more and more aggressive to kill Nature's symphony to agony. Why can't we create an ecosystem where we respect intersex people as part of the natural web? What is stopping us from accepting every individual identity?



Ram Kamal  
Social Engineer

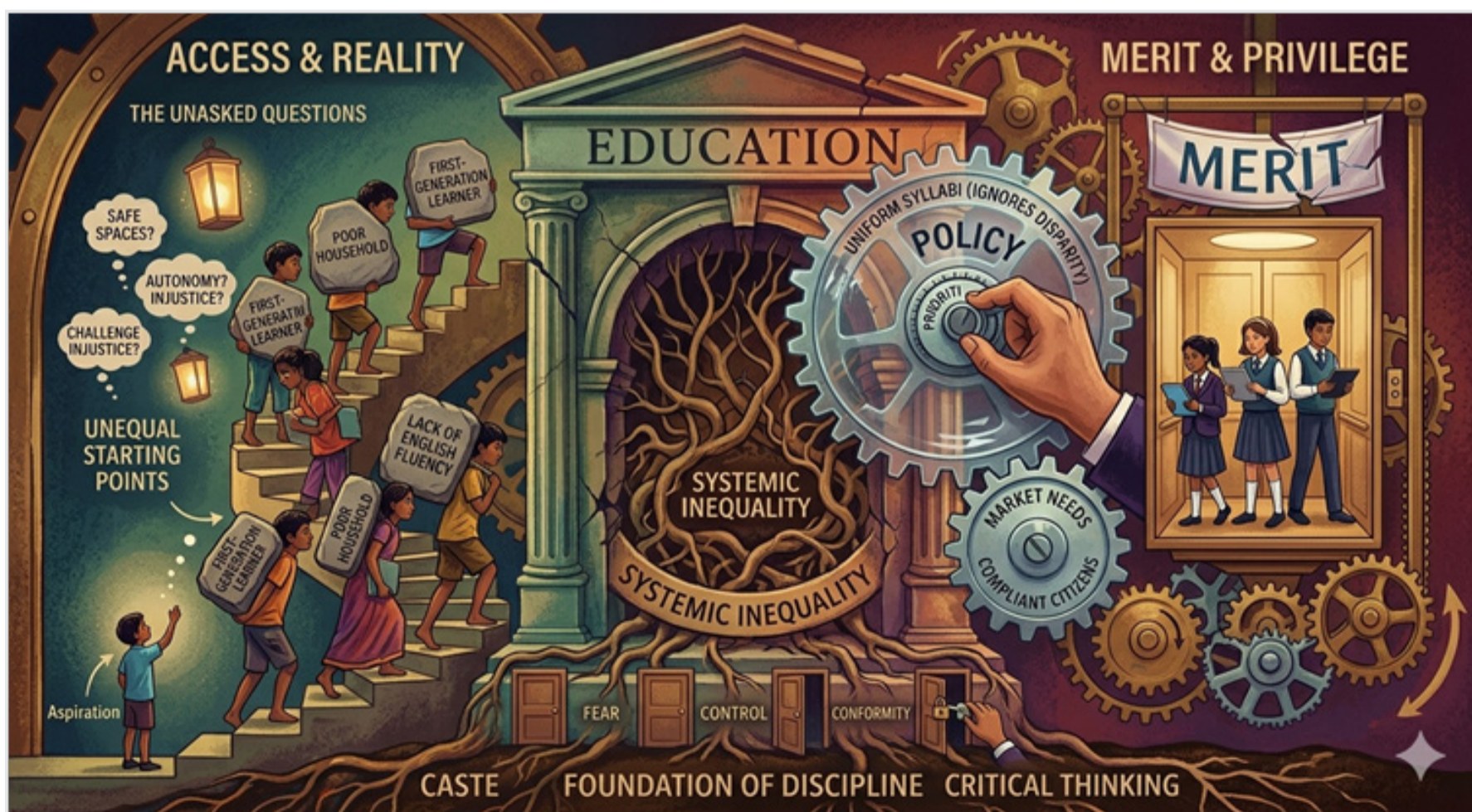
# Education Without Equality: A System Designed to Stand Still

We often lament that education is failing to transform society. But the uncomfortable truth is not that education cannot change society; it is that it has been structured in ways that rarely challenge it. This is not merely a failure of imagination; it reflects deeper political and institutional choices that prioritise stability over transformation.

Seventy-seven years after Independence, India has expanded its school and university systems and access to degrees. Yet, the core structure of society remains largely unchanged. Caste continues to exert influence, gender inequality persists, and poverty is still viewed as an individual failing rather than a systemic issue. Education, instead of challenging these realities, often conditions individuals to adapt to them. Literacy has increased, but justice and equality remain elusive.

For education to be transformative, it must first acknowledge inequality, encourage questioning, and equip learners with the tools to challenge injustice. However, the system often does the opposite. Policies framed as fairness, such as uniform syllabi, examinations, and evaluations, ignore unequal starting points. A first-generation learner, a child from a poor household, and a privileged student cannot be expected to compete on identical terms. Treating them as equals in the process while ignoring disparities in access is, in effect, systemic inequity.

The idea of 'merit' dominates educational discourse,



yet it rarely reflects pure talent. Instead, it often mirrors access to privilege, English fluency, coaching centres, digital tools, and financial support. When success is attributed solely to individual effort, systemic disadvantages are recast as personal failures. This shift of responsibility allows the system to avoid accountability

while reinforcing existing hierarchies.

Gender inequality presents another contradiction. Rising enrollment of girls is celebrated, but deeper questions remain unanswered. Are schools truly safe spaces? Do girls have the freedom to speak about their bodies, health, and rights? Can they question har-

assment without fear? Education frequently stops at inclusion, without addressing empowerment. Teaching girls without recognising their autonomy sustains, rather than dismantles, inequality.

Similarly, the treatment of children within schools raises serious concerns. While rights are constitutionally guaran-

teed, classrooms often function through fear and control. Discipline frequently masks punishment, and academic pressure becomes a tool of intimidation. Children's voices are seldom heard, and their aspirations are often decided for them. Such practices reflect not education, but an imbalance of power.

Education is also shaped by political priorities. Beyond textbook changes, its deeper function often lies in producing compliant citizens, shifting responsibility to individuals, and aligning human potential with market needs. Critical thinking is discouraged, while conformity is rewarded. Education becomes linked narrow-

ly to employment, losing its role in nurturing democratic consciousness.

As a result, India has an educated population, but not necessarily an empowered one. Degrees have multiplied, but the capacity to question, to challenge injustice, and to imagine alternatives remains limited. This is not accidental; it is the outcome of long-standing policy choices.

Meaningful reform requires more than structural adjustments; it demands a rethinking of purpose. Equality must be treated as a responsibility, not a slogan. The myth of merit must be interrogated. Silence should not be mistaken for discipline, nor conformity for success. Education must listen, to children, to girls, and to those on the margins, and place their lived realities at its centre.

Until then, education will continue to function, but society will remain largely unchanged. If education does not help us see beyond our differences, then what, ultimately, are we learning?



Sudha Mani  
Inamanamelluri

PGT Mathematics  
AP Model School  
Mavillapadu  
Tirupati District

# SuvenduAdhikari Retains Bhabanipur Seat, To Vacate Nandigram

West Bengal Chief Minister SuvenduAdhikari has decided to retain the Bhabanipur Assembly seat while vacating Nandigram after securing victories in both constituencies during the recently concluded state elections. The decision marks a major political development in Bengal politics, especially because Bhabanipur was considered one of the strongest bastions of Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee.

Adhikari defeated Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur by a margin of over 15,000 votes in what became one of the most closely watched electoral battles of the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections. At the same time, he successfully defended his traditional stronghold of Nandigram, where he won by nearly 10,000 votes.

Under election rules, a candidate elected from two constituencies must vacate one seat within a specified period. Adhikari had earlier indicated that he would take a final decision soon and assured supporters that he would continue fulfilling promises made to voters in both constituencies.



His decision to keep Bhabanipur is being seen as politically symbolic because the constituency was long associated with Mamata Banerjee and the Trinamool Congress leadership. Political observers believe re-

taining the seat strengthens the BJP's message following its historic victory in West Bengal and highlights Adhikari's emergence as the party's central face in the state. The BJP recently formed its

first-ever government in West Bengal, ending nearly two decades of Trinamool Congress rule. SuvenduAdhikari was sworn in as the state's first BJP Chief Minister after leading the party to a decisive electoral

win. Adhikari's political rivalry with Mamata Banerjee has become one of the defining stories of Bengal politics in recent years. Once considered one of Banerjee's closest aides in the Trinamool Congress, he later joined the BJP and emerged as her strongest political challenger. His victory over Banerjee in Nandigram during the 2021 elections had already transformed him into a major BJP leader in the state.

The latest election further intensified that rivalry, with Adhikari contesting directly against Banerjee in Bhabanipur — a constituency widely viewed as her political fortress. His win there is being described by BJP supporters as a historic breakthrough in Bengal politics.

With Nandigram now set to become vacant, the Election Commission will eventually announce a by-election for the constituency. Political parties are expected to closely watch the upcoming contest, as the seat carries strong political significance after becoming central to Bengal's recent political battles.



## N. Rangasamy Sworn In As Puducherry Chief Minister For Record Fifth Term

Veteran politician N. Rangasamy was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Puducherry for a record fifth term, further strengthening his position as one of the most influential leaders in the Union Territory's political history. The swearing-in ceremony took place at the Lok Bhavan in Puducherry in the presence of senior political leaders, party workers and supporters.

Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan administered the oath of office and secrecy to Rangasamy during the ceremony. Along with him, BJP leader A. Namassivayam and AINRC MLA Malladi Krishna Rao were also sworn in as ministers in the new cabinet.

Rangasamy's return to power comes after the National Democratic Alliance secured a comfortable majority in the recently concluded Puducherry Assembly elections. His party, the All India N.R. Congress (AINRC), emerged as the dominant force within the alliance, while the BJP and other allies also contributed to the NDA's victory.

The latest oath-taking marks Rangasamy's second consecutive term under the NDA alliance and his fifth overall tenure as Chief Minister, setting a new political record in Puducherry. Political observers say the achievement reflects his enduring popularity and strong grassroots support in the Union Territory.

Known for his simple public image and welfare-oriented politics, Rangasamy has remained a prominent figure in Puducherry politics for more than two decades. Supporters often credit him for maintaining a direct connection with the public and focusing on local development issues.

In the recent elections, the NDA alliance comfortably crossed the majority mark in the 30-member Assembly. The AINRC won 12 seats, while the BJP secured four. Other alliance partners, including AI-ADMK and LatchiyaJananayagaKatchi, also added to the coalition's strength.

The swearing-in ceremony witnessed the presence of several senior BJP leaders and alliance representatives. Party workers celebrated the occasion with processions, slogans and public gatherings across different parts of Puducherry.

Political analysts believe Rangasamy's latest term will be closely watched because of the growing role of the BJP within the Union Territory's political structure. The NDA government is expected to focus on infrastructure development, tourism, employment generation and welfare schemes in the coming years.

Rangasamy's political journey has been marked by multiple comebacks and strong electoral performances. His fifth term as Chief Minister further cements his legacy as one of Puducherry's longest-serving and most successful political leaders.



## Sonia Gandhi Admitted ToGurugram'sMedanta Hospital For Routine Check-Up

Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was admitted to Medanta Hospital in Gurugram for a routine medical check-up, party sources confirmed. The Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson was admitted under the supervision of a team of specialist doctors and is said to be stable.

According to party leaders, the hospital visit was part of a scheduled health evaluation and there is no immediate cause for concern regarding her condition. Sources indicated that Sonia Gandhi has been undergoing regular medical monitoring in recent years due to age-related health issues.

The development drew attention from political leaders across parties, with several Congress members visiting or enquiring about her health after news of her admission emerged. Party workers and supporters also expressed concern and wished for her speedy recovery on social media platforms. Sonia Gandhi, one of the most influential figures in Indian politics, has been active in key opposition meetings and Congress organisational matters despite reducing her pub-

lic appearances in recent years. Her health has often been closely watched due to her long political career and central role within the Congress party.

Congress leaders stated that doctors are conducting routine examinations and necessary medical tests as part of the evaluation process. Hospital authorities have not issued any detailed medical bulletin so far. The 79-year-old leader has previously travelled abroad for medical consultations and treatment on multiple occasions. Despite health concerns, she has continued to play an important advisory role within the party, particularly during major political developments and election strategies.

Political observers noted that Sonia Gandhi remains a significant figure in opposition politics, especially in efforts aimed at bringing together anti-BJP parties at the national level. Party leaders have appealed to supporters not to speculate about her health and assured that there is no serious medical emergency at present. Further updates are expected after doctors complete the scheduled assessments.

## BJP Leaders Begin Fuel-Saving Measures After PM Modi's Appeal

Several BJP leaders and ministers across the country have started adopting fuel-saving measures following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent appeal to reduce fuel consumption and promote energy conservation. The initiatives include smaller vehicle convoys, restrictions on unnecessary travel and increased use of virtual meetings for official work. The Prime Minister had recently urged citizens and government representatives to contribute towards fuel conservation amid rising global oil prices and growing concerns over energy security. His remarks came during discussions on India's dependence on imported crude oil and the need to promote responsible energy usage. Following the appeal, many BJP leaders reportedly instructed officials to minimise the number of vehicles used during public programmes and political events. Some ministers have also reduced large security convoys and encouraged carpooling among staff members during official visits. In several states, party leaders have started preferring virtual meetings instead of travelling frequently for organisational reviews and coordination activities. Officials believe these measures could help reduce fuel consumption while also cutting administrative costs. The move is being projected as part of a broader effort to encourage sustainable practices within the government and political system. BJP leaders have said public representatives should lead by example when it comes to conserving resources and reducing unnecessary expendi-

ture. Political observers note that fuel prices and energy costs remain sensitive issues for the public, especially during periods of global economic uncertainty. By promoting fuel-saving measures, the government appears to be sending a message about responsible consumption and long-term energy planning. Some state governments led by the BJP are also reportedly reviewing official vehicle usage policies and considering guidelines aimed at reducing fuel wastage during government events and VIP movement. Apart from reducing convoy sizes, officials are said to be encouraging better route planning, avoiding unnecessary air travel and limiting the use of government vehicles for non-essential purposes. The initiative has triggered mixed reactions online. Supporters praised the move as a practical step towards energy conservation, while critics questioned whether the measures would result in substantial savings without broader policy changes related to fuel pricing and public transport. India remains one of the world's largest importers of crude oil, making global fuel price fluctuations a major economic concern. Experts believe long-term energy security will require a combination of fuel conservation, renewable energy expansion and reduced dependence on imports.

The latest measures by BJP leaders are being seen as an attempt to align government functioning with the Prime Minister's broader message on sustainability, efficiency and responsible resource management.

## Vijay Removes Astrologer Appointed As Officer On Special Duty After Criticism

Tamil actor-turned-politician Vijay has reportedly removed an astrologer who was recently appointed as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in his political party after facing criticism from various quarters. The decision came shortly after the appointment sparked widespread debate on social media and among political observers.

The controversy began when reports emerged that an astrologer had been given an important role within Vijay's political setup. Critics questioned the decision and argued that political organisations should focus on professional expertise and administrative capability rather than beliefs linked to astrology. As the criticism intensified online, the appointment quickly became a major talking point in Tamil Nadu politics. Opposition voices and social media users began mocking the move, while some supporters expressed

disappointment over the controversy overshadowing Vijay's political activities.

Following the backlash, Vijay is said to have acted swiftly and removed the astrologer from the position. The development is being viewed as an attempt to avoid unnecessary controversy and maintain a serious image for his political party ahead of future electoral plans. Vijay officially entered politics with the launch of his party, Tamilaga Vetri-Kazhagam (TVK), and has been steadily building its organisational structure across Tamil Nadu. Since announcing his political ambitions, the actor has attracted significant attention due to his massive fan following and influence among younger voters.

Political analysts believe Vijay is trying to position himself as a credible alternative in Tamil Nadu politics, which has long been dominated by major Dravidian parties. Because of this, every decision



# National-Level Quiz Launched for Viksit Vibrant Villages Programme 2026

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, has launched a national-level quiz for the Viksit Vibrant Villages Programme (VVVP)-2026. The quiz is being conducted through the MY Bharat portal and serves as the first stage in selecting youth participants for field-level activities to be held in border villages in June 2026.

The Viksit Vibrant Villages Programme-2026 is a youth-led national initiative aimed at strengthening participation, social engagement, cultural exchange and awareness in

strategically important border villages located in regions such as Leh-Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

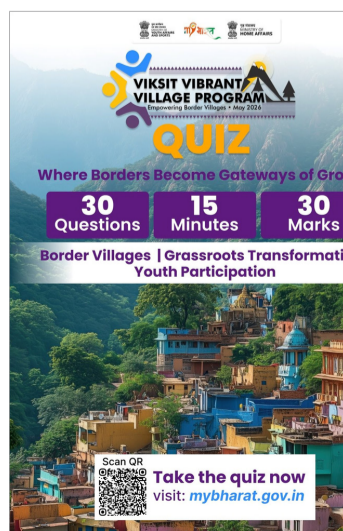
The online quiz will be conducted across the country from May 10 to May 20, 2026. The initiative seeks to create awareness among participants about the vision and objectives of the programme while encouraging youth participation in nation-building and border area development. The quiz will provide a platform for young people to learn about border village development, local culture, environmental awareness, governance activities, community

participation and the government's efforts to strengthen border regions. Candidates who perform exceptionally well in the quiz will undergo eligibility screening and physical fitness tests. Following this process, 500 MY Bharat volunteers from different states and Union Territories will be selected to participate in a one-week field programme under VVVP in June 2026. Selected volunteers will engage in field activities and community-based programmes in identified border villages. The activities will focus on cleanliness drives, youth interactions, environmental initia-

tives, cultural exchange programmes, awareness campaigns, career counselling sessions and experiential learning opportunities aimed at promoting grassroots development and national integration.

The programme reflects the government's commitment to empowering youth as active contributors toward achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. It also aims to raise awareness about the importance of strong and sustainable border communities.

Interested youth can participate in the quiz through the MY Bharat portal.



# China Sets “Four Red Lines” Ahead Of Expected Trump-Xi Summit

China has reportedly laid down “four red lines” in its relationship with the United States ahead of a possible summit between former US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The move signals Beijing’s attempt to clearly define its core interests and establish boundaries before any major diplomatic engagement with Washington.

According to reports, the Chinese leadership has identified Taiwan, democracy and human rights issues, China’s political system and its development path as the key areas where it expects the United States not to cross certain limits. Beijing believes these issues directly concern Chi-

na’s sovereignty, national security and long-term strategic interests.

The development comes amid rising geopolitical tensions between the two global powers over trade, technology, military influence and regional security. Although both countries have occasionally expressed interest in stabilising relations, disagreements continue to deepen on several fronts.

Taiwan remains the most sensitive issue in US-China relations. China views Taiwan as part of its territory and strongly opposes any foreign support for Taiwanese independence. Beijing has repeatedly criticised US military cooperation and political

engagement with Taiwan, warning that such actions could seriously damage bilateral relations.

Human rights and democracy-related criticism from the United States has also been a major source of friction. Washington has frequently raised concerns regarding issues in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet, while China accuses the US of interfering in its internal affairs.

Another key concern for Beijing is criticism of China’s political structure and governance model. Chinese officials have consistently defended the country’s one-party political system and argued that each nation has the

right to choose its own development path without external pressure.

The timing of the reported “red lines” is significant as speculation grows over a possible high-level meeting between Trump and Xi if Trump returns to the White House following the US presidential election. Analysts believe Beijing is attempting to prepare the groundwork for future negotiations by clarifying what it considers non-negotiable issues.

Relations between the two countries have remained tense in recent years due to disputes over tariffs, semiconductor restrictions, military activity in the South China Sea and competition in

emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing.

Despite the tensions, both nations continue to maintain strong economic ties, and experts believe neither side wants relations to deteriorate beyond a certain point. However, the growing strategic rivalry between Washington and Beijing has made diplomatic engagement increasingly complicated.

Observers say the reported “four red lines” reflect China’s broader strategy of projecting confidence on the global stage while signalling that it is prepared to firmly defend its national interests in any future negotiations with the United States.



## Pakistan Secretly Hosting Iranian Military Jets For Years, Claims Report

A new report has claimed that Pakistan has been quietly hosting Iranian military aircraft for several years, raising fresh questions about the security and strategic cooperation between the two neighbouring countries. The revelation comes at a time of heightened tensions in West Asia and growing global attention on regional military alliances.

According to the report, several Iranian military jets were allegedly stationed at undisclosed air bases inside Pakistan as part of a long-standing arrangement between Tehran and Islamabad. The aircraft were reportedly moved to Pakistan during periods of heightened regional instability and concerns over potential attacks on Iranian military infrastructure.



The report suggests that Pakistan’s role went beyond simple diplomatic coordination and may have involved providing temporary shelter and logistical support to the Iranian aircraft. The development has attracted attention because Pakistan has often projected itself as a neutral player in Middle East conflicts while maintaining relationships with multiple countries in the region.

The issue has become particularly sensitive amid ongoing tensions involving Iran, Israel and the United States. Analysts believe any evidence of covert military cooperation between Pakistan and Iran could complicate Islamabad’s diplomatic balancing act with Gulf nations and Western allies.

Security experts say countries sometimes relocate strategic military assets to allied or friendly territories during periods of geopolitical uncertainty to reduce the risk of direct attacks. If the claims are accurate, the arrangement could indicate a deeper level of trust and coordination between Pakistan and Iran than publicly acknowledged.

The report also highlights the strategic importance of Pakistan’s geographic location. Sharing a long border with Iran, Pakistan occupies a crucial position in regional security dynamics involving South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Neither Pakistan nor Iran has officially commented in detail on the claims so far. However, the report has already triggered widespread debate among geopolitical observers and defence analysts regarding the true nature of ties between the two countries.

Pakistan has historically maintained a complicated relationship with Iran. While the two nations cooperate on border security and trade, they have also experienced tensions related to sectarian violence, militant groups and differing regional alignments.

At the same time, Pakistan has close economic and military ties with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations that are often seen as rivals of Iran. This has forced Islamabad to carefully manage its diplomatic positioning in the region over the years.

The report is likely to intensify discussions around regional military coordination and secret defence arrangements at a time when geopolitical tensions in the Middle East continue to rise. Analysts believe further disclosures or official responses could have significant diplomatic implications in the coming weeks.

## US-Iran War Costs Reach \$29 Billion In 60 Days, Exceeding Initial Estimates

The financial burden of the ongoing US-Iran conflict has surged dramatically, with the Pentagon now estimating that the war has cost nearly \$29 billion in just 60 days. The revised figure is around 16 percent higher than earlier estimates, highlighting the rapidly escalating economic impact of the military campaign.

According to reports, the updated estimate was presented by senior Pentagon officials during a congressional hearing in Washington. The revised cost includes operational expenses, military deployments, repair and replacement of damaged equipment, and continued combat readiness across the Middle East.



Just weeks earlier, US officials had estimated the war cost at approximately \$25 billion. However, continued military operations, naval deployments and missile defence activities significantly increased expenses beyond expectations. Analysts believe the final bill could rise even further if tensions continue.

The conflict reportedly became expensive almost immediately after it began. Earlier briefings to lawmakers suggested that the first six days alone had already cost the United States more than \$11 billion due to the heavy use of missiles, airstrikes and military assets.

The war has also intensified political debate within the United States. Opposition lawmakers have demanded greater transparency from the Pen-

tagon regarding how the money is being spent and whether Congress should approve additional funding for the military campaign. Some estimates suggest the administration could seek tens of billions more in emergency war funding if the conflict continues.

Apart from direct military spending, experts warn that the broader economic consequences could be far more severe. Rising oil prices, disruptions around the Strait of

Hormuz and growing geopolitical uncertainty have already impacted global markets and increased inflation concerns worldwide.

The Pentagon has reportedly not provided a detailed public breakdown of all expenditures, leading to criticism from several lawmakers who argue that taxpayers deserve clearer information about the financial scale of the conflict.

Meanwhile, global energy markets remain on edge as tensions in the Middle East con-

tinue. Since the region plays a crucial role in global oil supply, prolonged instability could further raise fuel prices and affect economies across the world, including India.

Despite growing costs and political pressure, US officials continue to defend the military campaign as necessary for national security and regional stability. However, analysts say the rising financial toll is becoming one of the most closely watched aspects of the conflict.

## Pakistan Signals Expansion Of “Islamic NATO” With Turkey And Qatar

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has indicated that Turkey and Qatar could soon join the existing defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, fuelling fresh discussions about the emergence of an “Islamic NATO” in the region. The proposed alliance is being viewed as a major geopolitical development amid rising tensions across the Middle East.

Speaking to local media, Asif said discussions regarding the arrangement were at various stages of completion and suggested that a broader regional security framework involving “like-minded” Muslim-majority nations could soon take shape. He described the move as an effort to strengthen regional stability and reduce dependence on external powers.

The comments come months after Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement, under which both countries agreed to treat aggression against one nation as an attack on both. The pact significantly deepened military cooperation between Islamabad and Riyadh and triggered widespread debate about a possible new security bloc in the Muslim world.

Analysts believe the inclusion of Turkey and Qatar would dramatically increase the alliance’s strategic importance. Turkey possesses one of NATO’s strongest militaries,



while Qatar plays a key diplomatic and economic role in the Gulf region. Together with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the grouping could emerge as a powerful regional coalition with influence across West Asia and South Asia.

The idea of an “Islamic NATO” has circulated for years, but recent geopolitical instability, especially the ongoing US-Iran conflict, has accelerated discussions around greater military coordination among Muslim-majority countries. Security concerns, energy routes, missile threats and shifting alliances have all contributed to the renewed push for closer defence cooperation.

Pakistan has also attempted to position itself as a key diplomatic player during the current Middle East crisis. Islamabad has maintained relations with both Iran and Gulf countries while simultaneously strengthening strategic ties with Saudi Arabia and Turkey. This balancing act has in-

creased Pakistan’s importance in regional diplomacy.

Supporters of the proposed alliance argue that regional countries need stronger collective security mechanisms to handle emerging threats without depending entirely on Western military structures. However, critics warn that such a bloc could further polarise the Middle East and intensify rivalries involving Iran and other regional powers.

Experts also point out that despite media attention, the proposed arrangement is still far from becoming a formal NATO-style military alliance. Unlike NATO, there is currently no publicly announced treaty structure, integrated command system or collective military framework.

Nevertheless, Khawaja Asif’s remarks have intensified global interest in the possibility of a new regional powers bloc that could reshape political and military dynamics across the Islamic world in the coming years.

## Saudi Arabia Reportedly Carried Out Secret Strikes On Iran Amid Middle East Conflict

Saudi Arabia reportedly launched covert military strikes on Iran during the ongoing Middle East conflict, marking what analysts describe as a major shift in the kingdom’s defence strategy. According to multiple reports citing Western and Iranian officials, the strikes were carried out in late March as retaliation for Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting Saudi territory.

The alleged attacks were never officially announced by Riyadh, making them one of the most significant undisclosed military developments in the region in recent years. Reports claim the Saudi Air Force conducted several “tit-for-tat” strikes after Iranian attacks reportedly hit civilian infrastructure, airports and oil facilities inside the kingdom.

If confirmed, this would be the first publicly known instance of Saudi Arabia directly carrying out military action on Iranian soil. Experts say the development highlights how the regional conflict has expanded far beyond the initial confrontation involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

The broader conflict reportedly intensified after US and Israeli strikes on Iran earlier this year, triggering retaliatory attacks across the Gulf region. Iran is said to have targeted



several Gulf Cooperation Council countries with missiles and drones, increasing fears of a wider regional war.

Reports suggest Saudi Arabia informed Iran about the retaliatory strikes through diplomatic channels shortly after the attacks took place. This was reportedly followed by in-

tense backchannel negotiations aimed at preventing the conflict from escalating further. Analysts believe the Saudi response reflects growing frustration within the kingdom over repeated attacks on its territory despite its close military ties with the United States. The conflict has exposed vulnera-

bilities in Gulf security systems and pushed regional powers to adopt a more aggressive defence posture.

Reports also claim that the United Arab Emirates separately carried out covert operations against Iran during the conflict, suggesting that some Gulf nations have become more directly involved than publicly acknowledged.

Despite the military escalation, Saudi Arabia has reportedly continued diplomatic engagement with Tehran. Officials and analysts say both sides appear to recognise that a full-scale regional war would carry devastating economic and security consequences for the Middle East.

The revelations have sparked intense global attention because Saudi Arabia and Iran are considered the region’s two most influential rival powers, representing competing political and strategic interests across the Middle East. Their rivalry has shaped conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq for years.

While neither Riyadh nor Tehran has fully confirmed the reports, the alleged covert strikes underline how rapidly the Middle East conflict has evolved into a broader regional confrontation involving multiple countries and secret military operations.

# Sensex, Nifty Seen Opening Flat After Sharp Selloff; Gold Duty Hike And Crude Oil In Focus

Indian stock markets are expected to witness a cautious and largely flat opening after suffering a sharp selloff in the previous trading session. Investor sentiment remains fragile amid rising crude oil prices, weakness in the rupee and growing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

The Sensex and Nifty had recently faced heavy selling pressure as concerns over inflation and foreign investor outflows intensified. Analysts believe market participants are likely to remain cautious until there is more clarity on global developments, especially regarding crude oil prices and the ongoing US-Iran tensions.

One of the biggest develop-

ments influencing the markets is the government's decision to raise import duties on gold and silver from 6 percent to 15 percent. The move was aimed at curbing rising demand for precious metals and easing pressure on India's foreign exchange reserves. Following the announcement, gold-related stocks and ETFs witnessed strong buying interest.

The higher duty also impacted the bond and currency markets. India's 10-year government bond yield eased slightly after the announcement, while the rupee attempted to stabilise after hitting record lows against the US dollar. However, analysts warn that persistent foreign fund outflows

and elevated oil prices could continue to pressure the currency.

Crude oil prices remain another major concern for investors. Brent crude has been trading near the 106-107 dollar per barrel range amid fears of supply disruptions linked to tensions around the Strait of Hormuz. Since India imports a large portion of its energy needs, rising oil prices could worsen inflation and increase the country's import bill.

Global market cues are also mixed. While some Asian markets showed resilience, uncertainty surrounding the US economy, inflation trends and geopolitical tensions continues to keep in-

vestors nervous. Experts believe volatility may remain high in the near term.

Sector-wise, gold financing companies and jewellery-related stocks attracted buying after the import duty hike, while IT shares continued to face pressure. Metal stocks and broader mid-cap counters also showed signs of recovery after recent declines.

Market experts suggest investors should remain cautious and focus on global crude movements, rupee stability and foreign institutional investor activity over the next few sessions. Any easing in geopolitical tensions or correction in oil prices could provide temporary relief to Indian equities.



## Cipla Q4 Profit Drops 5.5% To Rs 555 Crore Despite Stable Revenue

Pharmaceutical major Cipla reported a 5.5 percent year-on-year decline in its consolidated net profit for the fourth quarter, posting a profit of Rs 555 crore compared to Rs 587 crore in the same period last year. Despite the drop in profit, the company managed to maintain relatively stable revenue during the quarter.

Cipla's consolidated revenue from operations stood at around Rs 6,163 crore in the January-March quarter, showing only a marginal decline compared to the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. The company said its performance was affected by pricing pressure in certain international markets and softer demand in some segments.

The decline in profit was also linked to higher operational expenses and increased investments in research, product development and expansion activities. Analysts noted that although revenue remained steady, rising costs impacted overall profitability during the quarter.

Cipla's domestic business continued to remain resilient, supported by steady demand in respiratory, cardiac and anti-infective therapies. The company also witnessed stable growth in its India-focused branded formulations segment, which remains one of its strongest revenue contributors.

In international markets, Cipla's North America business showed mixed perfor-



mance amid pricing pressure in the US generics market. However, the company continued to benefit from its respiratory portfolio and specialty products, which partially offset weakness in some generic categories.

The company's Africa business also delivered stable growth, supported by strong demand for prescription medicines and chronic therapies. Cipla has been focusing on expanding its presence across emerging markets while strengthening its specialty product pipeline globally.

Following the earnings announcement, Cipla's shares remained under investor focus as market participants evaluated the impact of slowing profit growth and future margin pressures. Analysts believe the company's long-term outlook remains positive due to its strong domestic positioning and diversified international

business.

Management highlighted that the company would continue investing in innovation, respiratory therapies and complex generics to strengthen future growth opportunities. Cipla also reiterated its focus on improving operational efficiency and maintaining sustainable growth across key markets.

The pharmaceutical sector as a whole has been facing challenges such as pricing pressure in export markets, regulatory costs and global economic uncertainty. However, strong domestic demand and healthcare spending continue to support major Indian drugmakers like Cipla.

Despite the quarterly decline in profit, investors remain optimistic about the company's long-term growth strategy, especially given its strong brand presence and expanding specialty portfolio.

## SEBI Exploring Specialised Distributors To Boost Retail Investment In Bonds

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is evaluating a proposal to introduce a specialised category of distributors aimed at expanding the reach of debt investment products and increasing retail participation in the bond market. The move is expected to make bond investing simpler and more accessible for ordinary investors.

Speaking at the FICCI Products Distribution Summit, SEBI Whole-Time Member Amarjeet Singh said the regulator is studying ways to replicate the success of mutual fund distribution in other segments of the financial market. According to him, debt products remain underpenetrated among retail investors despite growing interest in financial investments across India.

Under the proposed framework, specialised distributors would function similarly to mutual fund distributors by helping investors complete KYC formalities, documentation and transaction processes related to bond investments. The objective is to simplify the overall experience and encourage more individuals to participate in debt markets.

SEBI believes that improving distribution networks could play a major role in the "retailisation" of bonds, where more small investors gain ac-



cess to fixed-income investment opportunities traditionally dominated by institutions and high-net-worth individuals. The regulator has been focusing on broadening financial participation as India witnesses rapid growth in capital market investments.

During his remarks, Amarjeet Singh also highlighted the importance of ethical distribution practices in the financial sector. He cautioned that financial products differ from ordinary consumer products because investors often commit their long-term savings based on trust and professional guidance. He stressed that distribu-

tors should not merely act as transaction facilitators but should also serve as responsible guides throughout the investor journey. Singh added that sustainable growth in financial markets depends on maintaining a balance between scale, trust and investor protection. The proposal comes at a time when household savings are increasingly shifting towards market-linked instruments. According to SEBI, assets under management across mutual funds, portfolio management services and alternative investment funds have grown significantly over recent years, reaching nearly Rs

91 lakh crore by March 2026.

Industry experts believe that improving access to debt products could help diversify retail investment portfolios, which are currently heavily concentrated in equities, gold and traditional bank deposits. A stronger retail bond market could also improve overall market depth and provide companies with broader fundraising options. While the proposal is still under examination, the initiative reflects SEBI's broader effort to deepen India's financial markets while ensuring investor protection and responsible distribution practices remain a priority.

## MSCI May Rejig: Four Indian Stocks Added, Four Removed From Global Index

Global index provider MSCI has announced changes to its widely tracked MSCI Global Standard Indexes as part of its May 2026 semi-annual review, leading to major movements in Indian equities. The latest reshuffle includes the addition of four Indian companies while four others have been excluded from the index, a move expected to trigger significant passive fund inflows and outflows.

The stocks added to the MSCI Global Standard Index are Hyundai Motor India, Swiggy, Waaree Energies and NTPC Green Energy. Their inclusion is expected to attract fresh foreign investment from global passive funds and exchange-traded funds that track MSCI benchmarks.

Market analysts estimate that the additions could collectively attract billions of rupees in passive inflows once the changes become effective. Among the new entrants, Hyundai Motor India and Swiggy are expected to witness particularly strong inflows due to their larger market capitalisation and investor interest.

On the other hand, the companies removed from the index are Adani Total Gas, PB Fintech, Indus Towers and Polycab India. These stocks may face temporary selling pressure as passive funds rebalance their portfolios in line with the revised MSCI composition.

MSCI index changes are



closely monitored by global investors because many international funds automatically adjust their holdings based on these benchmarks. Inclusion in the index generally improves visibility, increases institutional participation and boosts trading volumes for the selected companies.

The latest review reflects changing market dynamics and investor preferences within the Indian equity market. Renewable energy and new-age technology companies have gained increasing attention in recent years, which is evident from the inclusion of firms like Waaree Energies, NTPC Green Energy and Swiggy.

Meanwhile, some stocks removed from the index have witnessed corrections in market value or relative underperformance compared to peers, which may have affected their eligibility during the review process.

The changes announced by

MSCI will become effective after the market closes on May 30, 2026. Traders and institutional investors are expected to closely track stock movements leading up to the implementation date, as index-related adjustments often create short-term volatility.

Apart from the MSCI Global Standard Index, MSCI also made changes to its Small Cap Indexes, adding and removing several Indian companies as part of the broader review. These revisions are aimed at ensuring the index accurately reflects evolving market capitalisation and liquidity conditions.

The MSCI reshuffle once again highlights the growing importance of Indian equities in global investment portfolios. With India continuing to attract strong foreign investor interest, inclusion in major global indexes remains a significant milestone for listed companies.

## Tata Motors Q4 Profit Surges 70% To Rs 2,406 Crore, Dividend Announced

Tata Motors reported a strong financial performance for the fourth quarter, with consolidated net profit rising 70 percent year-on-year to Rs 2,406 crore. The automobile giant also announced a dividend for shareholders following improved earnings driven by steady demand across its passenger and commercial vehicle businesses.

The company's revenue from operations during the January-March quarter stood at around Rs 1.19 lakh crore, reflecting healthy growth compared to the same period last year. Improved operational efficiency, better product mix and strong performance from Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) contributed significantly to the earnings growth.

Tata Motors' luxury arm, Jaguar Land Rover, continued to remain a key contributor to profitability. JLR witnessed improved wholesale volumes, stronger margins and better supply-chain conditions during the quarter. Demand for premium SUVs and luxury vehicles in global markets also supported the company's overall financial performance.

The domestic passenger vehicle business maintained stable growth, led by strong demand for SUVs such as the Nexon, Punch and Harrier. Tata Motors also continued to strengthen its position in the electric vehicle segment,



where it remains one of India's leading EV manufacturers.

In the commercial vehicle segment, the company saw moderate growth amid improving infrastructure activity and transportation demand. However, management acknowledged that competitive pricing pressure and fluctuations in raw material costs remained areas of concern.

Tata Motors' board announced a dividend of Rs 3 per ordinary share and Rs 3.10 per 'A' ordinary share for eligible shareholders. The announcement reflected management's confidence in the company's financial stability and future growth outlook.

Following the earnings report, investors closely tracked Tata Motors shares as analysts evaluated the sustainability of the company's profit growth. Market experts noted that low debt levels, stronger cash flow generation and improved JLR performance have significantly strengthened Tata Motors' balance sheet over the past year.

The company also highlighted its continued focus on electric mobility, technology upgrades and premiumisation strategies. Tata Motors plans to expand its EV portfolio further while investing in advanced automotive technologies and cleaner mobility

solutions.

Management expressed optimism about long-term growth prospects but cautioned that global economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions and rising input costs could impact the automobile industry in the coming quarters. Demand trends in export markets and fluctuations in commodity prices are expected to remain important factors going forward.

Despite external challenges, Tata Motors' latest quarterly results reinforced investor confidence and highlighted the company's recovery momentum across both domestic and international businesses.

# SwiggyInstamart's 10-Minute Delivery Steals the Show at Wedding Ceremony

A wedding function in India recently grabbed the internet's attention after guests witnessed an unusual sight — a SwiggyInstamart delivery arriving during the ceremony. What made the moment even more entertaining was that the order was reportedly delivered within just 10 minutes, leaving social media users amazed and amused at the growing influence of quick-commerce services in everyday life.

The viral incident came to light after a social media user shared a picture from the event online. The image showed a Swiggy delivery partner arranging multiple food packets at the venue while guests attended the

celebration under a decorated tent. The post quickly spread across social media platforms, with users joking that online delivery apps have now become an essential part of weddings and family functions as well.

According to reports, the couple chose to order food online instead of relying entirely on traditional wedding catering services. The unexpected use of a food delivery platform for such a large social gathering sparked a wave of funny reactions and memes. Many internet users joked that modern weddings are becoming increasingly tech-driven, where everything from groceries to party meals can now be delivered

instantly.

The viral post eventually caught the attention of Swiggy itself. The company responded humorously on social media, saying that no one had used its "Crazy Deals" feature better than the couple. Swiggy further joked that the pair should also consider ordering their wedding feast through the app in the future. The witty response added fuel to the online buzz and helped the post gain even more popularity.

Several users joined the conversation with hilarious comments. One person remarked that the wedding probably also had a digital payment QR code for guests. Another joked that invitees

might soon be asked to "eat before coming" while simply sending cash gifts online. However, some users defended the couple's decision, saying it was their celebration and they were free to organise it in any way they liked.

The incident highlights how quick-commerce platforms such as SwiggyInstamart are becoming deeply integrated into modern lifestyles. From emergency wedding shopping to instant food deliveries at ceremonies, these services are changing how people manage even their most important events. What started as a simple online order has now turned into one of the internet's most talked-about wedding moments.



## Russian Woman Reveals 5 Habits She Learned From Indian Women

A Russian woman living in India has gone viral on social media after sharing five habits she says she learned from Indian women. Her video, which quickly gained attention online, highlighted how living in India influenced her daily life, relationships and way of thinking.



In the clip, the woman explained that she had gradually adopted several practices commonly followed by Indian women after spending time in the country and observing local culture closely. She said the experience changed her perspective on family values, traditions and personal relationships.

One of the biggest changes she mentioned was learning to consult her husband more often before making important decisions. According to her, Indian women place strong importance on partnership and family discussions, something she found meaningful and eventually started practising herself. Her statement sparked major discussion online, with many people debating whether such habits reflect tradition, respect or outdated social expectations.

The woman also shared that she became more family-oriented after moving to India. She explained that Indian culture places great emphasis on maintaining close ties with relatives and participating actively in family gatherings and celebrations. She said this sense of connection and belonging impressed her deeply.

Another habit she adopted was dressing more modestly in certain situations. She noted that Indian women often choose clothing based on cultural values, family settings and comfort, which influenced her own fashion choices over time.

She further mentioned learning the importance of hospitality and caring for guests. According to her, Indi-

an households are known for warmly welcoming visitors and making them feel comfortable, something she admired and tried to include in her own lifestyle.

The woman also said she became more emotionally expressive and patient in relationships after observing Indian family dynamics. She explained that she learned the value of compromise, communication and emotional support within marriages and households.

The video generated mixed reactions online. Many users appreciated her respect for Indian traditions and praised her willingness to embrace another culture. Some viewers said her observations highlighted the strength of Indian family values and relationships.

However, others criticised parts of her comments, particularly the idea of consulting a husband before taking decisions. Critics argued that women should remain fully independent regardless of cultural influences. Some users also pointed out that modern Indian women themselves are moving toward more equal partnerships and personal freedom.

Despite the debate, the video sparked broader conversations about cultural exchange and how people often adopt habits from the societies they live in. The discussion also reflected how social media continues to amplify personal experiences and turn them into global conversations.

## Viral Classroom Video Sparks Outrage Even After 'Skit' Clarification

A shocking classroom video circulating on social media has triggered intense debate online after viewers watched what appeared to be a teacher physically assaulting a student during class. Although the individuals involved later claimed that the scene was only a scripted skit, many internet users remain unconvinced, arguing that the incident looked disturbingly realistic.

The viral clip shows a teacher aggressively confronting a student inside a classroom while several others watch silently. In the video, the teacher appears to slap and scold the student repeatedly, creating an atmosphere that many viewers described as uncomfortable and disturbing. The footage quickly spread across platforms, attracting thousands of reactions and comments within hours.

Soon after the backlash began, the people involved reportedly clarified that the video was staged for entertainment

purposes and was intended as a social media skit rather than a real act of violence. However, the explanation failed to calm many viewers, with several users insisting that such content should not be normalised online, especially in educational settings. Social media users expressed concern over the growing trend of creating controversial videos merely to gain attention and online engagement. Many argued that classroom environments are sensitive spaces and that content involving teachers and students should be handled responsibly. Some viewers pointed out that even if the video was scripted, it could still send the wrong message or trigger uncomfortable memories for students who have experienced harsh treatment in schools. Others criticised the creators for blurring the line between entertainment and harmful behaviour. A number of users commented that realistic portrayals of violence can easily mislead audiences, especially

when context is not provided immediately. Some even called for stricter monitoring of content creators who produce sensational videos for viral reach.

At the same time, a section of internet users defended the creators, saying that skits and dramatic performances are common on social media platforms. They argued that audiences often react too quickly before understanding the full context behind viral clips. According to these users, the outrage reflected how easily people believe short videos without verifying facts.

Despite the clarification, the video continues to divide opinion online. The incident has once again highlighted the power of social media in shaping public reactions and the challenges creators face when producing realistic content. It has also raised broader questions about the responsibilities of influencers and content makers in an era where viral videos can spread rapidly within minutes.



## Employee's Viral Post About Life After MNC Layoff Sparks Debate Online

A social media post by an employee describing the difficult transition from a multinational corporation (MNC) to a traditional Indian company after a layoff has gone viral online. The post, shared on Reddit, resonated with many professionals and sparked discussions about workplace culture, employee expectations and the realities of corporate life in India.

The employee revealed that they were laid off earlier this year through an email and spent nearly three months searching for a new job. The uncertainty became stressful due to financial responsibilities, including car loan payments and the pressures of newly married life. After submitting more than 200 applications and facing several rejections, the individual finally accepted a position at an Indian firm that offered a 25 percent salary hike.

Although the salary increase seemed attractive, the employee admitted that adapting to the new workplace environment has been emotionally challenging. In the viral post, the person described the experience as an "extreme cultural shock" and shared feelings of loneliness at the office.

The employee explained that the earlier MNC job offered several benefits and a vibrant work culture. According to the post, the previous company provided joining kits, health and wellness perks, free meals, regular team activities and flexible work-from-home options. Office visits were rare, but whenever employees met, there were team lunches and social interactions.

place reportedly felt silent and disconnected. The employee claimed that colleagues rarely interacted with one another and there were no team-building sessions or welcoming activities. The person shared that for nearly 20 days, they had been eating lunch alone and searching for quiet corners in the office to work peacefully.

The post also mentioned dissatisfaction with office infrastructure. On the first day, the employee allegedly received an outdated laptop that appeared poorly maintained. Despite these complaints, the worker acknowledged that the new job provided financial stability and a fixed routine.

The viral post generated mixed reactions online. Some users sympathised with the employee and said moving from a modern corporate setup to a more traditional office environment can feel isolating. Others, however, argued that the employee may have become too accustomed to the comfort and perks of MNC culture.

Several commenters pointed out that a peaceful office without constant meetings or forced celebrations could actually be beneficial. One user even called it a "dream job" for introverts. Responding to the feedback, the employee later admitted feeling "privileged and spoiled" by the previous workplace and said the stress of adjusting to a new environment may have amplified the frustration.

The discussion has since become a reflection of changing workplace expectations and how employees value culture, connection and flexibility alongside salary.

In contrast, the new work-

## "Good Luck Finding My Replacement": Mumbai Employee Quits After Public Humiliation

A Mumbai-based employee has gone viral online after resigning from her job following an alleged public humiliation by her manager. The incident has sparked widespread discussions on toxic workplace culture, employee dignity and the growing demand for respectful work environments.

The woman, identified as Dhrupadi, worked as a vocal coach at a music ed-tech company for over two years. According to reports, she had built a strong reputation at the organisation and was actively involved in teaching and mentoring students. Trouble reportedly began when she asked the company to compensate her for overtime work beyond her regular schedule.

Instead of addressing the matter privately, the manager allegedly shouted at her in front of colleagues

and other staff members. A viral Instagram video linked to the incident captured a heated exchange in which a man believed to be her boss was heard saying that employees unhappy with company rules were free to leave the next day.

The confrontation quickly gained traction on social media, with many viewers criticising the manager's behaviour and supporting the employee's decision to resign. In her statements online, Dhrupadi explained that quitting was not an impulsive move. She claimed she had initially tried to resolve the issue internally and sought accountability as well as an apology from the management before deciding to leave.

The phrase "Good luck finding my replacement" soon became a talking point online, symbolising frustra-

tion among workers who feel undervalued or mistreated in demanding workplaces. Many social media users praised the woman for standing up for herself and refusing to tolerate disrespect, even at the cost of leaving her job.

Several users shared similar experiences of workplace humiliation, unpaid overtime and harsh management practices. Many argued that toxic office behaviour often pushes talented employees to resign, leading companies to lose skilled workers unnecessarily. Some users also highlighted the importance of maintaining professional communication, especially in leadership positions.

However, a few people online believed that workplace disagreements should ideally be handled privately rather than through viral

social media posts. Others argued that both employers and employees should focus on better communication to avoid such situations escalating publicly.

The incident has once again brought attention to employee well-being and workplace ethics in India's corporate culture. Discussions around mental health, fair treatment and respectful leadership have become increasingly common as younger professionals place greater importance on healthy work environments alongside salary and career growth.

As the video continues to circulate online, it has become more than just a resignation story. For many internet users, it reflects a larger conversation about dignity at work and the importance of treating employees with respect.



# BCCI's IPL Final Shift to Ahmedabad Sparks Commercial Debate

The Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) decision to shift the IPL 2026 final from Bengaluru to Ahmedabad has triggered a fresh debate, with Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara suggesting that commercial viability could be one of the key reasons behind the move.

Originally, Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium was scheduled to host the high-profile final. However, the BCCI recently confirmed that the summit clash will now be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, one of the largest cricket venues in the world. The change has led to mixed reactions from political leaders, cricket administrators, and fans.

According to Parameshwara, while multiple factors may influence such decisions, the commercial potential of Ahmedabad's venue cannot be ignored. The stadium's massive seating capacity allows for significantly higher ticket revenue, hospitality earnings, and broadcast value compared to other venues. He indicated that this aspect may have weighed heavily in the BCCI's planning for the final.

At the same time, the minister clarified that there is no evidence suggesting issues related to security or match arrangements in Bengaluru. He also noted that concerns over ticket distribution to legislators, which had been discussed in media reports, were not official-

ly linked to the venue shift decision.

The BCCI, on its part, has maintained that logistical and operational considerations played a role in finalising Ahmedabad as the host city. The governing body has often chosen the venue for major ICC and IPL finals in recent years, citing its world-class infrastructure, large capacity, and ability to handle high-profile events smoothly.

The decision, however, has disappointed stakeholders in Karnataka cricket circles. Bengaluru had initially been set to host the final as part of a rotational or merit-based allocation system, especially with Royal Challengers Bengaluru being the defending champions. The

sudden change has raised questions about transparency and consistency in venue selection.

Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium has become a preferred destination for marquee cricket events, having previously hosted major international finals and IPL deciders. Its growing prominence reflects a broader trend of centralising high-revenue matches in larger commercial hubs.

As the IPL 2026 season moves towards its climax, the venue shift has added an off-field talking point to the tournament. While players focus on performance, the debate around commercial priorities versus traditional hosting rights continues to dominate discussions in Indian cricket administration.



## Pat Cummins Reprimanded By BCCI Despite GT vs SRH Match Ending in Just 34.5 Overs

Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins has been reprimanded by the BCCI for maintaining a slow over-rate during SRH's IPL 2026 clash against Gujarat Titans, despite the match finishing unusually quickly in just 34.5 overs. The decision surprised many cricket fans and sparked debate online after SRH suffered a crushing 82-run defeat in Ahmedabad.

The IPL governing body fined Cummins Rs 12 lakh for his team's first minimum over-rate offence of the season under the IPL Code of Conduct. What made the punishment particularly notable was the fact that the game itself ended far earlier than a typical T20 match due to SRH's dramatic batting collapse.

In the match played at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Gujarat Titans posted 168 runs before producing a sensational bowling display to dismiss Sunrisers Hyderabad for just 86 in 14.5 overs. The combined innings lasted only 34.5 overs, significantly shorter than the full 40 overs expected in a standard T20 game.

Gujarat's pace attack completely dominated the chase. Mohammed Siraj struck early by dismissing Travis Head, while Kagiso Rabada ripped through SRH's batting lineup with disciplined seam bowling and hard lengths. SRH crumbled under pressure and never recovered from the early setbacks.

After the match, Cummins admitted that Gujarat Titans



had executed their bowling plans far better on a difficult batting surface. He suggested that SRH bowlers perhaps failed to persist with the right lengths during GT's innings. However, the Australian skipper refused to overreact to his side's collapse and defended his batting unit, pointing out that SRH's top order has been among the best-performing groups in IPL 2026.

Cummins also praised Gujarat's bowling effort, calling it one of the finest T20 bowling performances he had witnessed. He acknowledged that the pitch became extremely challenging once bowlers consistently attacked hard lengths and extracted extra bounce

from the surface.

The BCCI's decision quickly became a talking point among fans because penalties for slow over-rates are usually associated with long matches or frequent delays. Many social media users questioned how an innings shortened by a batting collapse could still result in an over-rate violation. Others pointed out that the IPL's timing regulations are strict and based on scheduled over completion rather than total match duration. Despite the heavy defeat, SRH remain in contention for the IPL 2026 playoffs, while Gujarat Titans strengthened their position near the top of the points table with the emphatic win.

## BCCI To Hold Crucial Selection Meeting, Big Decisions On Bumrah And Shami Expected

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is reportedly preparing for a major selection meeting ahead of India's upcoming international assignments, with key decisions expected regarding star pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami. The discussions are likely to focus on workload management, squad planning and the future structure of India's fast-bowling attack.

According to reports, the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee is expected to meet BCCI officials within the next few days to finalise plans for the Indian team following the conclusion of IPL 2026. India are scheduled to play a one-off Test against Afghanistan beginning in June before entering a busy international calendar that includes multiple Test matches over the next nine months.

One of the biggest topics during the meeting is expected to be Jasprit Bumrah's participation in the Afghanistan Test. The Indian management reportedly wants to field its strongest possible team, even though the match is not part of the World Test Championship cycle. However, Bumrah's workload remains a major concern because he is considered India's most important fast bowler across formats.

The selectors are believed to be carefully monitoring Bumrah's physical condition and IPL workload before making a final call. Reports suggest that the decision will only be taken after detailed discussions in-



volving the medical staff and team management.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Shami's future in the Test setup has also become a major talking point. Shami has not played international cricket for some time due to fitness concerns, and reports claim that the selectors may now be looking beyond the veteran pacer as they plan for the future.

Several young fast bowlers are reportedly being considered as part of India's evolving pace attack. Players such as Anshul Kamboj, Gurnoor Brar

and Aaqib Nabi are said to be on the selectors' radar. The BCCI has allegedly asked some of these bowlers to increase their workloads during the remaining IPL matches as part of their preparation for possible national duties.

The reports also indicate that the board is focused on creating a long-term fast-bowling pool capable of handling India's packed schedule. Managing injuries and maintaining fitness among key bowlers has become a major priority after repeated concerns over player workloads in recent

years.

Despite uncertainty around Bumrah and Shami, the selectors reportedly remain committed to maintaining high standards in Test cricket and are unwilling to treat the Afghanistan match lightly. India are expected to announce the squad soon after the IPL playoffs begin.

The meeting is likely to shape India's pace-bowling strategy for the coming months and could mark the beginning of a transition phase in the national team's bowling department.

## Hardik Pandya Trains Alone Ahead Of PBKS Clash, Sparks Selection Speculation

Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya has once again become the centre of attention ahead of MI's IPL 2026 clash against Punjab Kings after videos of him training alone in the nets surfaced online. The solo practice session has sparked fresh speculation about his fitness, availability and role within the team for the remainder of the tournament.

Hardik has missed Mumbai Indians' last two matches due to back spasms, raising concerns over his physical condition during a disappointing season for the five-time IPL champions. Although he had travelled with the squad earlier, the all-rounder was reportedly not cleared by the franchise's medical team to participate in the match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Ahead of Thursday's match against Punjab Kings in Dharamsala, Hardik was seen practising separately in Mumbai rather than travelling with the main MI squad. Videos posted on social media showed him batting intensively against net bowlers and throwdown specialists at a training facility in Navi Mumbai. Reports suggested that the 32-year-old trained for over three hours and appeared comfortable while playing aggressive shots without visible discomfort.

The images and videos quickly went viral online, with fans interpreting the solo



training session as a "selection message" from the MI skipper. Many believed Hardik was signalling that he is ready to return despite fitness concerns. Others, however, questioned why he was practising alone while the rest of the squad had already travelled to Dharamsala. The situation has also fuelled rumours about possible tensions within the Mumbai Indians camp, although there has been no official confirmation of any internal issues. Social media discussions intensified after MI's poor performances this season and their early elimination from the playoff race. Hardik's leadership and personal form have both faced scrutiny throughout the campaign.

In Hardik's absence, Suryakumar Yadav stepped in as captain during MI's recent matches. However, Mumbai Indians continued to struggle and were officially knocked out of playoff contention after a narrow defeat against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Coach Mahela Jayawardene later admitted that the team simply had not performed well enough this season. Despite the uncertainty, Hardik's intense training session has given MI fans hope that the star all-rounder could still return before the season ends. Whether he features against Punjab Kings or not, his solo practice has already become one of the most talked-about IPL moments of the week.

## Indian Women's Hockey Team To Tour Australia Ahead Of Nations Cup

The Indian women's hockey team is set to tour Australia later this month as part of its preparations for the upcoming FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup in New Zealand. Hockey India announced that the team will travel to Australia from May 21 to June 3 before heading to Auckland for the prestigious tournament scheduled from June 15 to June 21.

As part of the tour, the Indian team will play four matches against Australia at the Perth Hockey Stadium between May 26 and May 30. The first two matches are scheduled for May 26 and 27, while the remaining fixtures will be played on May 29 and 30. The series is expected to provide the team with high-quality international exposure ahead of the Nations Cup.

The tour comes at an important stage for the Indian side, which is looking to build momentum after a promising performance during its recent tour of Argentina. Earlier this year, the team managed to secure two victories in a four-match series and showed encouraging signs under pressure against strong opposition.

Since returning from Argen-



tina, the squad has been training intensively at the national coaching camp in Bengaluru. The coaching staff has reportedly focused on improving defensive structure, penalty corner conversion and overall consistency as India prepares for a packed international calendar.

Head coach Sjoerd Marijne welcomed the Australia tour and described it as a crucial opportunity for the team to assess its progress. According to him, facing a strong side like Australia will help the players identify areas that still need improvement while also test-

ing how much the team has developed in recent months.

Following the Australia leg, the Indian team will travel directly to New Zealand, where they are expected to continue preparations with additional practice matches before the Nations Cup begins. The tournament holds major importance because the winning team earns promotion opportunities and valuable international ranking points.

Another key development during the tour will be a specialised drag-flick training programme for India's penalty corner specialists. Supported

by Anandana, the Coca-Cola India Foundation, the training clinic will be conducted by legendary Dutch drag-flick expert Taeke Taekema in both Perth and Auckland from May 26 to June 21. The Indian women's team is aiming to continue its rise on the international stage after several encouraging performances in recent years. With a combination of experienced players and young talent, the upcoming Australia tour is expected to play a vital role in shaping the team's preparations and confidence ahead of the Nations Cup challenge in New Zealand.

# “Sound Of Peddi” Musical Event Confirmed In Bhopal, AR Rahman To Perform Live

The makers of Ram Charan's much-awaited film Peddi have officially confirmed a grand musical event titled “Sound Of Peddi” in Bhopal on May 23. The announcement has created massive excitement among fans, especially after reports revealed that legendary music composer A.R. Rahman will perform live at the event.

The event is expected to become one of the biggest promotional celebrations for an Indian film this year. Fans are eagerly waiting to witness Ram Charan, director Buchi Babu Sana and the rest of the Peddi team together on stage ahead of the

film's theatrical release. Social media has already been flooded with posters, fan edits and countdown posts after the official confirmation surfaced online.

A.R. Rahman's live performance has become the biggest highlight of the event. The Oscar-winning composer, who has scored the music for Peddi, is expected to perform songs from the film along with some of his iconic hits. Fans believe Rahman's presence will elevate the event into a massive musical spectacle.

Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, Peddi is one of the most anticipated Telugu films of 2026. The sports ac-

tion drama stars Ram Charan in the lead role alongside Janhvi Kapoor, Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu and Divyendhu. The film has already generated huge buzz due to its scale, rustic setting and Ram Charan's intense transformation for the role.

Initially, there were reports that the film's trailer launch would also take place in Bhopal. However, recent updates suggest the makers may have shifted the trailer launch plans to Mumbai while retaining the grand musical celebration in Madhya Pradesh. Despite the change, excitement around the Bhopal event re-

mains extremely high.

Industry insiders believe the “Sound Of Peddi” event is part of a large-scale promotional strategy aimed at positioning the movie as a true pan-India entertainer. With Ram Charan's nationwide popularity after RRR and Rahman's musical appeal, the event is expected to attract huge media attention and fan turnout.

Peddi is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on June 4, 2026. The film's music, action sequences and emotional sports drama backdrop have already raised expectations among audiences across India.



## Vijay Jumps From 21st To 2nd Spot In IMDb's Most Popular Indian Celebrities List

Tamil superstar Vijay has made a massive leap in IMDb's latest list of Most Popular Indian Celebrities, jumping from the 21st position to the second spot. The sudden rise has created huge excitement among fans and once again highlighted the actor's enormous popularity across India.

The rankings are based on page views and user engagement on IMDb, one of the world's most widely used entertainment databases. Vijay's dramatic climb in the list is being linked to the strong buzz surrounding his upcoming projects and his continued dominance in South Indian cinema.

Fans have been actively discussing the achievement on social media, with many celebrating the actor's growing pan-India appeal. Vijay's popularity has significantly expanded in recent years, especially after the success of films that reached audiences beyond Tamil cinema.

The actor has been consistently making headlines due to speculation surrounding his political future and his upcoming film projects. His recent public appearances and announcements have also generated strong online engagement, contributing to the spike in IMDb rankings.

The latest list reportedly features several major Indian film stars from different industries,



reflecting the growing influence of pan-Indian cinema. However, Vijay's sharp jump from 21st to 2nd position became one of the biggest talking points among movie fans online.

Social media platforms were flooded with celebratory posts from Vijay's supporters soon after the rankings were released. Many fans described the achievement as proof of his unmatched fan following and star power. Several fan clubs also began trending hashtags praising the actor's popularity.

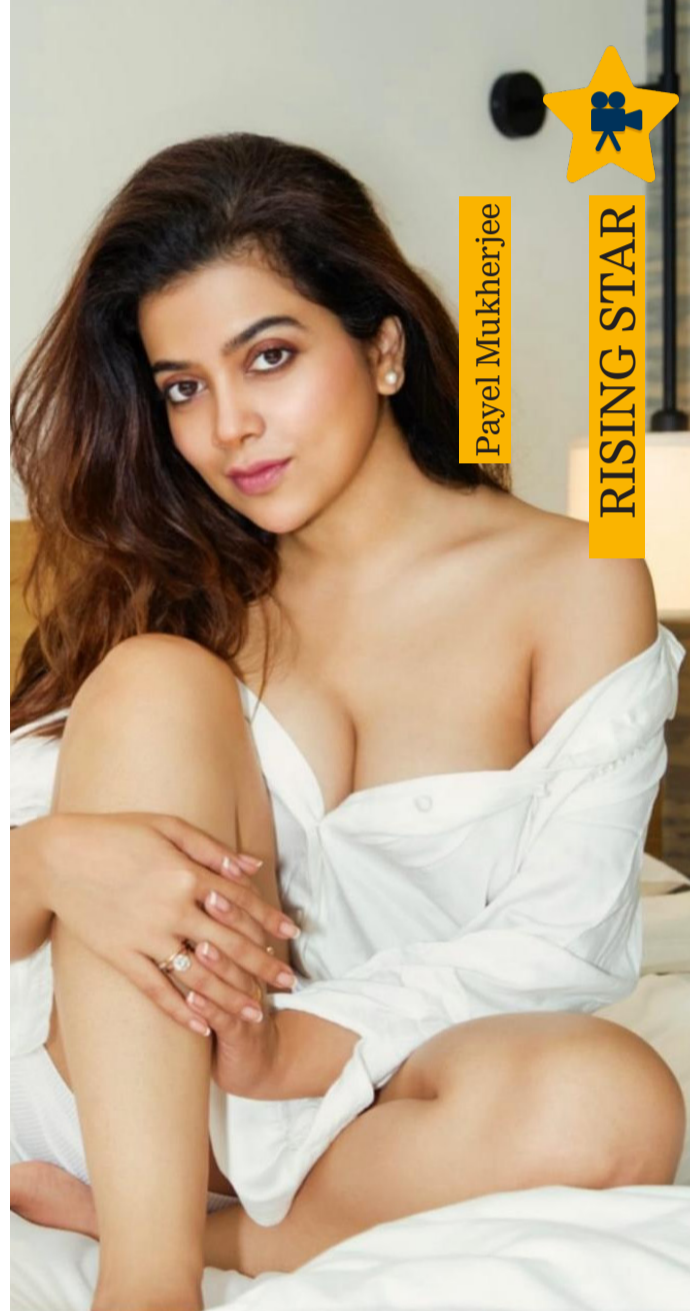
Industry observers believe Vijay's strong digital presence and loyal fan base play a major role in maintaining his popularity rankings. His films regularly generate massive online

discussions, teaser records and advance booking trends, especially in Tamil Nadu and overseas markets.

The actor is currently working on highly anticipated projects that are expected to release over the next year. Expectations remain extremely high as audiences eagerly wait for official updates regarding his future films and political plans.

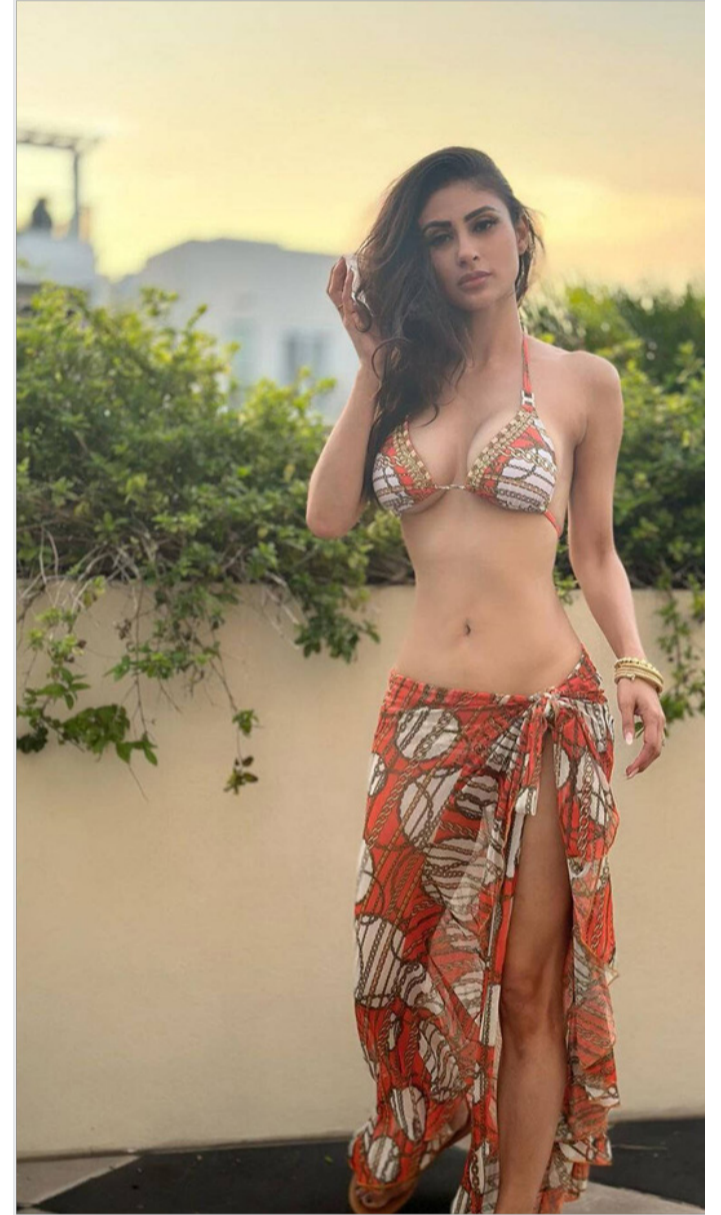
IMDb's celebrity rankings often change based on current trends, film announcements, media coverage and audience interest. Vijay's rise to the second spot reflects the intense attention he continues to receive from fans across the country.

The achievement has once again reinforced Vijay's status as one of India's biggest film



Payel Mukherjee

RISING STAR



## Mouni Roy Reacts To Divorce Rumours, Requests Privacy From Media And Fans

Actress Mouni Roy has finally addressed the ongoing rumours surrounding her marriage and strongly appealed for privacy amid growing speculation online. The actress reacted after several social media posts and gossip reports claimed that she and her husband Suraj Nambiar were facing problems in their relationship.

Speaking briefly about the rumours, Mouni dismissed the speculation and urged people not to interfere in her personal life. She reportedly said that everyone deserves “space and privacy,” making it clear that she does not wish to entertain baseless gossip regarding her marriage.

The rumours had been circulating online for several days after some users noticed that the couple had not been posting pictures together recently. Social media discussions intensified further when a few entertainment pages began speculating about a possible separation. However, neither Mouni nor Suraj had responded publicly until now.

Mouni's statement appears to be an attempt to put an end to the growing online chatter. Fans of the actress were quick to support her after her reaction surfaced online, with many criticising the culture of spreading unverified celebrity rumours on social media.

Several users commented that celebrities often face unnecessary scrutiny regarding their personal relationships and family life. Others praised

Mouni for handling the situation calmly instead of reacting aggressively to the speculation.

Mouni Roy married businessman Suraj Nambiar in January 2022 in a lavish ceremony attended by close friends and family members. The wedding received huge attention online, and the couple has often shared glimpses of their travels and celebrations on social media since then.

Over the years, Mouni has remained one of the most popular television and film actresses in the industry. She gained nationwide fame through television shows before successfully transitioning into Bollywood. Her performances in films and reality shows have helped her maintain a strong fan following.

Despite the rumours, neither Mouni nor Suraj has given any indication of serious issues in their marriage. Many fans believe the speculation was simply fuelled by online assumptions and the absence of frequent social media updates.

The incident once again highlights how celebrity relationships often become subjects of intense public discussion, especially in the age of social media where even small observations can quickly turn into viral rumours. For now, Mouni seems focused on maintaining her personal boundaries while continuing with her professional commitments.

## Pooja Hegde Likely To Romance Allu Arjun Again In Lokesh Kanagaraj's Next Film

Actress Pooja Hegde is reportedly in talks to reunite with Allu Arjun for his upcoming film with director Lokesh Kanagaraj. The project, tentatively titled AA23, has already generated massive buzz among fans, and the latest casting speculation has further increased excitement around the film.

If confirmed, this would mark the third on-screen collaboration between Allu Arjun and Pooja Hegde after the successful films Duvvada Jagannadham and Ala Vaikunthapuramuloo. The pair has enjoyed strong popularity among audiences, and many fans believe their chemistry could once again become a major highlight of the movie.

The film itself is one of the most anticipated pan-India projects currently in development. Directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, known for blockbuster action entertainers such as Leo, Vikram and Kaithi, the movie officially went on floors earlier this year after being announced by Mythri Movie Makers.

Reports suggest that discussions regarding the female lead have been ongoing for some time, with several actresses being considered for the role. However, Pooja Hegde's name has now emerged as the front-runner, leading to huge excitement on social media. While there has been no official confirmation from the makers yet,



the possibility of another Allu Arjun-Pooja pairing has already become a trending topic online.

Fans have been especially enthusiastic because both of their previous collaborations turned into major commercial successes. Songs, dance performances and romantic scenes featuring the duo continue to remain popular among Telugu cinema audiences. Many social media users are already calling the potential reunion a “hat-trick combo.”

The film is expected to be mounted on a massive scale and will reportedly feature Lokesh Kanagaraj's trademark action-packed storytelling style. Music for the project will be composed by Anirudh Ravichander, adding further anticipation among movie lovers.

Meanwhile, Pooja Hegde is currently busy with multiple projects across Telugu, Tamil and Hindi cinema, while Allu Arjun continues to focus on large-scale pan-India films following the enormous success of the Pushpa franchise.

## Honey Rose Signs Another Telugu Film After ‘Veera Simha Reddy’ Success

Actress Honey Rose is set to make another return to Telugu cinema after gaining major recognition with Balakrishna's blockbuster film Veera Simha Reddy. The actress recently confirmed that she has signed a new Telugu project, creating excitement among her fans and Telugu movie audiences.

Honey Rose became widely popular in Tollywood after her role in Veera Simha Reddy, where she shared screen space with Nandamuri Balakrishna. Although she had appeared in a few Telugu films earlier, it was the 2023 action entertainer that brought her significant attention and helped expand her fan base in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

During a recent interaction with paparazzi, Honey Rose revealed that she has officially signed another Telugu movie. However, the actress chose not to reveal further details regarding the project. She did not disclose the name of the hero, director or production banner associated with the film, which has led to growing curiosity among fans online.

The announcement quickly became a talking point on social media, with many fans expressing excitement about seeing Honey Rose once again in Telugu cinema. Following the success of Veera Simha Reddy, the actress gained strong visibility not only for her screen



presence but also for her public appearances and growing pop-