# Andhra Pradesh to Emerge as Global Hub for Deep Tech, AI, and Creative Innovation



**TPN Bureau | December 10**

SAN FRANCISCO, USA: Andhra Pradesh is poised to become a global hub for deep technology, artificial intelligence, creative industries and digital innovation, following a series of high-profile meetings by the state's Education, IT and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh with leading international technology and investment firms in San Francisco.

Minister Lokesh met with Arun Kumar, Managing Partner of international venture capital firm Celesta VC, to discuss the establishment of a Deep Tech Innovation Hub in Andhra Pradesh. Highlighting the state's investor-friendly environment, Lokesh said, "Visakhapatnam is rapidly emerging as an IT and data hub.

We invite Celesta Capital to invest in deep tech sectors, including semiconductors, AI, and quantum computing. The Andhra Pradesh government offers the most comprehensive incentives in the country, including the nation's first escrow account system to ensure timely disbursement of subsidies to industries." Arun Kumar responded, confirming that Celesta VC is prioritizing investments in deep tech, SaaS, cybersecurity, cloud infrastructure, and startups with global market potential across the US, India, Israel, and Southeast Asia.

In another major initiative, Minister Lokesh met Creative-Land Asia founder Sajan Raj Kurup, senior partner Yang Kaping, and acclaimed filmmaker Chick Russell to expedite the Creative Land Project in Amaravati. The project aims to transform Andhra Pradesh into a global hub for creative economy, tourism, and digital innovation, featuring AI-driven virtual studios, AR/VR theme parks, and world-class co-production facilities. Kurup emphasized that the project will focus on high-demand sectors like VFX, AI, gaming, and animation, providing skill development for local youth, with potential investments of up to 10,000 crore and creation of 1.5 lakh jobs.

Minister Lokesh also met with OpsRamp CEO Varma Koonapuneni to strengthen IT infrastructure and smart city initiatives. Lokesh urged the company to partner with AP Tech Academy for AI Ops training, internships, and R&D support, enhancing IT operations and fostering SME and startup growth. Varma highlighted OpsRamp's global presence with over 500 enterprise clients and ongoing innovations in AI Ops and cloud-native monitoring.

Further engagements included meetings with global technology leaders:

Autodesk CTO Dev Patel: Lokesh proposed establishing a Design & Innovation Academy in Amaravati to provide certified training in digital fabrication, sustainable design and research, leveraging Autodesk's BIM and computational fluid dynamics technologies for resilient urban planning.

Zscaler CEO Jay Chaudhary: Lokesh requested a Cloud Security R&D and Development Center in Visakhapatnam to support the city's growth as a data hub.

Salesforce EVP Ramesh Ragineni: Lokesh invited Salesforce to set up a Global Capability Center and R&D Center in Visakhapatnam to integrate with the state's startup ecosystem and data infrastructure.

Rigetti Computing CTO David Rivas: Lokesh discussed creating a Quantum Computing Research Wing in Amaravati's upcoming Quantum Valley, supporting AI-based media processing and QaaS services for domestic and international markets.

Ohmium CTO Chokkalingam Karuppayee: Lokesh encouraged setting up an Electrolyzer Manufacturing Plant in Krishna district for green hydrogen and associated industries.

Canva CCSO Rob Giglio: Lokesh sought collaboration for Creative Land Project skill development programs, integrating Canva's cloud-based design platform.

AMD SVP Vamsi Boppana: Lokesh invited AMD to establish an Assembly and Testing Unit in Andhra Pradesh's electronics manufacturing clusters.

OpenAI CTO Srinivas Narayanan: Lokesh discussed collaboration to establish an AI University in Andhra Pradesh, providing AI-based learning tools for students and supporting data center operations.

Minister Lokesh stressed Andhra Pradesh's rapid progress under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, highlighting over 20 lakh crore in investments in the last 18 months, global-standard infrastructure and a conducive ecosystem for high-tech innovation, manufacturing, and research.

With these initiatives, Andhra Pradesh is positioning itself as a global center for AI,

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## AIIMS Mangalagiri Crosses 30 Lakh OPD Consultations, Marks Major Healthcare Milestone

**TPN Bureau | December 10**

MANGALAGIRI: AIIMS Mangalagiri has achieved a significant milestone by recording over 30 lakh Outpatient Department (OPD) consultations since the commencement of its patient care services.

The institute witnessed a remarkable surge in footfall, registering 5 lakh OPD visits in just the last six months, a clear indication of the growing public trust and the institute's expanding healthcare capabilities.

Officials said the milestone highlights AIIMS Mangalagiri's commitment to providing accessible, affordable and high-quality healthcare to people across Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states. Over the years, the institute has strengthened its reputation as a dependable centre for medical excellence, backed by modern infrastructure, skilled clinical teams, and patient-centric services.

"As we celebrate this achievement, AIIMS Mangalagiri reaffirms its mission to serve society with compassion, medical expertise, and a strong focus on public health," the institute stated.

AIIMS Mangalagiri also extended gratitude to patients, caregivers, medical staff, and all stakeholders for their trust and support, which continues to fuel the institution's growth and service expansion.

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## All Set for Launch of 'Atal–Modi Good Governance Yatra' in Dharmavaram Today



**MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav to Attend Public Meeting**

**TPN Bureau | December 10**

DHARMAVARAM: Arrangements are in full swing for the grand launch of the 'Atal–Modi Good Governance Yatra', scheduled to begin today in Dharmavaram of Sri Sathya Sai district. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will take part in the public meeting marking the commencement of the statewide programme. BJP State President PVN Madhav, BJP National Secretary and State Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav personally inspected the arrangements on Wednesday. The Yatra will begin with the unveiling of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's statue in Dharmavaram, Minister Satya Kumar's own constituency and will continue across all district headquarters until December 25. The concluding meeting will be held in Amaravati on December 25, coinciding with Atal Ji's birth centenary.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and either Union Home Minister Amit Shah or BJP National President JP Nadda are expected to participate in the closing ceremony. NDA partner leaders from TDP and JanaSena will also be part of the district-level programmes. Party leadership has ensured that Vajpayee statues will be installed at every district headquarters during the Yatra.

Dharmavaram town has been decked with BJP flags, flex banners and coalition party symbols, showcasing NDA unity. The launch event will feature three components: installation of Atal Ji's statue, a large public meeting, and a special welfare initiative. As part of community service, Minister Satya Kumar will distribute 2,000 bicycles to Class X students of government schools in the constituency.

The bicycles, funded through the minister's charitable trust named after his daughter 'Sanskriti', cost nearly 1 crore. The trust has also paid 2.60 lakh in exam fees for government school students.

Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav, Union Minister Srinivas Varma, BJP MLAs, and NDA partner leaders will be in attendance. Three specially designed buses featuring images of Prime Minister Modi, BJP leaders and NDA icons have been prepared for the Yatra. Senior BJP leaders, Union ministers and state representatives will travel in these buses and participate in the district-level public meetings. Speaking about the initiative, State BJP President PVN Madhav and Minister Satya Kumar stated that the Yatra aims to explain the governance legacy of Atal Bihari Vajpayee his Golden Quadrilateral project, rural roads, crop insurance, Kisan Credit Cards schemes and reforms in telecom and aviation. They said PM Modi is working with similar resolve to make India the No. 1 nation globally by 2047.

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# IndiGo Flight Operations Return to Normalcy at Rajamahendravaram Airport

**TPN Bureau | December 10**

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM (Madhurapudi): Flight operations at the Rajamahendravaram Airport have returned to normal after a brief phase of partial disruptions, according to Airport Director N.K. Sreekanth. Speaking to the media on Wednesday, he confirmed that air services, particularly those operated by IndiGo Airlines, are now functioning smoothly in coordination with all stakeholders. Director Sreekanth reported that out of the airport's ten scheduled flights per day, nine are currently operating without interruption. He acknowledged that one route the Delhi–Rajamahendravaram (6E-0364/0363) remains temporarily suspended due to operational limitations.

The airline has informed that services on this route will resume from December 11, 2025. "The operations of IndiGo Airlines have



been streamlined, and all domestic services except one are proceeding as per schedule," he said. "Rajamahendravaram Airport continues to coordinate closely with all airlines to ensure passenger convenience and operational efficiency." Alongside IndiGo's services, Alliance Air is maintaining regular operations on the Tirupati route, providing continued connectivity for passengers traveling between the Godavari region and the state's key pilgrim destination.

Airport authorities highlighted that no other sectors have been affected and that passenger traffic remains steady throughout the day. Sreekanth assured that all airport systems, including security, ground handling, and air traffic management, are functioning in full capacity. Regular maintenance, safety checks, and coordination with flight operators are being carried out to ensure hassle-free service delivery.

"All operations at the airport are running seamlessly. Our teams are working round the clock with airlines to make sure passengers experience minimal inconvenience," he stated. The director also extended gratitude to travelers for their patience and cooperation during recent operational adjustments.

"We sincerely thank our passengers for their understanding during the temporary cancellation of certain services. Rajamahendravaram Airport remains committed to providing safe, efficient, and passenger-friendly services." Located at Madhurapudi, Rajamahendravaram Airport serves as a key regional aviation hub in Andhra Pradesh, linking major cities such as Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Visakhapatnam with the Godavari districts. With increasing traffic from business travelers and tourists, the airport has been steadily enhancing its infrastructure and service capacity. Officials noted that the airport's flight movements and passenger footfall have grown consistently in recent years, reflecting Rajamahendravaram's economic and cultural prominence. Efforts are underway to expand runway capabilities and improve terminal facilities to accommodate growing demand in the near future.

"Passenger safety, operational efficiency, and smooth service delivery remain our top priorities," Director Sreekanth emphasized. "We are in constant touch with airlines to ensure that Rajamahendravaram continues to offer reliable connectivity and a comfortable travel experience for all.

"The resumption of regular IndiGo operations marks a positive step toward full normalization of air traffic at Rajamahendravaram Airport, reinforcing its status as one of the busiest domestic terminals in coastal Andhra Pradesh.

# Scrub Typhus Cases Cross 1,500 in Andhra Pradesh; 9 Deaths Reported, Says Health Commissioner Veerapandian

TPN Bureau | December 10

Mangalagiri: Andhra Pradesh has reported a total of 1,566 confirmed cases of scrub typhus this year, according to the state's Health Commissioner, J. Nivas Veerapandian. Speaking to the media at Mangalagiri on Tuesday, the commissioner said that nine deaths have been recorded among patients exhibiting symptoms of the disease.

However, he clarified that the exact cause of these deaths is yet to be verified, and confirmation could take another two to three months as investigations and medical reviews continue. Scrub typhus, also known as bush typhus, is a rickettsial infection transmitted through the bite of infected chiggers (larval mites). The disease causes high fever, headache, rash, and body pain, and can be-

come fatal if not diagnosed and treated in time. "We have intensified surveillance and diagnostic testing across districts to ensure early detection and treatment.

The department is monitoring suspected cases closely," Veerapandian said.He added that Andhra Pradesh's caseload remains significantly lower than that of several neighboring states. Karnataka has registered 1,870 scrub typhus cases so far this year, Tamil Nadu 7,308 cases the highest in South India while Telangana has reported 309 cases.

"Compared to these figures, Andhra Pradesh's situation is relatively controlled, thanks to preventive efforts and awareness drives across rural and urban health centers," he noted.Health authorities have been conducting awareness cam-

paigns to educate rural communities about recognizing early symptoms and seeking timely medical attention. Special teams of doctors and field surveillance officers have been deployed in high-risk areas, particularly in districts with dense vegetation and agricultural activity, where the spread of scrub typhus is more prevalent.

The Health Commissioner said vector control measures, such as clearing bushes and improving sanitation, are

being strengthened in collaboration with local bodies.Veerapandian also highlighted the importance of community participation in prevention efforts. "People living in hilly and forest-fringe areas need to take extra precautions. Using protective clothing during agricultural work, maintaining personal hygiene, and promptly consulting a doctor in case of fever or rashes can significantly reduce the risk," he said.

Public health experts

have emphasized that while scrub typhus is treatable with antibiotics, the challenge lies in early diagnosis, as its symptoms often resemble those of dengue, malaria, or viral fevers. Many rural health centers have been instructed to make diagnostic tests available and ensure sufficient medicine stocks.

The state health department is maintaining constant communication with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and other research institutes to track emerging trends and strengthen laboratory confirmation capacity. Veerapandian reiterated that the department is committed to transparency and preparedness, assuring citizens that measures are in place to tackle any potential rise in scrub typhus cases during the winter season.

# AP NGO Association Mylavaram Taluka Unit Elected Unanimously; District Leaders Congratulate New Committee



TPN Bureau | December 10

VIJAYAWADA: The Andhra Pradesh NGO Association's Mylavaram Taluka Unit has been unanimously elected, reflecting the unity and collective spirit of government employees, said District President D Satyanarayana Reddy. Extending congratulations to the newly elected committee, he expressed confidence that the team would uphold the trust placed in them by employees. District Secretary P Ramesh also praised the dedication of the members in safeguarding employee rights.

The oath-taking ceremony for the newly elected committee was held on Wednesday at the R&B Guest House in Mylavaram. District President D Satyanarayana Reddy and District Secretary P Ramesh attended as

chief guests. Addressing the gathering, they highlighted that the AP NGOs Association has a proud 75-year history of fighting for employee rights and demands. They noted that the association has been instrumental in securing several benefits for government employees and continues to take issues concerning employees, teachers and pensioners to the government for resolution.

Election officer M Rajubabu announced that the panel led by SD Vazeeruddin Khadeer and Ch Narasimharao was unanimously elected. Vazeeruddin Khadeer will serve as President, D Ravi Kumar as Vice President, Ch Narasimharao as Secretary and NN Satyanarayana as Treasurer. The elected Vice Presidents include Ch Srini-

vasarao, PP Bhanu Prasad and YS Bhagyalakshmi. Joint Secretaries elected are B Krishna, K Uma Maheshwararao and PV Shivarao, while K Poornima Nagaratnam will serve as Women's Joint Secretary. Assistant Election Officer KV Shiva Reddy and observers G Ramakrishna supervised the election process.

Several dignitaries attended the event, including Vijayawada City Unit Vice President Rajasekhar, Village/Ward Secretariat President Sheikh Jani Basha, former president Raghupati, senior leaders of the AP NGO Association, employees from various departments, and retired staff.

The district leadership congratulated the election team for conducting the process smoothly and successfully.

# AP Tourism Sector Witnesses Record Growth with 30,000 Investments in 16 Months
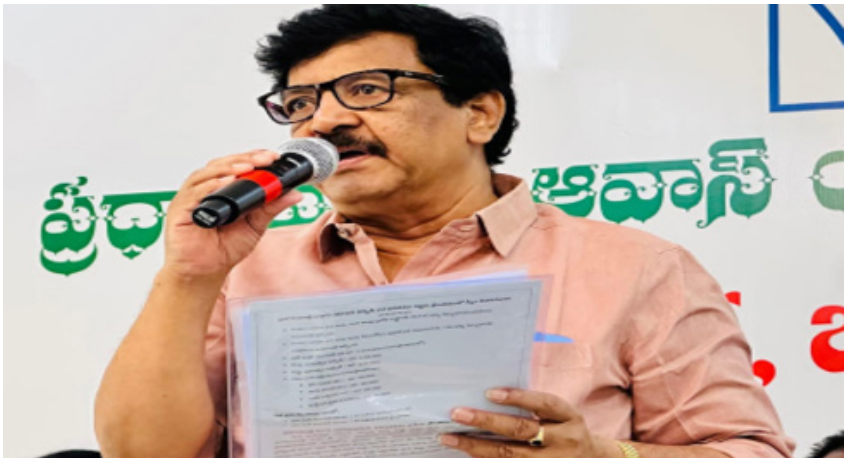
TPN Bureau | December 10

VIJAYAWADA: Andhra Pradesh's tourism sector has gained remarkable momentum under the Coalition Government, emerging as a major destination for both domestic and international investors. With Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu according industrial status to the tourism sector and unveiling the Tourism Policy 2024–29, the department has transformed into a hub of innovation, development, and investor confidence.

In just 16 months, the Tourism Department has attracted over 30,000 private tourism-related investments, surpassing its initial five-year target of 25,000. This unprecedented response comes as a result of a series of forward-looking initiatives, including new Adventure Sports Guidelines, Home Stay & Bed and Breakfast Policy, Employment Policy, Caravan Policy, and the Land

Allotment Policy–2025. Operational guidelines were also issued to ensure quick clearances and seamless support to investors under the PPP model.

So far, the State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) has approved 27 tourism projects. Of these, three projects are ready for inauguration, 12 are under active construction, five are ready for foundation stone laying, and seven projects have already received land allocations. Once completed, these projects will collectively add 4,597 rooms to AP's tourism capacity. Significantly, Andhra Pradesh is set to host one-third of the 11,272 new hotel rooms planned nationwide for 2025–26, highlighting investor trust in the Coalition Government.

The Tourism Department has also secured the highest-ever central funding of 428 crore post-bifurcation for developing infrastructure across eight major desti-



nations Akhanda Godavari, Gandikota, Suryalanka Beach, Ahobilam, Nagarjuna Sagar, Araku, Annavaram and Simhachalam.

To realise the Mission-2029 vision, the Tourism Department has set ambitious goals: establishing 50,000 rooms, creating 10,000 home stays, achieving 20% GVA, creating 15% employment, and increasing per capita spending from the current 1,700 to 25,000. Plans are underway to provide affordable ac-

cess by establishing 4,500 to 20,000 classified rooms across various categories. Initiatives promoting sustainable and responsible tourism focus on community participation, private investment, employment creation, and improved per capita income.

Upcoming policies Concrete Structures, Monuments Conservation, MICE Tourism, Beach Shack Policy and Film Tourism Policy are expected to further elevate Andhra Pradesh's

profile on the global tourism map.

Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain, APTDC MD and APTA CEO Amrapali Kata are actively reviewing field-level progress and steering the department towards rapid transformation. Their coordinated efforts are positioning Andhra Pradesh as one of the fastest-growing tourism destinations in India, poised for global recognition in the years ahead.

# Ramachandrapuram Revenue Division to Remain Unchanged: CM Assures Minister Subhash



TPN Bureau | December 10

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed the officials to discuss with various banks and financial institutions to bring down the interest rates on loans. He said with the damage of AP brand image several financial institutions increased the interest rates during previous government's regime resulting in wastage of peoples money.

He said the NDA government is able to save Rs 512 crore last year and Rs 1000 crore so far this year through rescheduling of loans and discussions with banks and financial institutions. Addressing heads of departments at secretariat here today, the Chief Minister said officials should initiate measures to save public money by reducing the interest rates by which the state can save Rs 7000 crore on total loans.

He said coordination among all departments is essential to win peoples confidence and stressed the need for change in attitude of officials along with technology auditing. Referring public health, the

Chief Minister said officials should be more alert on public health and initiate steps to prevent seasonal diseases and waterborne diseases. He said using information of data lake necessary information should be passed on to people to bring awareness among people on public health.

He said efforts are on to provide 1200 public services through Whatsapp governance. Peoples representatives also should take responsibility to increase satisfaction level among people on public services. He said technology should be used in judiciary also to speed up clearance of pending cases.

Expressing concern over non spending of Rs 1170 crore central government funds by various departments, the Chief Minister said that the funds should be utilized by December 20 and the utilization certificate should be sent to central government for further sanction of funds. Ministers also should take active role in utilizing central funds for development works. He said all the departments should come under audit purview by March 2026.

Ministers should speed up files clearance.

The Chief Minister said that he is going to review every three months on performance of various departments. He said officials should act immediate on the issues of farmers, crop prices, roads, employment generation, drinking water and increase in prices of essential commodities to take remedial measures.

An action plan should be formulated well in advance on drinking water supply during coming summer season. He said officials should react immediately on negative reports in media and improve functioning of the concerned departments. Revenue, Police and Municipal administration departments are receiving huge number of grievances.

Steps should be taken to redress the grievances in real time. Citing the example in Parvatipuram Manyam district, the Chief Minister said by introducing Mustabu programme district collector brought huge change in students and such procedures should be followed for better results.

# International Ministries Launch Free Legal-Aid Cell on Human Rights Day

TPN Bureau | December 10

Vijayawada: To mark Human Rights Day, the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC) – Geneva and Dahinchu Agni International Ministries jointly launched a Free Legal-Aid Cell aimed at providing legal guidance, awareness, and support to the poor and the oppressed. The initiative was formally announced during a special programme held in Vijayawada, attended by church leaders, social activists, and representatives from multiple districts.

Speaking on behalf of IHRC–Geneva, Rev Dr Bishop Thomas, Andhra Pradesh Vice President, and IHRC Geneva National President Kundavaram Rajanandan highlighted the organisation's commitment to ensuring justice and dignity for marginalized communities.

The new legal-aid cell, they said, will operate as a platform to educate citizens about their legal rights, facilitate ac-



cess to justice, and offer pro bono advice to those who cannot afford professional legal assistance.Rev Dr Bishop Thomas, reflecting on his 35 years of service, recalled numerous painful instances of people facing denial of justice, exploitation, and harassment due to lack of legal awareness and financial resources.

These experiences, he said, reinforced his determination to stand with the underprivileged and to use his ministry as a vehicle for social change. "Justice should not be a privilege of the powerful, it is a

right for every human being," he emphasized, urging more community engagement in protecting constitutional rights.

The organisers announced a dedicated helpline – 85 199 69 199 – for individuals in need of legal consultation or assistance. Citizens facing domestic abuse, property disputes, labour exploitation, or human rights violations can reach out for free legal guidance. The IHRC team also extended an open call for volunteer lawyers and legal experts willing to contribute their expertise to the cause.

Highlighting the rising cases of injustice against the poor, women, and children, speakers underscored the urgent need for legal literacy campaigns across rural areas. They stressed that awareness of one's rights is the first step toward empowerment and equality before the law. Plans were announced to organise district-level awareness programmes and paralegal workshops in collaboration with local NGOs and grassroots organisations.

As part of their social outreach during the festive season, Dahinchu Agni International Min-

istries announced that it would distribute clothes worth 15 lakh to poor workers, orphans, and senior citizens as part of their Christmas charity drive. The initiative seeks to spread compassion and uplift underprivileged communities during the holiday period.TDP Christian Minority General Secretary B. Suresh Babu, Sunil, and nearly 100 participants from ten districts attended the event and extended their support to the newly launched legal-aid programme.

Participants lauded the joint effort between IHRC–Geneva and Dahinchu Agni Ministries, describing it as a timely step toward strengthening social justice and equality. With this initiative, IHRC–Geneva and Dahinchu Agni International Ministries aim to create a stronger network of volunteers and legal professionals dedicated to defending the rights of the voiceless and building a society based on fairness, empathy, digni-

## YSR Congress Conducts Massive Rally in Narasaraopet as Part of "One Crore Signatures" Campaign

TPN Bureau | December 10 Narasaaropet, Palnadu District: As part of the YSR Congress Party's state-wide "One Crore Signatures" campaign opposing the privatization of medical colleges in Andhra Pradesh, a huge rally was organized in Narasaraopet constituency under the leadership of Dr. Gopireddy Srinivas Reddy, the party's district working president and former MLA.

The rally was held with petitions carrying 62,500 signatures collected from residents of the constituency.Hundreds of YSR Congress leaders and activists participated in the rally, which began at the YSRCP office on Guntur Road and proceeded to the Palnadu district YSRCP office at Lingaguntla. The participants raised slogans against the state government and in support of YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and Dr. Gopireddy's leadership.

Speaking to the me-dia, Dr. Gopireddy declared that the YSR Congress's "One Crore Signatures" initiative had become a "super hit," while calling the coalition government's "Super Six" program a "flop show." He alleged that the government's policy of privatizing medical colleges amounted to surrendering public wealth to private hands. "The government is granting free land, constructing buildings, setting up hospitals, and even paying staff salaries for two years, all for private players," he said.

"Is this justice? Why is this government looting state resources in the name of development?" Dr. Gopireddy further stated that the opposition to medical college privatization was not limited to YS-RCP supporters. "Even people from BJP, Jana Sena, and the Telugu Desam Party have signed these petitions, demanding that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu stop the privatization drive," he noted.

He argued that instead of spending thousands of crores to benefit private investors, the government could invest 5,000 crore to strengthen the existing public medical institutions. "Chandrababu Naidu and his son are busy touring foreign countries, while the people of Andhra Pradesh are struggling for basic healthcare," he said. "This coalition government cares only for industrialists, not for the poor.

The dreams of the poor are being shattered."Dr. Gopireddy announced that on December 15, petitions from all seven constituencies in the Palnadu district—carrying tens of thousands of signatures will be transport-ed from the district office to the YSR Congress Party's central office in Tadepalli.

He called upon all party leaders, activists, and supporters to participate in large numbers in the event.Addressing the gathering, Poonuru Gautam Reddy, Palnadu Parliamentary Convener of YSRCP, said that under the guidance of YSR Congress Party president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the signature campaign had already surpassed 1.6 crore signatures across the state. "This movement clearly reflects the massive public opposition to the state government's policies," he said. He added that teachers, anganwadi workers, doctors, and employees from all sectors were already protesting daily at Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada, which he described as evidence of the growing unrest across the state. A large number of YS-RCP leaders and party workers participated in the Narasaraopet rally.

## YSRCP calls Chandrababu's bluff

TPN Bureau | December 10 HYDERABAD: YS-RCP has slammed Chandrababu Naidu for projecting inflated figures of GSDP, unmindful of the fact that there is a mismatch when compared to State revenue and said that the presentation started on the premise to project the previous government in poor light, which is not the case.

Speaking to the media here on Wednesday, former minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy said, the projected GDSP growth figure is 12. 2 percent does not match with the revenue tally of just 3 percent, which shows that Chandrababu Naidu has been fudging accounts as the figures do not add up.

There was an attempt to show YSRCP performance in a poor light but the figures are in the open to all and the State stands as an aggressive borrow in the latest list re-leased. During the YS-RCP term the state's share was about 4.8 percent, despite Covid and the coalition government's share was just 4.45 percent and the data speaks for itself.

If the 12 percent growth rate is true, why is it not reflected in terms of revenue is the question to be answered. We have done better during our term and surpassed the national average on many counts, he said.

The total loans taken by the coalition government run into Rs 2,66,175 crore and corruption is rampant as there is no answer as to where the money has gone, with the Super Six promise not being implemented as promised.

Farmers are not getting MSP and prices have fallen drastically, pushing the farmers into a lurch as there is no crop insurance, no input subsidy and procurement is shoddy. The prices of mango, paddy, onion, mango, banana and other crops have fallen drastically and farmers are bearing the brunt. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, on the other hand had prioritised agriculture and stood by the farmer at all times and had paid a premium of Rs 7,800 crore during the five years and 54 lakh farmers benefited through his initiatives.

The Super Six is a flop and the power tariff was hiked despite contrary claims. The PPAs show how the purchases were made despite knowing the prices of wind and solar energy would fall. Health, education and agriculture are the most neglected sectors as the Aarogyasri dues are not cleared, nor the fees reimbursement cleared.

Chandrababu is speaking of high-end technology to hallucinate people, but there has been a large-scale scam involved in it, he said.

## Narsaraopet MLA Aravind Babu Slams Ex-MLA Gopireddy, Calls Him "Unfit for Public Life"

TPN Bureau | December 10 Narsaraopet (Palnadu District): Narsaraopet MLA Dr. Chadalavada Aravind Babu launched a scathing attack on former MLA Gopireddy Srinivas Reddy, alleging that the latter's "mental condition is not sound" and that letting him move freely in society would be "dangerous." Speaking to the media at his constituency office, Dr. Aravind Babu accused Gopireddy of spreading false propaganda against the coalition government and of having a history of corruption and misconduct during his tenure as a legislator.

The MLA said Gopireddy had insulted women and repeatedly shown disrespect towards them, describing the former lawmaker as a person who cannot tolerate the coalition government's development and welfare initiatives. "He is trying to impose his past sins and illegal deeds on us," Dr. Aravind Babu remarked, urging the public to socially boycott him.Accusing the former YSRCP leader of large-scale corruption, the MLA claimed that Gopireddy and his close associates looted public money when they were in power.

He alleged that the former chairman of the Government Hospital Development Committee collected money for medical services and sold "Southern certificates" for 30,000 each, later constructing a building with those proceeds, sharing the profits with Gopireddy. "Gopireddy used his political influence for personal enrichment.

The people of Narsaraopet know exactly who worked for them and who looted them," he said.Aravind Babu further accused Gopireddy of attacking political opponents and misusing power to in-timidate critics. He cited incidents where TDP Legal Cell leader Chinnaparreddy was allegedly beaten and BJP leader Ramakrishna falsely implicated and jailed for 21 days. He said both leaders were victimized during YS-RCP rule while former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu personally monitored their cases and assured justice.

Recounting several incidents, the MLA said Gopireddy tried to obstruct a local religious procession in Elamanda village and attempted to file false SC/ST cases against opposition activists. "He even stood against divine rituals.

Such a person has no moral right to accuse others of wrongdoing," Aravind Babu asserted. Highlighting the coalition government's record, the MLA said 17 months of governance had brought visible development in the constituency including the construction of two flyovers and over twenty CC roads.

He credited the welfare-oriented approach of the coalition for the district's progress.Referring to his own relief efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Aravind Babu said he and his team distributed essential supplies to about 46,000 people and personally conducted fu-neral rites for more than 100 unclaimed bodies. "That is the difference between us and Gopireddy, who abandoned people in their time of need," he said.

He alleged that during YSRCP rule, Gopireddy ordered the destruction of plaques commemorating development projects initiated by the late Dr. Kodela Siva Prasada Rao. "We never removed his plaques; that's the difference between constructive and destructive politics," the MLA added.

Dr. Aravind Babu described himself as a leader rooted in Communist ideology, committed to serving people with integrity. "Gopireddy entered politics to amass wealth using caste and power, while we entered to serve," he said. The press meet concluded with local coalition leaders reaffirming their support for Aravind Babu and denouncing Gopireddy's alleged misdeeds.

## Public Anger Peaks as One Crore Signatures Collected Against Medical College Privatisation: Botsa

TPN Bureau | December 10 VIZIANAGARAM: YSRCP Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Botsa Satyanarayana announced that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will meet Governor S Abdul Nazeer on December 18 to submit one crore signatures collected across Andhra Pradesh opposing the alleged privatisation of newly established government medical colleges.

Addressing the media at the YSRCP district office, Botsa accused Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of "prioritising corporate interests over public welfare" by attempting to hand over new government medical colleges under the Public–Private Partnership (PPP) model.

He recalled that former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had initiated the construction of 17 medical colleges one in each district with the objective of ensuring accessible super-specialty healthcare for the poor and expanding medical education. Seven colleges were completed and admissions commenced in five of them.

Botsa alleged that the TDP-led coalition is now seeking to privatise ten new medical colleges, including some that have already begun operations, thereby "betraying the original purpose" of the initiative. He said the widespread public anger is evident from lakhs of people voluntarily participating in the YSRCP's statewide campaign, resulting in the mobilisation of one crore signatures opposing the government's move.

These signatures, he said, will be formally submitted to the Governor to express the people's objections.

Botsa questioned whether any private institution, including GITAM or other corporate hospitals, would provide free medical services to the poor as government institutions do. Turning public medical colleges over to private entities, he warned, would severely compromise affordability and accessibility for common people. He reiterated that the YSRCP would cancel the PPP model and restore full government control over all medical colleges upon returning to power. Responding to queries, Botsa said gov-ernment medical colleges typically take 5–7 years to become functional, whereas the YS-RCP completed construction in just three years. He criticised the decade-long delays at AIIMS Mangalagiri and alleged neglect by the Centre.

The YSRCP leader also opposed the proposed privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), stating that the absence of captive mines had deliberately inflated production costs to project artificial losses. As a key partner in the NDA coalition, he said, the TDP government must pressure the Centre to withdraw the decision.

He further blamed the Union Civil Aviation Minister for the IndiGo crisis, alleging that mismanagement at the Centre led to hundreds of flight cancellations and caused severe inconvenience to thousands of passengers.

Botcha further said that whether in healthcare, industry or infrastructure, the BJP–TDP alliance is "failing to protect public interest", whereas the YS-RCP stands firmly for social justice and the welfare of the people.

## YSRCP Warns Govt as One Crore Signatures Oppose Medical College Privatisation

TPN Bureau | December 10 VIJAYAWADA: YS-RCP senior leader and former Minister Vidadala Rajini on Wednesday issued a strong warning to the Chandrababu Naidu-led coalition government, stating that the one crore signatures collected across Andhra Pradesh represent a clear public mandate rejecting the proposed privatisation of government medical colleges. She cautioned that if the government ignores this overwhelming citizen opposition, its downfall will be "inevitable".

Addressing the media at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, Rajini alleged that the decision to privatise government medical colleges without public consultation is "dictatorial" and could become the government's "death warrant" if it continues to push the proposal. She accused the coalition of severely damaging the public health sector within just one-and-a-half years, claiming that government hospitals are struggling without basic medical supplies, ambulance services have deteriorated, and Aarogyasri is weakened due to pending dues. Even the Health Minister, she said, has publicly admitted the crisis.

Rajini stated that the YSRCP's statewide campaign against the proposed PPP model received unprecedented public response from youth, employees, students, intellectuals, and medical experts across all 175 constituencies. More than one crore people voluntarily signed the petition opposing privatisation, which she described as an authentic expression of public will—unlike what she alleged were "fake memberships, fake MoUs, and fake promises" by the ruling TDP.

She criticised the government for attempting to hand over public medical colleges and district hospi-tals to private entities, alleging that the proposed model benefits corporate middlemen at the expense of poor families. Rajini also accused the government of stalling the construction of 17 government medical colleges started by former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, scrapping the Family Doctor system, and weakening emergency ambulance services. She condemned the reported plan to lease government land for medical colleges at "nominal rates" and continue paying doctor salaries even after institutions are transferred to private operators.

Rajini announced that the collected signatures will be submitted to the Governor on 18 December, led by YSRCP President YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Expressing gratitude to citizens across political lines, she said the signatures reflect a people's movement to safeguard public medical

# Government Employees Demand Timely Payment of Salaries and Pensions on the 1st of Every Month

TPN Bureau | December 10, 2025

Amaravati: Government employees and pensioners across Andhra Pradesh have expressed growing resentment over the repeated delays in the payment of their monthly salaries and pensions, emphasizing that any postponement beyond the 1st of every month is unacceptable. Despite understanding the government's financial distress and competing priorities, employees say their livelihoods depend entirely on receiving payments on time.

According to the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of state government employees, pensions and salaries that should normally be credited on December 1 have not been deposited for thousands of employees even by December 10. Nearly 31 government departments are still awaiting salary credits amounting to an estimated 800– 1,000 crore. "This is sheer irresponsibility on the part of the Finance Department," the JAC leaders alleged, noting that there was no official clarification or statement from the government on the delay.

JAC general secretary M. Ramesh Kumar and state president Kashi Bhattla Rama Suryanarayana reminded that they had earlier urged then-Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan on January 19, 2023, to instruct the government to enact a law guaranteeing that salaries and pensions are paid strictly on the first day of every month. "At that time, some people mocked us for demanding such a law," they said, "but the current situation has once again proved that our stand was justified.

"They pointed out that while the present government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has a positive outlook toward employees, the inability to restore punctual salary disbursement shows the depth of the state's fiscal constraints. The JAC leaders asserted that under no circumstances will employees compromise on the issue of receiving salaries and pensions on the 1st.

"The middle class, represented by employees and pensioners, depends on this income for their very survival. Delayed payments disturb the entire economic rhythm of families," the statement said. The leaders also criticized the Finance Department officials for their "indifferent" attitude and accused them of lacking transparency, as no formal explanation was given to workers even after several days of uncertainty.

They further highlighted the widespread financial pressure on employees and pensioners: about 90% of them allegedly have ongoing bank loans such as housing, vehicle, and education loans, which demand monthly installments due on the 1st. Pensioners, many of them elderly and dependent on regular income for medical and living expenses, were said to be facing hardship.

"Society does not accept any excuse when essential bills, rents, or household expenses re-

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## CM Stresses Public Satisfaction, Administrative Reforms at Ministers– Secretaries Conference

Sets Jan 15 deadline to bring all government services online; No power tariff hike this year

TPN Bureau | December 10

Vijayawada: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed officials to prioritise improving public satisfaction levels in the delivery of government services. Chairing a conference of Ministers, Secretaries and Heads of Departments at the Secretariat, the CM said simplifying administrative rules and ensuring speedy file clearances were essential for efficient governance.

Questioning the reluctance behind changing business rules, he said even the Constitution had been amended multiple times for public benefit. He stressed that technology must be leveraged to enhance service delivery, but added that a humanitarian approach at the last mile remained crucial.

The Chief Minister said both public representatives and officials must be accountable to the people and called for strengthening village and ward secretariats for effective monitoring of services. He also reiterated that the NDA government will not increase power tariff this year, and efforts were underway to reduce the power purchase cost from the present 4.92 per unit to 4 per unit.

Highlighting Andhra Pradesh's improved investment climate, he said the success of the CII Partnership Summit in Visakhapatnam reflected the state's restored brand value. The CM noted that AP achieved 12.02% growth in Q1 and 11.28% in Q2 of 2025–26 and set a target of 17.11% growth.

The Chief Minister said the government was giving top priority to irrigation and had successfully stored 944 TMC of water across various projects. He added that Andhra Pradesh leads the country with 638 industrial parks and reiterated the government's commitment to developing all regions. Three major economic zones Visakhapatnam (North Andhra & East Godavari), Amaravati (West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur & Prakasam) and Tirupati (Nellore & Kurnool would be strengthened to boost regional development.

CM Chandrababu Naidu set January 15 as the deadline for making all government services available online and instructed departments lagging behind to accelerate their efforts. He cautioned officials against adopting a negative outlook and urged them to focus on grievance redressal by directly engaging with petitioners to improve satisfaction levels.

Reviewing departmental performance, the Chief Minister said while many departments had shown improvement in the past 18 months, some including Endowments and Revenue were yet to pick up pace. He noted that TTD's performance had improved and said similar standards must be ensured across all temples.

Stressing the importance of public trust in governance, the CM said officials' performance would be monitored in real-time using data-driven governance tools, including the state's data lake.

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# Kesineni Foundation to Support Women's Economic Empowerment: Janaki Lakshmi

TPN Bureau | December 10

Vijayawada: Women's economic independence is the foundation for the progress of families, society, and the state said Kesineni Foundation Chairperson Janaki Lakshmi, wife of MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni). She stressed that Self-Help Group (SHG) women must take confident steps toward self-reliance and utilise skill development training to enhance their livelihoods.

Janaki Lakshmi interacted with 61 SHG women from NTR district undergoing a five-day skill development programme at the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) in Hyderabad on Wednesday. In a statement released by MP Kesineni Sivanath's office, she reviewed the details of the ongoing training and appreciated the women for their enthusiasm.

As part of their training, the SHG women showcased the home-based and handmade paper products they had prepared—photo frames, files, folders, phenyl, floor cleaner and toilet cleaner. They expressed gratitude to MP Kesineni Sivanath and the Kesineni Foundation for enabling them to receive this opportunity, which they said would help improve their livelihoods.

Speaking on the occasion, Janaki Lakshmi said women can achieve anything when they set their minds to it. She added that SHG women, who are already adept at saving, have the potential to emerge stronger through self-employment. SHGs are not just about savings, she said, but about progressing towards self-sufficiency. The Kesineni Foundation will continue to encourage and support women's skill development and entrepreneurship.

She assured the trainees that she would visit their mandals soon and urged them to share the skills they learned with other women in their villages. She encouraged them to collectively establish production units and promised marketing support for their products. Citing Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision of "one entrepreneur per family," she said MP Kesineni Sivanath is working with NIRD and NTR district officials to promote women's empowerment and holistic village development through his personal funds.

NIRD senior consultant Mahammad Khan, professors Dr Katiresan, NTR district rural NIRD coordinator Songa Sanjay Varma, NTR district rural Mahila Samakhya president Kandula Kalpana and others participated.

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# CRDA Moves to Resolve Gramakantam Issues in Amaravati; Key Directions Issued to Field Staff

TPN Bureau | December 10

VIJAYAWADA: The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) has stepped up efforts to resolve long-pending gramakantam issues in the Amaravati capital region. A three-member committee comprising Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, State Municipal and Urban Development Minister Dr Ponguru Narayana and Tadikonda MLA Tenali Sravan Kumar has already been constituted to oversee the matter.

As part of the initiative, APCRDA Additional Commissioner A Bhargava Teja, recently toured Nelapadu one of the core capital villages to study the issues in detail and explore immediate solutions.

In continuation of these efforts, a preparatory meeting was held on Wednesday at the CRDA headquarters in Rayapudi to collect comprehensive data on gramakantam lands, exemptions and related proposals across all capital villages.

The meeting was chaired by APCRDA Additional Commissioner A Bhargava Teja, and attended by Guntur Joint Collector Ashutosh Srivastava, Tenali Sub-Collector V Sanjana Simha, Special Deputy Collectors of LPS units, tahsildars, deputy tahsildars, mandal tahsildars, office staff, surveyors, revenue personnel and village secretariat staff working in the Amaravati region.

Both the Additional Commissioner and the Joint Collector instructed field-level staff to work without any negligence while collecting detailed gramakantam data. They clarified various doubts raised by the officers regarding the data-gathering process. Officials were directed to complete data collection and documentation within the stipulated timeline based on the maps and guidelines provided by the CRDA.

Additional Commissioner Bhargava Teja reaffirmed that the CRDA is determined to resolve all gramakantam issues in Amaravati as per the directions of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. He stressed that field staff must work with complete responsibility and accuracy to support the government's resolve to address the concerns of capital region villagers.

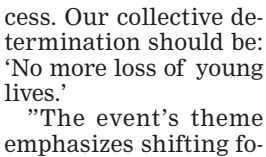# Parents' Association of Andhra Pradesh Calls for Student Suicide Prevention Dialogue in Nellore

TPN Bureau | December 10

Nellore: In response to the rising concern over student suicides and growing mental stress among school and college-going youth, the Parents' Association of Andhra Pradesh (PAAP) is convening a "Parents–Students Round Table Meeting" at the Town Hall Reading Room in Nellore this Friday at 10 a.m.

The meeting will focus on one urgent message "It Should Not Happen Again." Organizers say the event is meant to spark a statewide conversation on mental health, parental awareness, and changes needed in the education system to ease academic pressure. The Association is calling parents, teachers, counselors, and educational administrators to join hands in ensuring that marks alone do not define a child's future.

According to PAAP representatives, the state has witnessed a worrying increase in student suicides over the past year, a trend linked to intense exam pressure, competitive expectations, and lack of mental health support systems. "We can no longer stay silent," said a spokesperson for the Association. "Every child deserves a safe, supportive learning environment that values emotional well-being as much as academic success. Our collective determination should be: 'No more loss of young lives.'

"The event's theme emphasizes shifting focus from academic results to emotional assurance and creating a learning atmosphere built on empathy and understanding. The round table aims to bring stakeholders together parents, teachers, students, and policy makers to discuss practical steps for reducing stress among students.

Discussions are expected to cover several key areas, including the need for trained counselors in schools, awareness campaigns about mental health, restructuring assessment systems, and creating open communication channels between students and parents.

Panel speakers will include education reform advocates, psychologists, and representatives from teachers' federations. Local parents' groups across Andhra Pradesh have reportedly expressed support for PAAP's initiative, calling it "timely and long overdue." Many argue that excessive academic pressure, long hours of study, and constant social comparison have created an environment of fear rather than curiosity among students.

"If children cannot talk to parents or teachers about their anxiety, we as adults have failed in our responsibility," one parent activist said. The Association's call — "Let's join hands: Marks are not what they need, our reassurance is" — has resonated widely on social media under hashtag like #StudentSuicidePrevention, #Mental Health Awareness, and #Ika Jaraganivvam ("It Should Not Happen Again").

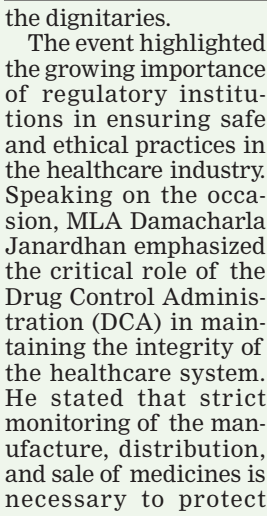PAAP hopes the outcome of the Nellore meeting will form the basis for a larger state-level action plan, involving both government departments and education boards to introduce systematic emotional support mechanisms in classrooms.

"This is not a one-day event," said the organizing committee chairperson. "We are building a movement for our children's safety. Each parent, each teacher, and each citizen has a voice in shaping that change."For further details or to participate in the discussion, interested individuals can contact the organizers through WhatsApp at https://wa.me/916305313558.

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# Inauguration of Drug Control Administration Assistant Director's Office in Ongole 34th Division

TPN Bureau | December 10

Ongole, Prakasam District: A new milestone was achieved in the healthcare administration sector of Prakasam district on Tuesday with the inauguration of the Drug Control Administration Assistant Director's Office in Ongole's 34th Division. The newly established office aims to strengthen the regulation of pharmaceutical distribution, quality assurance, and enforcement of medical safety standards across the district.

The facility was formally inaugurated by Ongole MLA Damacharla Janardhan and Mayor Gangada Sujatha, who participated in a ceremonial event held at the new office premises. The program began with the traditional "lighting of the lamp" as a symbolic gesture marking the beginning of service, followed by the ribbon-cutting ceremony that officially opened the office.Local officials, healthcare professionals, and representatives from the medical and pharmaceutical sectors attended the inauguration and extended a warm welcome to the dignitaries.

The event highlighted the growing importance of regulatory institutions in ensuring safe and ethical practices in the healthcare industry. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Damacharla Janardhan emphasized the critical role of the Drug Control Administration (DCA) in maintaining the integrity of the healthcare system. He stated that strict monitoring of the manufacture, distribution, and sale of medicines is necessary to protect public health and maintain trust in the medical profession.

"Regulatory vigilance ensures that only safe and effective drugs reach the people. Every department involved in the medical field should work in coordination and uphold transparency to bring reputation to both the district and the state," he said. Mayor Sujatha commended the efforts of the health and administrative departments in bringing this office to Ongole. She noted that such infrastructure expansion will not only improve response times for regulatory activities but also enhance collaboration among various branches of the medical administration.

"This office will help streamline inspection services, respond to pharmaceutical irregularities promptly, and foster better communication between government health divisions," she stated.Officials from the Drug Control department briefed the guests on the functions and objectives of the new office.

The Assistant Director's Office will oversee the implementation of pharmaceutical regulations, issue licenses, and ensure compliance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. It will also play a pivotal role in checking counterfeit drugs, monitoring medical stores, and guiding local pharmacists on best practices.

By establishing a local administrative office in Ongole, authorities aim to make governance more accessible and responsive. The department will work closely with district hospitals, private clinics, and pharmacies to ensure that patients have access to safe and genuine medicines.

The presence of a dedicated regulatory office is also expected to facilitate faster resolution of complaints and help curtail the spread of spurious drugs. The event concluded with expressions of gratitude by officials who said that the initiative reflects the state government's commitment to strengthening public health infrastructure through regulatory empowerment and inter-departmental cooperation.

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# Avanigadda MLA Buddha Prasad Says Praja Darbar Programme a Resounding Success

TPN Bureau | December 10

Nagayalanka, Krishna District: The state government's flagship outreach initiative, Praja Darbar, is being successfully implemented across the region, said Avanigadda MLA Mandali Buddha Prasad. The MLA, who supervised the programme at the Mandal Parishad Development Office (MPDO) in Nagayalanka on Wednesday, described it as a vital bridge connecting citizens directly with the government and its various departments.

During the event, residents from several villages in Nagayalanka mandal attended the session and submitted 22 petitions addressing a range of personal and community issues. MLA Buddha Prasad, along with constituency special officer Penamudi Saibabu, examined each petition and held direct discussions with officials from the concerned departments to identify appropriate and timely solutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Buddha Prasad said that the Praja Darbar initiative was conceived to bring administrative services closer to the people, ensuring swift redressal of grievances in a transparent and responsive manner. "The government machinery is working with the primary objective of delivering faster and people-centric solutions. Every officer should treat public issues as their own and ensure resolution at the earliest possible stage," he emphasized. The MLA urged officials at the mandal and village levels particularly panchayat secretaries and Village Revenue Officers (VROs) to remain vigilant about local problems.

He advised them to take prompt action as soon as issues come to their notice so that residents need not approach higher authorities for minor grievances. "Our mission is to ensure that citizens feel government institutions are accessible, accountable, and functional," he said.

Several officials from various departments participated in the meeting, reflecting the state's commitment to inter-departmental coordination. Among them were MPDO K.M. Chandrasekhar, Tahsildar C.H. Veeranjaneya Prasad, R&B Department DEE M. Ramesh, Irrigation Department DEE B.B.S. Ganapathi, Assistant Executive Engineers (AEE), panchayat secretaries, and staff from the Vision Action Plan Unit Office of the constituency.

The Mandal Parishad Office staff oversaw the event's logistical arrangements.Officials reviewed issues relating to road connectivity, irrigation maintenance, welfare benefits, revenue records, and local infrastructure. Some petitions were resolved on the spot, while others were forwarded to respective departments for follow-up action.

Citizens who attended expressed satisfaction at being able to voice their concerns directly before their elected representative and senior officials. The Praja Darbar initiative, introduced by the Andhra Pradesh government, is designed to create direct interaction between people and administrative officers. It aims to enhance transparency, ensure accountability, and accelerate grievance redressal mechanisms at the grassroots level.By personally overseeing the proceedings, MLA Buddha Prasad reaffirmed the government's commitment to participatory governance.

He noted that continuous monitoring of petitions would help achieve sustainable development and better public service delivery across the constituency. With active public participation and strong administrative support, Wednesday's Praja Darbar at Nagayalanka exemplified the renewed efforts of local governance to stay closely aligned with people's needs and state development goals.

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# Every Family Should Have an Entrepreneur: Collector Krutika Shukla

TPN Bureau | December 10

Narasaraopet (Palnadu District): Palnadu District Collector Krutika Shukla has called upon every family to encourage at least one member to become an entrepreneur. She emphasized that self-employment and small-scale industries play a crucial role in promoting economic development and local empowerment. Presiding over the District Industries and Export Promotion Committee meeting held at Narasaraopet as Chairperson, the Collector reviewed the progress of various industrial schemes and subsidy claims. She informed that out of 96 industrial incentive claims, 95 were approved, and a total amount of 8.68 crore had been sanctioned to eligible beneficiaries.

Collector Shukla instructed all departmental officials to clear applications submitted through the Single Desk Portal promptly without waiting for the stipulated Service Level Agreement (SLA) period. She said officials must prioritize fast-track approvals to ensure that entrepreneurs face no unnecessary delays.The Collector also directed the District Industries Centre (DIC) officials to conduct programs across all constituencies under the Rural & Urban Micro Enterprises Promotion (R.A.M.P.) scheme, highlighting various industrial opportunities available at the local level. She further asked them to expedite the processing of applications filed under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) by forwarding them swiftly to banks for sanction.

Under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, she urged banks to speedily process and sanction loans to those who have already applied. Collector Shukla pointed out that these measures would help skilled artisans and entrepreneurs establish small and medium-scale enterprises, generating employment and strengthening the local economy. Highlighting the Chief Minister's flagship program "One Family, One Entrepreneur", the Collector said this initiative aims to nurture one entrepreneur in every family, thereby transforming Palnadu into a district of self-reliant and innovative communities.

She directed the DRDA Project Director, MEPMA Project Director, and Municipal Commissioners to work in coordination to prepare and implement an effective action plan for the program. Officials including DRDA Project Director Jhansi Rani, District Horticulture Officer Venkata Rao, District Skill Development Officer Thammaji, Narasaraopet Municipal Commissioner Jas-

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# Bike Thief Nabbed; 29 Two-Wheelers Recovered in Rajamahendravaram

TPN Bureau | December 10

East Godavari: A young man who started stealing motorcycles for fun soon turned it into a habit and ended up behind bars. Rajamahendravaram Three Town Police arrested a notorious bike thief who was responsible for multiple vehicle thefts across the city.

Addressing the media on Wednesday, Central Zone DSP V. Srikanth and Three Town CI V. Apparao said the accused, Sabbu Veerababu, hails from Indukurupeta in Devarapalli Mandal of Alluri Sitaramaraju district. Orphaned at a young age, he was raised by his grandmother.

He worked as a night boy at a hotel near the Pushkar Ghat and did welding work during the day.According to police, Veerababu's troubles began when he desired a bike but couldn't afford one. He used an old key to steal a parked motorcycle near the Pushkar Ghat. Realizing how easy it was, he began targeting more two-wheelers across Rajamahendravaram, selling the stolen vehicles to acquaintances Kosuri Pavan Kumar of Bhimavaram and Jargani Appanna of Achuthapuram in Gokavaram mandal at low prices.

He allegedly spent the proceeds on a lavish lifestyle.Following several theft complaints, East Godavari SP D. Narasimhakishore directed special surveillance across the city. The Three Town Police team apprehended Veerababu during vehicle checks and, upon interrogation, he confessed to stealing 29 motorcycles from various localities including Pushkar Ghat, Kotagummam, Mallayapeta, Subrahmanya Grounds, Lalacheruvu Road, ISKCON Temple area, and Vadapalli in Atreyapuram mandal.

The recovered vehicles are worth 17.4 lakh.Police have also registered cases against those who purchased the stolen bikes. DSP Srikanth lauded the efforts of CI V. Apparao, SI M.D. Zubair, and the investigation team. Authorities urged the public to use wheel locks and GPS trackers to safeguard their vehicles.

# Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls in India: An Explanatory Overview

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is a key initiative undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure the accuracy, inclusivity, and integrity of voter lists across the country. While routine electoral roll updates—known as summary revisions—are conducted annually, the SIR is a far more comprehensive, time-bound exercise involving house-to-house verification of voters. Typically, it is conducted ahead of major elections to eliminate errors, include eligible citizens, and remove duplicates, deceased persons, and other ineligible entries. The process underscores India's commitment to democratic fairness and reflects the increasing emphasis on data-driven governance in electoral processes.

## Legal and Constitutional Basis of SIR

The authority of the ECI to conduct a Special Intensive Revision is grounded in both the Constitution of India and the Representation of the People Act, 1950. The key legal provisions include:

1. Article 324: Grants the ECI superintendence, direction, and control of elections to Parliament and State Legislatures. This broad mandate enables the Commission to take decisions ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

2. Article 326: Guarantees adult suffrage for all citizens aged 18 years and above in elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

3. Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950: Explicitly empowers the ECI to conduct a "special revision of the electoral roll," which forms the statutory basis for SIR.

4. Registration of Electors Rules, 1960: Lays down procedural guidelines for voter enrolment and revision. Although the term "Special Intensive Revision" is not explicitly mentioned in these rules, it has evolved as a distinct, large-scale revision methodology combining summary updates and full enumeration features.

This legal framework establishes both the authority and responsibility of the ECI to conduct intensive voter verification exercises to safeguard the principle of "one person, one vote."

## Objectives of Special Intensive Revision

The primary aim of SIR is to maintain accuracy, inclusion, and legitimacy in India's electoral system. Its objectives can be categorized as follows:

1. Accuracy: Remove duplicates, deceased voters, ineligible entries, and incorrect information to ensure the roll reflects the real electorate.

2. Inclusion: Incorporate all eligible citizens, particularly first-time voters, migrants, and previously excluded individuals.

3. Demographic Adjustment: Reflect the impact of urbanization, migration, and newly eligible voters (18+), ensuring rolls match contemporary demographic realities.

4. Legitimacy and Public Trust: Strengthen confidence in elections by ensuring transparency and fairness in voter registration.

5. Pre-Election Preparedness: Clean rolls help reduce litigation, streamline polling logistics, and facilitate smooth elections, including booth allocation and resource planning.

## Special Intensive Revision Process

The SIR follows a structured, multi-phase process designed to ensure thorough verification and minimal exclusion:

1. Notification and Planning: The ECI issues a formal notification specifying the qualifying date for eligible voters. For instance, in Bihar's 2025 SIR, the qualifying date was 1 July 2025, ensuring all citizens turning 18 by 1 October 2025 were eligible.

2. House-to-House Enumeration: Booth Level Officers (BLOs) visit each household within their assigned polling area. Pre-filled enumeration forms are distributed to existing voters, and new eligible residents are encouraged to submit their details.

3. Submission of Documents: To strengthen verification, voters registered after a previous electoral cutoff (e.g., January 2003 in Bihar) are required to submit proof of date and place of birth, as well as parentage information. This is stricter than routine procedures.

4. Verification, Additions, and Deletions: Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) scrutinize submissions, identify deceased persons, duplicates, and ineligible voters for deletion, while simultaneously processing new inclusions. In Jaipur, for example, 741 new polling booths were created to accommodate demographic changes revealed by the SIR.

5. Draft Roll Publication and Objections: A draft electoral roll is published for public scrutiny. Citizens can raise objections, and a grievance redressal mechanism addresses disputes. In the Bihar SIR, the Supreme Court mandated publication of deleted names to maintain transparency.

6. Final Roll Constitution: After processing objections and completing verifications, the final electoral roll is published and frozen for the forthcoming election. Only special cases warrant later adjustments.

## Key Features of SIR

SIR is distinguished from routine updates by several unique features:

• Comprehensive Household Focus: Unlike summary revisions, every household is contacted for verification.

• Time-Bound Execution: The process is carried out within a fixed schedule, especially ahead of major elections.

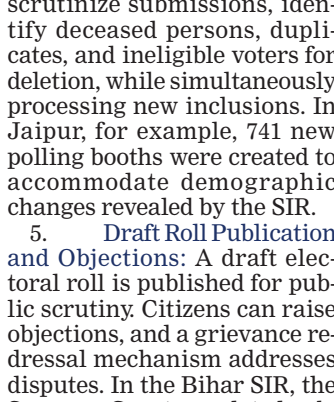• Special Focus on Marginalized Groups: Emphasis is placed on migrants, youth, first-time voters, and persons with disabilities.

• Digital Integration: Tools such as SMS alerts, online portals, and mobile applications facilitate efficient enumeration.

• Stricter Document Verification: Voters added post-last intensive revision must provide documentary proof, ensuring authenticity and reducing fraud.

## Case Study: Bihar SIR 2025

Bihar's 2025 SIR provides a practical insight into the scale and complexity of such exercises:

• Over 8 crore voters were subjected to re-verification.

• Approximately 4 lakh volunteers and BLOs were mobilized.

• Voters registered after January 2003 were required to provide proof of birth and parentage.

• The Supreme Court directed public disclosure of deleted names, ensuring transparency.

• Civil society organizations, such as the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), raised concerns regarding potential exclusion due to strict documentation requirements.

• Booth rationalization included creating new polling stations to accommodate demographic changes, improving access and reducing crowding.



## Benefits of SIR

The SIR delivers multiple advantages for India's electoral system:

1. Reduces Ghost Voters: Removing duplicates and outdated entries improves the fairness and credibility of elections.

2. Reflects Demographic Changes: Migration, urbanization, and population growth are accurately represented.

3. Increases Inclusivity: Marginalized populations, youth, and migrants are incorporated into the voter list.

4. Enhances Transparency and Trust: Citizens' confidence increases when they see a robust, inclusive voter roll.

5. Optimizes Election Logistics: Clean rolls help plan polling stations, reduce ballot errors, and streamline polling operations.

## Challenges and Criticisms

Despite its benefits, SIR is not without challenges:

• Risk of Disenfranchisement: Demanding additional documents may inadvertently exclude legitimate voters, particularly the poor, migrants, and marginalized groups.

• Timing Issues: Conducting SIR immediately before elections can create confusion and allegations of political bias.

• Procedural Ambiguity: The term "Special Intensive Revision" lacks explicit mention in existing rules, sometimes causing legal disputes.

• Resource Constraints: Implementing house-to-house enumeration at scale requires substantial manpower, training, and technological support.

• Digital Divide: Rural, low-literate, or remote citizens may struggle with online submissions and digital verification.

• Political Controversy: Opposition parties often raise concerns that SIR may be used to manipulate voter lists for electoral advantage. The Bihar SIR witnessed PIL challenges in the Supreme Court on this ground.

## The Role of the Election Commission and State Officials

Election Commission of India (ECI)



The ECI supervises the SIR at a national level. Its responsibilities include:

• Issuing notifications and schedules.

• Supervising house-to-house verification and document scrutiny.

• Overseeing grievance redressal and final roll publication.

• Ensuring inclusion of all eligible voters and elimination of errors, under its constitutional authority.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

The CEO of each state or union territory executes SIR locally, coordinating:

• District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, and Booth Level Officers.

• Staff training and mobilization of volunteers.

• Public awareness campaigns.

• Data collection, monitoring, and reporting to the ECI.

## SIR and Upcoming Elections: 2025-26 Roll Revision

Following Bihar's SIR, the ECI has initiated the next phase across 12 states and Union Territories, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, and Puducherry. Key features:

• Over 51 crore voters will be covered.

• The process began on 4 November 2025, with the final roll to be released on 7 February 2026.

• Voter eligibility proof includes 13 types of documents, including Aadhaar cards—a reform introduced after Bihar's SIR experience.

• Assam is excluded due to the ongoing NRC exercise.

• This phase represents one of India's largest voter verification drives since 2002, highlighting the SIR's increasing scale and technological integration.

## Way Forward: Strengthening the SIR Process

To improve the effectiveness and fairness of SIR, several reforms are suggested:

1. Clear Legal Guidelines: Detailed rules on timelines, documentation, and inclusion criteria can reduce disputes.

2. Minimal Documentation Barriers: Avoid blanket demands for documents unless justified to prevent disenfranchisement.

3. Technology Integration: Use mobile apps, GIS mapping, and online grievance portals to enhance efficiency and transparency.

4. Targeted Inclusion Measures: Special camps for migrants, disabled, and first-time voters, with multilingual awareness campaigns.

5. Stakeholder Consultation: Engagement with political parties, civil society organizations, and community groups ensures inclusivity.

6. Public Disclosure and Monitoring: Publish details of deletions and inclusions to reduce fears of disenfranchisement.

7. Post-Roll Audit: Sample audits to verify inclusion of marginalized groups and correct errors before elections.

8. Integration with Delimitation and Polling Station Rationalization: Ensure that constituency boundary changes and new booths are accurately reflected.

The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls is a cornerstone of India's democratic process, balancing accuracy, inclusivity, and transparency. By combining house-to-house verification, strict document checks, and modern technology, SIR strengthens public trust in elections and enhances the efficiency of polling operations. However, its scale, timing, and procedural challenges require careful management to avoid disenfranchisement, logistical difficulties, and political controversy.

With reforms emphasizing legal clarity, inclusivity, technology integration, and stakeholder participation, SIR can ensure that India's electoral rolls remain robust, credible, and reflective of its diverse population, thereby upholding the principle of "one person, one vote" at the heart of its democracy.

# SHAH-RAHUL CLASH DOMINATES LOKSABHA DEBATE ON ELECTORAL REFORMS



A heated confrontation between Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi took centre stage in the Lok Sabha during a crucial debate on electoral reforms on Wednesday. What began as a discussion on voter list revisions quickly spiralled into a sharp personal and political duel, marked by historical references, barbed accusations, and an eventual Opposition walkout.

The flashpoint arose when Gandhi interrupted Shah's address and challenged him to debate the allegations he had raised in recent press conferences regarding irregularities in electoral rolls. These press conferences—one infamously described by Gandhi as a "Hydrogen Bomb"—had accused the government and the Election Commission of facilitating "vote chori" or vote theft.

### Shah Hits Back: "Parliament Will Not Run on Your Wishes"

Shah, visibly irritated by Gandhi's repeated interjections, firmly rejected the Opposition leader's challenge and accused him of attempting to dictate the flow of Parliamentary proceedings.

"I have been elected to legislative assemblies and Parliament for 30 years," Shah said. "The Leader of the Opposition says he wants me to answer this or that first. Let me make this very clear: Parliament will not work based on your wishes. I will decide the order in which I say things. He should listen patiently. Everything will be answered, but he cannot determine my speech."

Gandhi retorted that Shah's stance was "defensive and fearful," insisting that the minister had avoided responding to why the government had granted immunity to Election Commissioners for actions taken during their tenure. He accused Shah of "cherry-picking" issues and sidestepping the core allegations he had raised publicly.

Shah refused to be baited, saying he would not respond to "provocations," and countered that "vote chori" truly occurs when public mandates are violated—a veiled reference to previous Congress governments.

### Shah Revives Historical Attacks on Nehru–Gandhi Family

The Home Minister escalated his attack by invoking what he described as historical instances of "vote theft" involving the Nehru–Gandhi family. According to him, the earliest such episode occurred during the selection of India's first Prime Minister.

"Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had 28 votes from provincial Congress units, and Jawaharlal Nehru had only two. Yet Nehru ji became the Prime Minister," Shah claimed, leading to loud protests from Opposition benches.

He further cited the 1975 judgment of the Allahabad High Court that invalidated Indira Gandhi's election from Rae Bareli. "To hide this vote chori," Shah alleged, "she brought a law to ensure no case could be filed against the Prime Minister. The Leader of the Opposition talks of immunity for Election Commissioners—what does he say about the immunity Indira Gandhi gave herself?"

Continuing the attack, Shah accused Indira Gandhi of superseding senior judges to appoint a more favourable Chief Justice, calling it another example of manipulating democratic processes.

He also repeated the long-standing allegation that Sonia Gandhi had once voted before she became an Indian citizen. As Congress MPs objected loudly, Shah maintained, "I have merely stated a fact."

### The Voter List Battle and EVM Criticism

Shah also targeted the Opposition for what he termed hypocritical criticism of electoral rolls. "The voter lists are absolutely fine when you win," he said mockingly. "You wear new clothes and take oath. But when you fall flat, like in Bihar, suddenly the voter list becomes a problem. These double standards will not fly." He defended the government's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, arguing that its purpose was to update the lists and remove ineligible or illegal entries. He accused the Opposition of resisting the exercise to "ensure illegal immigrants remain on voter lists."

The Opposition vehemently rejected this claim, arguing that their objections stem from a lack of transparency in EVM architecture and discrepancies in voter databases.

### Opposition Walks Out; Gandhi Slams "Non-Answers"

As Shah continued to speak, Opposition MPs—led by the Congress—staged a dramatic walkout. Outside Parliament, Gandhi told reporters that the Home Minister had delivered "a defensive speech" and failed to address any of the substantive issues raised by the Opposition.

"He did not speak about transparent voter lists, he did not clarify concerns regarding EVM architecture, and he ignored the solid evidence we placed in our press conferences," Gandhi said. "Instead, he indulged in diversions and personal attacks."

The heated exchange underscored the widening gulf between the government and the Opposition on electoral reforms—an issue likely to dominate political discourse in the months ahead, as the nation braces for upcoming elections.

# Goa Nightclub Inferno Probe Reveals Escape Trail, Fake SIM, Missing Luxury Cars



In a significant development in the ongoing investigation into the December 6 nightclub inferno in Goa — a tragedy that claimed at least 25 lives — authorities have uncovered evidence suggesting that two of the establishment's owners attempted to flee the country even as rescue efforts were underway.

According to investigators, brothers Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, co-owners of Birch by Romeo Lane in Arpora, logged into the MakeMyTrip booking platform at 1:17 AM on December 7, a time when firefighters and police teams were still battling the blaze and searching for trapped victims. Records indicate the duo swiftly booked tickets and later boarded IndiGo flight 6E 1073 from Delhi to Phuket, departing at 5:30 AM the same morning — less than five hours after the fire was first reported.

The brothers' flight to Thailand has raised serious concerns about deliberate evasion. An active Interpol Blue Corner Notice remains in place to track their movements abroad. Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the Rohini Court in Delhi heard a transit anticipatory bail plea filed by the Luthras. Their petition sought four weeks' protection from arrest and interim relief to facilitate their return to India without being taken into immediate custody.

While the Luthras remain abroad, law enforcement has made progress in detaining another co-owner. Ajay Gupta, one of the four partners of the nightclub, was produced before a Delhi magistrate after being traced by Goa Police. Gupta had earlier been declared missing, prompting the issuance of a Look Out Circular (LOC) when police failed to locate him at his residence. After undergoing a medical examination, Gupta will be transported to Goa for formal arrest and questioning.

Authorities have also expanded their search for a fourth co-owner, Surinder Kumar Khosla, a British national who is currently under an LOC. Officials believe his cooperation will be crucial to reconstructing the events leading up to the blaze and understanding discrepancies in the nightclub's operations.

New revelations have surfaced regarding a mobile number used by the Luthra brothers. Investigators discovered that the SIM card associated with their communications was registered in the name of Ram Hari Singh, a former driver employed by the family. When an NDTV team visited the address linked to the number, Singh was absent. Later reached by phone, Singh confirmed that he worked as a driver for Saurabh Luthra for two years before being dismissed during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown. He stated he has had no contact with the family since then and had no knowledge that any SIM card was issued using his identity.

Further suspicions have arisen over the Luthras' vehicles. Sources indicate the brothers owned three cars until 2020, but by the time of their escape, they were believed to possess over four luxury cars — all of which are now missing. Investigators are examining whether the vehicles were hidden or relocated deliberately prior to the brothers' departure for Thailand.

The family's recently confirmed, multi-crore residence in Goa presents a similar picture of abandonment. When police entered the property following the fire, it was found completely deserted except for a lone dog.

As the probe deepens, authorities are piecing together what increasingly appears to be a coordinated effort to evade accountability. The Goa Police, bolstered by central agencies, continue to pursue all leads as pressure mounts to bring the fugitives back to India and deliver justice to the victims of one of the state's deadliest nightclub tragedies.

# SUPREME COURT'S 30% WOMEN'S QUOTA FOR BAR COUNCILS WELCOMED, BUT COMPLIANCE FEARS LOOM



The Supreme Court's landmark direction mandating 30 percent reservation for women in State Bar Councils has been widely welcomed as a long-awaited reform in the legal profession. However, despite the general optimism, several senior women advocates have raised concerns about whether State Bar Councils will fully comply with the spirit and letter of the order.

On Monday, the Supreme Court ordered that 30 percent of the seats in every State Bar Council must be reserved for women. Of these, 20 percent will be filled through direct elections, while 10 percent may be filled through co-option, particularly where the number of eligible candidates is insufficient. The Court also directed that councils must proactively submit co-option proposals when required.

The move is being hailed as a significant push toward gender equity in legal governance structures, long criticised for being dominated by entrenched male leadership. Yet, legal experts warn that without strict monitoring, the reform may remain symbolic.

Advocate Yogamay MG, one of the petitioners, expressed cautious optimism. She warned that there is a real risk of the directive being diluted or delayed by councils reluctant to change existing power structures. "Some State Bar Councils may try to postpone elections or introduce procedural hurdles. There is a real risk of delay or dilution," she said.

She stressed that while the Bar Council of India (BCI) can coordinate the implementation, its "political nature and internal interests" may make it difficult for the BCI alone to ensure strict compliance. Yogamay suggested a joint monitoring mechanism—with periodic compliance reports submitted to the Supreme Court, and the BCI handling the execution—to maintain uniformity and prevent delays across states.

Senior Advocate Mahalakshmi Pavani outlined other practical challenges: the possibility of token co-option, the uneven distribution of women lawyers across states, and potential resistance from entrenched power groups within the legal community. She emphasised the need for "robust implementation" and urged the BCI to take proactive steps. "This order is a powerful key; now the lock must be turned," she said, expressing faith in the leadership of the BCI.

Meanwhile, Advocate Pragya Baghel, Secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), raised the issue of social perception and potential backlash. "People may think you came only via reservation," she said, pointing to the prejudices women may face even after earning elected positions.

Responding to concerns that reservations might inadvertently place unprepared candidates in leadership roles, Dr. Charu Mathur, counsel for the petitioners, said the reform opens long-denied doors. "Women will be more resilient—and at least the doors are now open," she said.

However, Senior Advocate Nandini Gore, a partner at Karanjawala & Co and a prominent advocate for women's welfare in the judiciary, voiced a different concern: the possible emergence of proxy candidates. She warned that powerful members of the Bar may push their wives, daughters, or relatives to occupy the reserved seats merely to retain influence. "If such a situation arises, it would reduce these elected women to mere puppets," she cautioned. Yet, she expressed hope that the profession would rise above such manipulation.

While the Supreme Court's order marks a transformative moment, advocates underline that its success lies not just in legislation but in transparent implementation, strict timelines, and active monitoring. Whether Bar Councils will rise to the challenge remains an important question for the future of gender equity in the legal profession.

# MODI-RAHUL'S MEETING TRIGGERS BUZZ; ITS ON CIC APPOINTMENTS



An unusually long 88-minute meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Thursday sparked intense speculation across Parliament, currently in session for the Winter sittings. The interaction, originally scheduled to discuss the appointment of a new Chief Information Commissioner (CIC), extended well beyond the expected duration, leaving MPs curious about whether the discussion broadened into other political matters.

As per the Right to Information (RTI) Act, appointments to the Central Information Commission, Election Commission, and certain Vigilance posts are decided by a high-level committee consisting of the Prime Minister, one Union minister nominated by him, and the Leader of the Opposition. For this meeting, Union Home Minister Amit Shah was the nominated minister.

Rahul Gandhi arrived at the Prime Minister's Office at 1 pm, and the meeting began shortly after at 1:07 pm. As the clock ticked past an hour, murmurs began spreading through both Houses of Parliament.

These selection meetings are typically brief, usually lasting not more than 20 to 30 minutes.

When Gandhi exited the meeting after nearly an hour and a half, it was confirmed that the deliberations went beyond the CIC position. The committee had also discussed the appointments of eight Information Commissioners and one Vigilance Commissioner — a significant number given the current staffing crisis within the Central Information Commission.

Sources later indicated that Rahul Gandhi objected to all the recommended appointments, and submitted his objections in writing. Such objections, however, are not unprecedented. Opposition representatives, including Mallikarjun Kharge and Gandhi himself in earlier years, have routinely recorded their dissent on grounds of transparency and suitability.

The Central Information Commission is currently functioning with severe resource shortages. Since the retirement of Chief Information Commissioner Hiralal Samariya on September 13, the CIC has been without a chief. Only two Information Commissioners — Anandi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari — remain on duty, resulting in a heavy backlog of cases.

According to official figures on the CIC website, the commission is currently burdened with 30,838 pending appeals and complaints, a number that has been rising steadily due to vacant positions. Information Commissioners play a critical role in enforcing the RTI Act, and delays in hearings have slowed down the flow of information to citizens.

Under Section 12(3) of the RTI Act, the committee chaired by the Prime Minister is responsible for recommending names for appointment as the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners. Once selected, the names are forwarded to the President for approval.

Although sources close to the government maintain that the 88-minute discussion stayed within the defined agenda of appointments, the unusually long meeting gave rise to speculation among MPs and observers. With Parliament witnessing heated exchanges over electoral reforms, institutional appointments, and accountability, many wondered whether the leaders also touched upon the ongoing controversies surrounding electoral processes.

Neither the PMO nor the Congress issued any additional comment on the meeting's content.

With the Winter Session entering a critical phase, the prolonged Modi–Rahul meeting — coupled with Gandhi's written objections — has added a new layer of political intrigue to an already tense parliamentary atmosphere.

## María Corina Machado's Daughter Accepts Nobel Peace Prize Amid Secrecy Over Opposition Leader's Whereabouts

Amid intense speculation and uncertainty, the daughter of Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado accepted the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize on her mother's behalf during a deeply emotional ceremony in Oslo on Wednesday. Machado, who has spent the past two years in hiding following Venezuela's disputed 2024 presidential election, was unable to attend despite earlier indications she would travel to Norway.

Machado was honoured for "her struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy" in Venezuela. The Nobel Institute confirmed she is "safe" and expected to arrive in Oslo later on Wednesday night or early Thursday morning—too late to participate in the ceremony.

Her daughter, Ana Corina Sosa, delivered a powerful speech to a packed hall that included members of Norway's royal family. At the start of her address, Sosa reflected on the personal toll of her mother's absence, describing the pain of not having seen her for two years. "As I wait for the moment to hug her, to kiss her, to embrace her… I think of the other daughters and sons who do not get to see their mothers," she said, her voice breaking.

Sosa then read the Nobel lecture written by Machado, who has remained a symbol of defiance in the face of Nicolás Maduro's government. The speech expressed profound hope for Venezuela's future. "Venezuelans will hug again. Fall in love again. Hear our streets fill with laughter and music," Sosa read. "All the simple joys the world takes for granted will be ours… Because in the end, our journey towards freedom has always lived inside us. We are returning to ourselves. We are returning home."

The audience responded with a standing ovation, reflecting the global solidarity Machado's struggle has inspired.

Machado has been in hiding since July 2024, when she rejected the results of Venezuela's presidential election—an election widely condemned as fraudulent both domestically and internationally. After Maduro claimed victory, nationwide protests erupted, resulting in the arrest of around 2,000 people, including many from Machado's opposition coalition. Facing the threat of detainment herself, Machado disappeared from public view but continued to give interviews and share messages online, urging her supporters not to give up.

Her last public appearance was in January, when she spoke at a rally denouncing Maduro's swearing-in for a third term. Her family—including two of her children and her mother—are already in Oslo, anxiously awaiting reunion after years of forced separation.

Speculation about her ability to attend the Nobel ceremony had intensified in recent months, especially amid reports that she faced a travel ban. In an audio recording shared by the Nobel Institute prior to the ceremony, Machado declared: "I will be in Oslo, I am on my way." But the secrecy surrounding her movements remained absolute. Nobel officials admitted they had no information about her precise whereabouts earlier in the day.

How Machado managed to leave her hiding place and travel toward Europe also remains unknown. Her supporters hope that her eventual arrival in Oslo will mark the beginning of renewed international pressure on the Maduro government.

For now, her Nobel Prize—accepted by her daughter—has injected fresh momentum into Venezuela's pro-democracy movement and reminded the world of the personal cost borne by those resisting authoritarian rule.

## South Korea Protests After Chinese and Russian Warplanes Enter Its Air Defence Zone

South Korea has lodged formal complaints with the Chinese and Russian defence attaches in Seoul after warplanes from both countries briefly entered its Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) on Tuesday. The incursion involved seven Russian and two Chinese military aircraft, prompting Seoul to scramble fighter jets as a precaution, though the planes did not violate South Korea's sovereign airspace, officials said.

According to South Korea's Ministry of Defence, its jets were deployed to "take tactical measures in preparation for any emergencies" after the foreign aircraft entered the zone. While some countries require foreign planes to identify themselves in their ADIZ, these zones are not considered sovereign airspace under international law.

The Russian aircraft entered the ADIZ near Ulleung Island and Dokdo, while the Chinese planes approached near Ieodo, a submerged rock off the South Korean island of Jeju, according to a Joint Chiefs of Staff official cited by South Korean media. Both sets of aircraft later regrouped near Japan's Tsushima Island.

"Our military will actively respond to aircraft activities from neighbouring countries in the Kadiz in compliance with international law," South Korea's defence ministry said on Wednesday when lodging the complaints.

The incident comes amid ongoing tensions over territorial claims in the region. Both South Korea and Japan claim sovereignty over Dokdo, and Ieodo is a point of contention between Seoul and Beijing. These islands have repeatedly been flashpoints for diplomatic and military friction, particularly as nations establish overlapping ADIZs.

China confirmed the deployment, describing it as part of a joint patrol with Russia in the East China Sea and Western Pacific airspace. A national defence spokesman in Beijing said the exercise was part of an "annual cooperation plan" between Moscow and Beijing to address regional challenges and maintain regional peace and stability.

Such ADIZ incursions are not unprecedented. Since 2019, both Chinese and Russian military aircraft have entered South Korea's ADIZ without prior or notification, often during joint exercises. Russia has consistently stated that it does not recognize South Korea's ADIZ, describing it as unilaterally established and asserting that it does not create legal obligations for other nations.

In March this year, South Korea also deployed fighter jets after several Russian aircraft flew into the ADIZ near Dokdo and Ulleung Island, highlighting the recurrent nature of these airspace tensions.

The issue underscores broader security challenges in Northeast Asia, where overlapping ADIZs and territorial disputes have become a feature of regional geopolitics. South Korea maintains that while foreign aircraft can traverse the ADIZ, notification and identification procedures are essential for preventing miscalculations.

Experts say such patrols by Russia and China serve multiple purposes: demonstrating military presence, testing South Korea's response, and signaling regional influence in the East China Sea and Western Pacific. With both nations increasingly cooperating on joint exercises, Seoul has stressed vigilance, while urging adherence to international norms to avoid escalation.
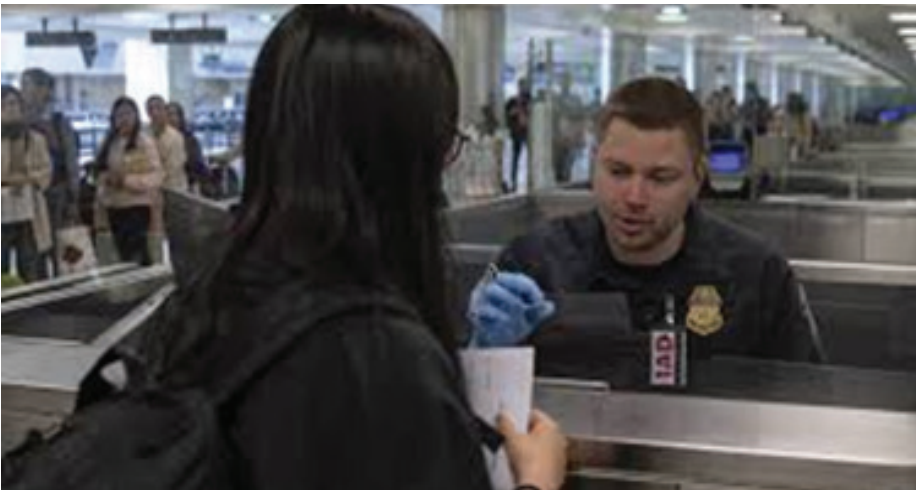
The Ministry of Defence emphasized that South Korea's responses remain defensive, and that the country is committed to monitoring and regulating its ADIZ in accordance with international law.

# US MAY REQUIRE TOURISTS TO SUBMIT FIVE-YEAR SOCIAL MEDIA HISTORY UNDER NEW PROPOSAL

In a move that could significantly reshape international travel to the United States, American authorities have proposed requiring tourists from dozens of countries—including the UK—to submit five years' worth of social media history as a condition for entry. The proposal, unveiled by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), would apply to travellers eligible for visa-free entry under the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

The measure comes as President Donald Trump's administration intensifies efforts to tighten US borders, citing national security concerns. Analysts, however, caution that the plan could create new barriers for visitors, raise privacy concerns, and potentially harm travellers' digital rights.

Under the proposal, ESTA applicants would be required to disclose social media identifiers used over the past five years. Additional information requested would include telephone numbers used over the last five years, email addresses used over the last ten years, and expanded details about family members. The proposal did not specify which platforms or additional account information travellers might need to provide.

Currently, the ESTA requires limited biographical data and a $40 fee, allowing multiple entries into the US over a two-year period. The programme is available to citizens of approximately 40 nations, including the UK, Ireland, France, Japan, and Australia.

The policy shift is framed in reference to a January executive order titled "Protecting the United States From Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats." The Trump administration has already implemented similar social media disclosure requirements for applicants seeking student visas and H1B visas for skilled workers.

A State Department official defended the expanded scrutiny, stating that Americans expect their government to "make every effort to make our country safer." Visa-screening officers have been instructed to identify individuals who may support designated terrorist groups or engage in unlawful extremist activity.

The proposed change comes at a time when the United States anticipates a surge in international visitors for the 2026 FIFA World Cup—co-hosted with Mexico and Canada—and the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Yet experts warn the new requirements could slow ESTA approvals and discourage travel.

Sophia Cope of the Electronic Frontier Foundation criticised the plan, arguing it could "exacerbate civil liberties harms" and create disproportionate risks for travellers with politically sensitive online histories. Immigration law firm Fragomen cautioned that the proposal may lead to increased processing times and administrative burdens.

The measure also follows a broader tightening of US immigration and travel controls. Officials have recently signaled that the current travel ban affecting 19 countries across Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean may be expanded. That announcement came shortly after a shooting incident in Washington DC in which an Afghan national was identified as a suspect.

Travel industry analysts say such policies have already dampened tourism. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, the US is the only economy among 184 surveyed expected to witness a decline in international visitor spending in 2025. Fallout from trade tensions has also been felt, with many Canadians boycotting US travel in protest of Trump-era tariffs. October marked the tenth consecutive month of declining Canadian travel to the US; historically, Canadians have accounted for nearly a quarter of all foreign visitors, spending over $20 billion annually.

The proposal will remain open for public comment for 60 days before a decision is finalised.

## European Sperm Donor With Hidden Cancer Gene Mutation Fathered Nearly 200 Children, Investigation Reveals

Tensions flared once again along the Thailand-Cambodia border on Monday, forcing thousands of residents on both sides to evacuate as fresh clashes left at least five people dead. Both nations have blamed each other for initiating the violence, marking the most serious confrontation since a ceasefire agreement was reached in July.

Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul stressed that his country "never wanted violence" but pledged to use "necessary means to preserve its sovereignty." Meanwhile, Cambodia's former leader Hun Sen accused Thai "invaders" of provoking retaliation. Since May, rising tensions between the neighbours have claimed over 40 lives, disrupted daily life, and prompted import bans and travel restrictions.

The Thai army reported responding to Cambodian fire in Ubon Ratchathani Province, including air strikes along the disputed border. Cambodia's Defence ministry, however, asserted that Thai forces initiated the attack in Preah Vihear province. The Monday fighting reportedly killed at least one Thai soldier and four Cambodian civilians, leaving about a dozen others wounded.
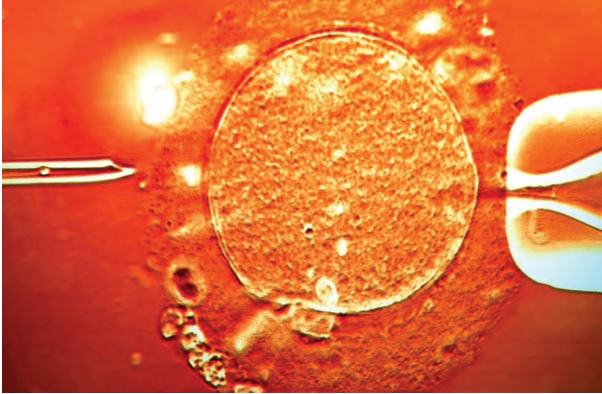
Beyond the immediate casualties, the border clashes have taken a heavy toll on children living in affected areas. Thai teacher Siksaka Pongsuwan highlighted the hidden victims of the conflict: children whose education and daily routines are repeatedly interrupted. Nearly 650 schools across five Thai provinces were ordered to close on Monday for safety reasons, while chaotic scenes were also reported at schools in Cambodian border provinces as parents rushed to take their children home.

This is not the first disruption for children in the region. In July, during critical examinations, five days of intense fighting forced schools to shift to online classes, a solution that was not accessible to all students due to limited internet access and inadequate distribution of digital devices. Social media posts from Cambodian journalist Mech Dara depicted children fleeing schools and eating meals in underground bunkers, highlighting the profound psychological impact of the ongoing conflict.

Pongsuwan described the dilemma faced by local residents: whether to stay in their villages amid intermittent gunfire or evacuate in search of safety, knowing that either choice carries risk. "If you ask whether we're scared, yes we are… Should we leave? Will it really be safer? Or should we stay?" he said.

The current flare-up is part of a century-old territorial dispute over an 800-kilometer border that has roots dating back to the French colonial period in Cambodia. The conflict escalated in July when Cambodian forces launched a rocket barrage into Thailand, prompting Thai air strikes. Following days of fighting, the countries agreed to an "immediate and unconditional ceasefire," brokered by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

In October, a formal ceasefire ceremony was held in Malaysia, with former U.S. President Donald Trump present, where he hailed the agreement as a historic achievement. However, just two weeks later, Thailand suspended parts of the agreement after two of its soldiers were injured by a landmine near the border. Cambodia maintains that it remains committed to the ceasefire, while the cycle of violence continues to threaten lives and disrupt communities along the contested border.

As the latest clashes demonstrate, resolving the long-standing border dispute remains a complex challenge, with civilians — particularly children — bearing the brunt of the conflict. The situation underscores the urgent need for renewed dialogue and robust mechanisms to protect vulnerable populations amid ongoing tensions.

## Australia Enforces World's Strictest Social Media Ban for Children Under 16

Australia's unprecedented social media ban for children officially came into force on Wednesday, leaving many teenagers waking up to find their accounts disabled—while others boast they have already slipped past the new restrictions. The world-first law requires platforms including Meta, TikTok and YouTube to take "reasonable steps" to ensure no Australian under the age of 16 can hold an account, even with parental consent.

The Albanese government argues the sweeping ban is essential to shield young people from harmful content, predatory algorithms and escalating online risks. Supporters say the policy marks a historic moment in global online safety reform. Critics warn it is unworkable, easily bypassed and could isolate vulnerable teenagers who rely on digital spaces for support.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, calling the day "one of the proudest of my leadership," said Australia was leading a global movement to rein in tech giants. "This is Australia showing enough is enough," he declared, flanked by parents, advocates and media figures who helped champion the reform. "I think this will stand alongside the other great reforms Australia has led the world on."

Countries from Denmark and Malaysia to Greece, Singapore and Brazil are monitoring the Australian rollout closely, as governments worldwide debate how to curb online harms without cutting off digital access.

Under the new law, ten major platforms—among them Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube and Snapchat—are the first to fall under mandatory age restrictions. Others have been warned they will be added soon. Social media firms, not parents or children, face liability, with fines reaching up to A$49.5 million (US$33 million) for serious breaches.

Online Safety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant said compliance checks begin Thursday. "Tomorrow, I will issue information notices to the 10 major platforms," she said, adding that preliminary findings on how platforms are implementing age limits will be published before Christmas.

Across Australia, there is widespread agreement that social media giants have failed to protect children from harmful content, cyberbullying and exploitation. Supporters of the ban include parents, clinicians and students like 12-year-old Tasmanian schoolgirl Florence "Flossie" Brodribb, who said the ban would give children a healthier environment. "Our brains are going through one of the biggest rewiring periods of our lives… Social media is designed to take advantage of that," she said. "Young people deserve better."

But among teenagers, the reaction is far more negative. Many argue the ban removes their primary means of connection, especially for those who are LGBTQ+, neurodivergent or living in remote areas.

"My closest friend is 30km away, and the next is over 100km," said 15-year-old Breanna. "When our Snapchat is taken away, so is our communication."

Experts also warn the policy may push teenagers towards riskier online spaces or incentivise them to bypass age checks through VPNs, fake IDs or alternative platforms. Some parents say education and better moderation would have been more effective.

Sydney father-of-two Ian expressed the ambivalence felt by many adults: "There's a good idea behind it… But is this the right way to go about it? I'm not sure."

# Adani Green Sees Rs 2,778 Crore Block Deal; Institutional Investors Scoop Up Shares



Mumbai: Adani Green Energy witnessed a significant block deal worth Rs 2,778 crore on Wednesday, executed at Rs 970 per share, marking one of the largest secondary transactions in the renewable energy sector in recent months. The shares were sold by TotalEnergies Renewables, which offloaded approximately 2.86 crore shares.

The entire block was absorbed by a diverse mix of institutional investors, mutual funds, family offices, and high-net-worth individuals, reflecting sustained investor interest in the Indian renewable energy space.

Among the major buyers, Quant Mutual Fund emerged as the largest purchaser, acquiring 1.23 crore shares. Other notable buyers included BNP Paribas Financial Markets, which picked up 15.49 lakh shares, Vanguard Emerging Markets Index Fund with 10.18 lakh shares, and Edelweiss Mutual Fund, which added 10.30 lakh shares to its portfolio.

The deal underscores the strong institutional appetite for renewable energy companies, particularly those with robust project pipelines and international collaborations. Adani Green, a key player in India's renewable energy sector, has been expanding rapidly, with an emphasis on solar and wind power projects across the country.

Market analysts noted that the transaction reflects confidence in Adani Green's long-term growth prospects despite broader market volatility. "The absorption of this large block by high-quality institutional investors is a positive signal for the sector," said Anil Kumar, equity analyst at Prudent Capital. "It indicates that funds are willing to back renewable energy leaders that have strong execution capabilities and stable cash flows."

TotalEnergies' decision to sell the stake is seen as part of its strategic portfolio management, allowing the firm to reallocate capital to other international energy projects while still maintaining a long-term partnership with Adani Green. The French energy major had been a shareholder in Adani Green as part of its global renewable energy investments.

The deal comes amid a broader surge in institutional participation in India's renewable energy sector, driven by favorable government policies, increasing demand for green energy, and the country's ambitious net-zero targets by 2070. Mutual funds and global investors have been actively seeking exposure to Indian renewable energy companies, attracted by policy stability, strong growth potential, and long-term contracts.

Shares of Adani Green reacted positively in the early trade on Wednesday, reflecting investor confidence following the block deal. Market participants noted that liquidity from such large block deals can improve the stock's trading profile and attract further institutional attention.

With this transaction, Adani Green strengthens its position in the market as one of India's leading renewable energy companies, backed by both domestic and international institutional investors. Analysts believe continued strategic partnerships and robust project execution could further enhance shareholder value in the medium to long term.

As India accelerates its transition toward renewable energy, block deals like this highlight the increasing role of institutional investors in supporting sustainable infrastructure while participating in one of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy.

# Federal Reserve Set for Third Rate Cut, But Future Moves Uncertain Amid Division

Washington, D.C.: Federal Reserve officials are widely expected to implement a third consecutive interest-rate cut on Wednesday, but signs point to this potentially being the last reduction for the near term. The US central bank faces internal divisions over the trajectory of monetary policy, driven by lingering inflation concerns and the risks of over-stimulating the economy.

Over the past 15 months, the Fed has cut its benchmark interest rate by a cumulative 1.5 percentage points, with two reductions coming this autumn alone. While these cuts were designed to support economic activity amid slowing growth, officials now caution that further reductions could push rates below a neutral level—the point at which monetary policy neither accelerates nor restrains economic expansion.

Several Fed policymakers have expressed the view that current rates are already close to neutral, raising concerns that additional cuts could overheat the economy or exacerbate inflationary pressures. These differences are expected to produce a split decision at Wednesday's meeting, with analysts predicting as many as three dissents in favor of holding rates steady.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell faces the delicate task of forging consensus among officials with opposing perspectives. Some members of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) believe the Fed remains slightly restrictive, while others see current policy as appropriately balanced. This divide is likely to make any clear forward guidance challenging, with Powell hesitant to signal further moves early next year.

Compounding the challenge is the absence of fresh economic data, a result of the recent government shutdown that lasted throughout October and much of November. Key statistics, including November labor market figures and inflation data, will not be released until December 16 and 18, respectively. Policymakers will
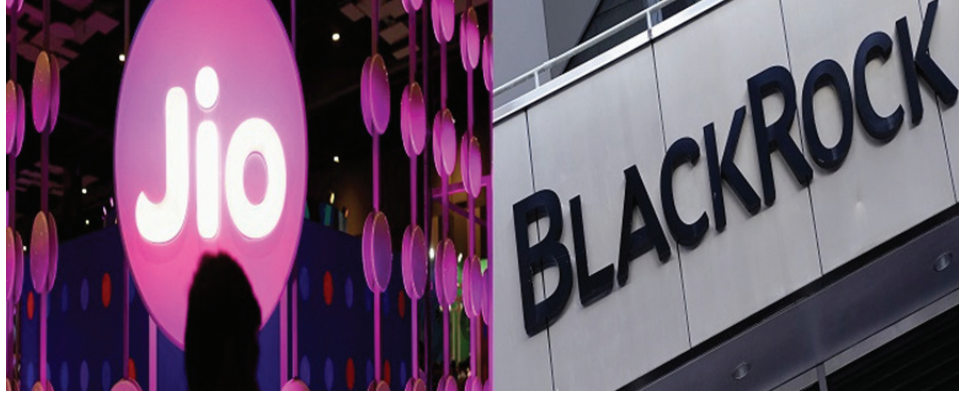


need to make decisions in the absence of current data, relying on older metrics and projections to guide policy.

"This leaves the Fed in this position of having to walk a fine line," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG. "They need to support the economy without overstimulating it, and the lack of timely data makes that an even more delicate balancing act."

Investors are watching closely, as the Fed's decisions have global ramifications, influencing currency markets, bond yields, and international capital flows. The prospect of a rate pause after Wednesday's meeting could affect expectations for the US dollar and impact emerging markets that rely on dollar-denominated capital.

Economists note that while a third cut is expected, any commitment to future reductions will likely be conditional on incoming economic data. Inflation trends, consumer spending, and employment figures will play a decisive role in shaping the Fed's approach in early 2026.

Powell's public statements following the meeting are anticipated to emphasize flexibility and caution, underscoring the Fed's focus on navigating a divided committee and a complex economic landscape. Market participants will also scrutinize the updated economic projections and the committee's "dot plot" forecasts, which indicate individual policymakers' expectations for future rate movements.

With inflation still above the Fed's target and economic growth showing signs of moderation, officials are expected to maintain a data-dependent approach, signaling that any further easing will be measured and contingent on evidence of slowing economic momentum.

# Jio Financial and BlackRock Pump Rs 229 Crore Each Into Digital Asset Management JV



Mumbai: Jio Financial Services and BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager, have jointly infused a total of Rs 458 crore into their 50:50 partnership, Jio BlackRock Asset Management, as the two companies step up efforts to establish a leading digital-first asset management platform in India.

Both partners subscribed to 22.9 crore shares each at a face value of Rs 10 per share, amounting to Rs 229 crore per entity through a rights issue. The c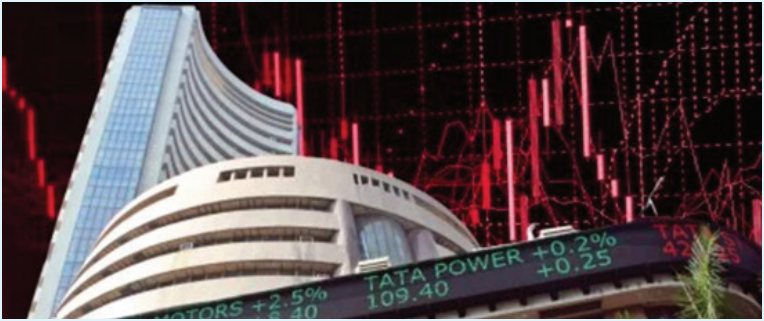apital infusion will primarily support the joint venture's business expansion, operational scaling, and technology-driven initiatives, positioning it to compete aggressively in the fast-growing Indian mutual fund and investment management sector.

The JV, formed in early 2024, is part of Jio Financial's broader ambition to leverage its digital ecosystem—which spans telecom, payments, and fintech services—to create a seamless platform for financial services. With BlackRock's global expertise in asset management, the partnership aims to provide Indian investors with a mix of international investment products and locally tailored solutions.

The infusion is also expected to help the JV accelerate product development, enhance distribution channels, and strengthen its digital infrastructure to serve retail and institutional clients efficiently. The focus will be on making investment management accessible, transparent, and cost-effective, leveraging Jio's vast customer base and digital touchpoints.

Speaking on the capital raise, a spokesperson for Jio Financial said: "This infusion reflects our commitment to building one of India's most ambitious digital-first asset management platforms. With BlackRock's deep global experience and our digital capabilities, we are well-positioned to offer innovative investment solutions to millions of Indian investors."

From BlackRock's side, the firm emphasized that the partnership with Jio is a strategic move to tap into India's rapidly growing financial services market, which is expected to witness exponential growth over the next decade. "We see significant potential in India's retail and institutional investor segments, and this JV allows us to combine BlackRock's investment expertise with Jio's digital reach," the firm said.

The Indian asset management sector has been experiencing strong inflows, driven by growing retail participation, rising financial literacy, and the adoption of digital platforms. Analysts note that digital-first platforms are gaining an edge by offering convenience, low costs, and personalized investment options, making the Jio-BlackRock venture a potentially formidable player.

This capital infusion marks a major milestone for the JV, enabling it to accelerate its roadmap and compete with established asset managers in India. By leveraging digital innovations and global investment strategies, Jio BlackRock Asset Management is poised to redefine how Indians invest, making wealth creation more accessible and technology-driven.

With this latest funding round, the JV signals its readiness to scale rapidly, expand its offerings, and set the stage for long-term growth in India's booming asset management landscape.

# Sensex Falls 275 Points; Meesho Debut Soars 53% Amid Market Volatility



Mumbai: The Indian stock market witnessed a broad-based decline on Wednesday, with the S&P BSE Sensex dropping 275 points (0.32%) to close at 84,391.27, while the NSE Nifty 50 slipped 82 points (0.32%), ending at 25,758. This marks the third consecutive session of losses, with both benchmark indices down roughly 1.6% over the past three trading sessions amid sustained foreign fund outflows and global economic uncertainties.

On the 30-share Sensex, Eternal, Trent, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, and Tech Mahindra emerged as the biggest laggards, shedding between 1% and 3%. Financial stocks, which form the backbone of the index, declined 0.5%, while the IT sector witnessed a sharper fall of 0.9%. The selling extended to the broader market, with small-cap and mid-cap indices retreating 0.9% and 1.1%, respectively, reflecting cautious investor sentiment.

Among sectoral movers, InterGlobe Aviation, the operator of IndiGo, tumbled 3.3% after the government instructed the airline to trim 10% of its scheduled flights, following over 2,000 cancellations last week due to operational disruptions. The directive weighed on aviation stocks, which have been under scrutiny for service reliability issues.

On the flip side, newly listed Meesho made a sensational market debut, surging 53% above its offer price. The e-commerce company's asset-light, zero-commission marketplace model was well-received by investors, underlining strong demand for growth-oriented technology stocks in India despite broader market weakness.

Market participants are also keeping a close eye on global cues, particularly the ongoing Federal Reserve meeting in the United States. While the Fed is widely expected to cut interest rates, analysts caution that policymakers remain divided on the path forward, adding to market uncertainty.

**Global markets presented a mixed picture on Wednesday:**

• Stoxx Europe 600 fell 0.2% as of 9:30 a.m. London time.
• S&P 500, Nasdaq 100, and Dow Jones futures were largely unchanged.
• MSCI Asia Pacific Index rose 0.2%, while MSCI Emerging Markets Index gained 0.3%, signaling selective optimism in the Asia-Pacific region.

Analysts noted that continued foreign portfolio outflows, coupled with concerns over a potential U.S.-India trade deal, have kept domestic markets on edge. "Investors remain cautious ahead of the Fed decision and are closely monitoring global economic signals. Mid- and small-cap stocks are particularly sensitive to external shocks," said Ramesh Iyer, Senior Analyst at Axis Securities.

Overall, the market displayed a risk-off sentiment, with investors preferring to lock in profits in high-flying IT and consumer stocks while allocating selectively to growth-oriented IPOs like Meesho. With global cues remaining uncertain and domestic headwinds such as foreign outflows and policy developments, analysts expect volatility to persist in the near term.

# DGCA Sets Up 8-Member Oversight Team to Monitor IndiGo Amid Crew Shortage Crisis



New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has intensified scrutiny on IndiGo, India's largest airline, by establishing an eight-member oversight team to closely monitor operations, following a surge in flight cancellations due to crew shortages.

The move comes after IndiGo, controlled by Rahul Bhatia, faced significant operational disruptions, with hundreds of flights delayed or canceled over the past week. Aviation safety regulators noted that crew unavailability had a cascading effect on the airline's schedule, affecting passengers and prompting safety concerns.

According to the DGCA order issued on Wednesday, the oversight team will comprise a Deputy Chief Flight Operations Inspector, senior Flight Operations Inspectors (FOIs), and two additional FOIs. Of these, two members will be stationed at IndiGo's corporate office daily to monitor critical operational metrics and ensure that the airline addresses staffing and scheduling challenges efficiently.

The team's mandate is comprehensive. They are tasked with reviewing IndiGo's total fleet, average stage length (distance traveled by an aircraft on one leg), pilot strength, network coverage, crew utilization in hours, and crew under training. Additionally, the oversight team will track flights per day, unplanned leave, total sectors affected due to crew shortages, and the availability of cockpit and cabin crew on standby at each base.

The DGCA's intervention signals growing regulatory concern about IndiGo's operational resilience, especially during peak travel periods. "The aim is to ensure that flight safety and passenger service standards are maintained while addressing systemic crew management issues," the order stated.

IndiGo has seen rapid expansion in recent years, emerging as the dominant carrier in India's domestic aviation sector. However, the airline has also faced challenges in retaining pilots and crew amid aggressive hiring and rising industry demand, leading to sporadic cancellations and operational bottlenecks.

Industry experts believe that the DGCA's oversight is a proactive step to prevent escalation of disruptions, particularly as the airline prepares for the busy holiday season. The regulators' presence at the corporate office will allow real-time monitoring of crew deployment and operational compliance, ensuring that any shortfall in resources is promptly addressed.

Passengers have already expressed frustration over delays and cancellations, and analysts say continued disruption could impact IndiGo's brand reputation and financial performance, especially given competition from other carriers in the market.

The DGCA has emphasized that safety remains the top priority and that oversight is meant to strengthen operational planning, not penalize the airline. The regulators will continue to monitor developments and may take further measures if systemic issues persist.

With this intervention, IndiGo will be under unprecedented regulatory supervision, highlighting the challenges of balancing rapid expansion with operational reliability in India's fast-growing aviation sector.

## Oppo Reno 15C Listed Online Ahead of Launch; Specifications, Colourways, and Variants Revealed



Oppo is gearing up to expand its Reno 15 lineup with the addition of the Oppo Reno 15C, which is now confirmed to debut in China this December. While the company initially teased the device during the unveiling of the Reno 15 series, it withheld detailed specifications at the time. Now, a new listing on a Chinese certification platform has revealed the handset's key features, design elements, and possible launch date.

According to a report by Gizmochina, the Oppo Reno 15C has surfaced on the China Telecom website with the model number PMD110, shedding light on its hardware and colour options. The listing suggests that the smartphone may go on sale in China starting December 19, although Oppo has not officially confirmed this launch date.

The Reno 15C is expected to feature a 6.59-inch display with a 1.5K (1,256 × 2,760 pixels) resolution, offering enhanced clarity compared to standard Full-HD+ panels. The screen is also tipped to support a 120Hz refresh rate, providing smooth scrolling and improved responsiveness, particularly beneficial for gaming and multimedia consumption.

In terms of optics, the smartphone could come equipped with a triple rear camera setup, comprising a 50-megapixel primary sensor, a 50-megapixel secondary sensor, and an 8-megapixel camera. For selfies and video calls, the listing indicates a powerful 50-megapixel front camera, positioning the Reno 15C as a compelling option for content creators and photography enthusiasts.

The China Telecom listing further reveals that Oppo plans to offer the Reno 15C in three colourways: Aurora Blue, Academy Blue, and Starlight Bow. These shades appear to cater to users seeking a stylish yet understated aesthetic. The device may arrive in two memory configurations—12GB RAM + 256GB storage and 12GB RAM + 512GB storage—giving users flexibility depending on their storage needs.

Performance-wise, the Reno 15C is listed with Qualcomm's Snapdragon 7 Gen 4 chipset, indicating a mid-range but capable processor designed to deliver solid multitasking and power efficiency. Recent leaks from industry tipsters also align with these details, suggesting that the phone will act as an "entry-level" option within the Reno 15 series, offering core Reno features at a more affordable price point.

On the design front, Oppo has teased a square-shaped rear camera module housing three lenses. The phone is also expected to sport the Oppo branding centered near the bottom of the back panel. Additional design cues include a USB Type-C port, speaker grille, and SIM card tray positioned at the bottom edge, as well as a sleek metal frame running along the sides.

With the expected launch just days away, anticipation continues to build as more details emerge. Oppo is likely to confirm the official specifications, pricing, and availability soon as part of its December lineup announcement. For now, the Reno 15C appears poised to strengthen Oppo's mid-range offerings with a balanced mix of performance, design, and camera capabilities.

## Google Pixel 10a Reportedly Passes Verizon Certification; Key Specifications Revealed Ahead of Launch



Google's upcoming mid-range smartphone, the Pixel 10a, appears to be inching closer to launch, following reports that the device has successfully passed Verizon's certification process. The development, shared by noted tipster Evan Blass (@evleaks), suggests that the Pixel 10a is now approved for use on the major US carrier's network—an indicator that the official debut may take place in the coming months. The certification has also revealed several important hardware details about the smartphone, which will succeed the Pixel 9a introduced in March.

According to the leaked documents, the Pixel 10a will retain much of the familiar design and functionality of its predecessor while offering enhancements in display, performance, and connectivity. The handset is said to feature a 6.3-inch full-HD+ AMOLED display with a dynamic refresh rate ranging from 60Hz to 120Hz. This marks an upgrade over earlier budget Pixel models that were limited to lower refresh rates. The panel is also rumoured to support a peak brightness of 2,000 nits, significantly boosting outdoor visibility and HDR performance.

In the camera department, Google appears to be sticking with the tried-and-tested dual-camera system. The Pixel 10a is tipped to come equipped with a 48-megapixel primary camera with an f/1.7 aperture, alongside a 13-megapixel ultrawide lens offering a 119.7-degree field of view and an f/2.2 aperture. For selfies and video calls, the device is expected to house a 13-megapixel front camera with an f/2.2 aperture. These specifications mirror those of the Pixel 9a, indicating Google's focus on refining computational photography rather than drastically altering hardware.

Under the hood, the Pixel 10a is expected to feature 8GB of RAM paired with 128GB of internal storage. Powering the device could be Google's in-house Tensor G4 chipset, which is also rumoured to appear in the more premium Pixel 10 series. This chipset is expected to improve performance efficiency and AI processing capabilities, strengthening Google's emphasis on on-device intelligence.

A standout aspect of the Pixel 10a is its sizeable 5,100mAh battery, which is expected to provide longer backup than its predecessor. The Verizon listing also confirms support for 5G and LTE Cat 19, ensuring robust connectivity across major networks. While details on charging speed were not revealed, the Pixel 10a is likely to follow Google's typical mid-range charging standards.

Design-wise, recent renders indicate that the Pixel 10a will adopt a similar aesthetic to the Pixel 9a, featuring Google's signature camera bar and a minimalist matte finish. Subtle refinements to ergonomics and build quality are expected but not confirmed.

One of the most significant expectations surrounding the Pixel 10a is Google's commitment to long-term software updates. Reports suggest that Google may offer up to seven years of software support, putting the device in line with the industry's growing focus on sustainability and longevity.

With its certification complete and leaks rapidly expanding, the Pixel 10a now appears poised for an imminent launch. More official details are expected to surface soon as Google prepares for its next wave of mid-range hardware releases.

# Realme Narzo 90 Series to Launch in India in Third Week of December; Key Specifications Confirmed



Realme is gearing up to expand its Narzo smartphone lineup in India with the launch of the Narzo 90 5G and Narzo 90x 5G in the third week of December. The company has already begun teasing the design of both smartphones, and ahead of the official launch, a dedicated microsite on Amazon has now confirmed several major specifications and features of the upcoming models. The Narzo 90 series will be available for purchase exclusively via Amazon.

One of the biggest highlights of the new series is the introduction of a massive 7,000mAh 'Titan Battery' on both handsets. Realme claims that the new battery design delivers superior durability along with extended backup, making the Narzo 90 lineup one of the most power-packed offerings in its segment. Both phones will also support 60W wired fast charging, ensuring quick top-ups. However, the standard Narzo 90 5G model will go a step further with additional features such as bypass charging and wired reverse charging, allowing users to charge other devices directly from the phone.

The Narzo 90 5G also appears to be positioned as the more rugged variant, boasting IP66, IP68, and IP69 ratings for dust and water resistance—an uncommon feature in its price category. Realme has also shared battery endurance claims for both models.

According to the company, the Narzo 90 5G can deliver up to 143.7 hours of music playback, 8.1 hours of gaming, 24 hours of online video streaming, and 28.2 hours of video calling on a single charge.

Meanwhile, the Narzo 90x 5G also promises strong longevity, offering 136.2 hours of music playback, 23.6 hours of online video playback, 27.7 hours of messaging, 61.3 hours of voice calling, and 17.1 hours of navigation. These numbers highlight Realme's clear focus on power efficiency and dependable all-day battery life.

Both smartphones will feature modern, hole-punch display designs. The Narzo 90 5G will come with an exceptionally bright panel capable of hitting 4,000 nits, one of the highest brightness levels in its category. The Narzo 90x 5G will sport a display with 1,200 nits peak brightness and a 144Hz high refresh rate, catering especially to gamers and users who prefer fluid scrolling.

In the camera department, both phones will be equipped with a 50-megapixel primary rear camera. Realme is also adding multiple AI-powered photography tools across the series, including AI Edit Genie, AI Editor, AI Eraser, and AI Ultra Clarity, designed to enhance image quality and simplify post-processing. While the Narzo 90 5G will feature a square triple-camera module, the Narzo 90x 5G will sport a rectangular dual-camera setup, giving each model a distinct design identity.

With powerful batteries, fast charging, enhanced AI features, and bright displays, the Realme Narzo 90 series is shaping up to be a compelling addition to the mid-range smartphone segment. As the launch date approaches, Realme is expected to reveal more details, including pricing and availability.

# Google Reportedly Testing Built-In AI Mode Inside Chrome for Seamless On-Browser Assistance



Google is reportedly experimenting with a major upgrade to its AI capabilities by integrating a new version of its AI Mode tool directly into the Chrome browser. The feature, spotted in the latest Chrome Canary build, appears to allow users to interact with Google's AI without opening a new Search page, marking a significant shift toward native, on-browser artificial intelligence integration.

According to a report by Windows Report, the revamped AI Mode opens as a "Contextual Tasks" page within Chrome itself. This suggests that the tool is running independently from Google Search, potentially signaling a future in which Chrome offers built-in AI assistance similar to emerging AI-first browsers. This internal interface can be accessed via a special Chrome address, confirming that the feature currently operates in a restricted testing environment.

In its upgraded form, AI Mode reportedly allows users to perform a variety of tasks directly within Chrome. These include typing queries, uploading PDFs or images, and receiving detailed responses—all within a single page. Users can also ask the AI to analyse webpage content, summarise documents, or answer contextual questions about what they are viewing. Unlike the previous version, which redirected users to Google Search results, this new interface contains the entire interaction inside the browser.

Testers also found additional functionality that doesn't appear in the Search-linked AI Mode. In one instance, when a user selected an open tab and asked AI Mode to summarise its content, the tool provided an accurate summary without opening a new tab or navigating to another website. This suggests Chrome's native AI can access active tabs directly, functioning similarly to AI browsers like Perplexity's Comet and ChatGPT Atlas, which are designed around AI-driven navigation and content understanding.

The report further claims that Google has included image generation capabilities in this internal AI build. Testers were able to generate images using models labeled Nano Banana or Nano Banana Pro, depending on whether the user holds a Google AI Pro or Ultra subscription. Even this feature runs entirely inside Chrome's internal AI page, without requiring access to Search or external applications.

While the full scope of AI Mode's capabilities is not yet known, the tool's expanding feature set suggests Google may be positioning Chrome to compete more directly with newer AI-powered browsers. With rival platforms offering integrated summarisation, context-aware assistance, and generative tools, Google's move indicates an effort to future-proof Chrome for an AI-first browsing experience.

Since the feature is currently available only within the Canary development build, it remains inaccessible to general users—including those on Chrome's beta channel. Google has not yet commented officially on the testing phase or its plans for a wider rollout.
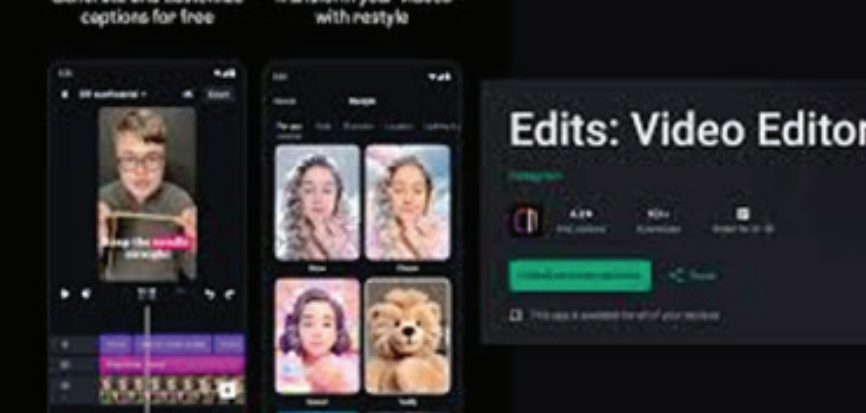
If brought to the stable version of Chrome, the new AI Mode could significantly enhance productivity for millions of users by providing AI-powered assistance natively, without the need for additional extensions or separate web pages.

# Instagram Rolls Out New Templates, Storyboards, and iOS Lock Screen Widget for Its Edits App



Instagram is expanding the capabilities of its standalone video creation app, Edits, with a fresh round of updates aimed at giving creators more control, creativity, and convenience. Launched earlier this year, the app has quickly evolved into a dedicated platform for crafting short-form videos, and the latest feature rollout reinforces Meta's focus on improving creator tools across its ecosystem.

According to a post shared by the Instagram Creators account on Threads, the Edits app now includes new video templates, enhanced customisation options, an intuitive storyboard feature, and an iOS lock screen widget. Several of these additions are already live for users in select countries, with more tools expected soon.

One of the biggest upgrades in the new update is the introduction of new templates that allow creators to build videos quickly using trending music, pre-arranged time clips, and fresh font styles. These templates are designed to help both new and experienced creators produce polished videos in minutes. Importantly, users can now share their own custom-made templates, enabling others to adopt or remix them. This feature is rolling out this week globally, though access to the full template library may vary by region.

Instagram also revealed that a dedicated templates section will appear in the app for some creators located in select countries, including the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. This curated section will showcase additional template styles and ideas. The company has not confirmed when or if these expanded template options will reach India, indicating that the rollout may remain geographically limited for now.

Another major addition is the new storyboard feature, which transforms idea stickies into structured visual planning boards. This tool will allow creators to map out their video flow using teleprompter cues, clip placeholders, and written notes. The feature is particularly valuable for creators who prefer to organise their content ahead of time or manage more complex video concepts.

The Edits app is also gaining deeper integration with Instagram's video ecosystem. Users can now import public Reels directly into their projects, enabling them to remix, react to, or modify these videos within Edits. Instagram noted that proper credit will always be given to original creators when their Reels are used, preserving attribution and respecting community guidelines.

To further enhance personalisation, the update includes new text editing features, such as the ability to add a secondary colour to the background or outline of text and captions. This allows creators to fine-tune the visual style of their videos with more precision.

For iOS users, Instagram is introducing a brand-new lock screen widget for Edits. With this widget, iPhone users can launch the Edits camera instantly or add sticky notes to the app directly from their lock screen, making spontaneous content creation more accessible than ever.

With these updates, Instagram aims to make Edits a more powerful and versatile tool, helping creators streamline their workflow while exploring new ways to express themselves.

# Shahid Afridi Backs Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, Says They Are Backbone of Indian ODI Team

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has come out strongly in support of Indian batting legends Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, dismissing calls to sideline them from the ODI side. Afridi emphasized that the duo forms the backbone of the Indian lineup and should continue playing until the 2027 World Cup, according to a report by Telecom Asia Sport on Monday.

Afridi praised the pair for their consistent performances in recent ODI series. "It's a fact that Virat and Rohit are the backbone of the Indian batting line-up, and the way they have played recently, it can confidently be said that they can play until the 2027 World Cup," he said.

He also suggested strategic resting of the stars in less challenging games to preserve them for major series. "You need to preserve both these stars, and when India is playing against a weaker team, they can try some new players and rest Virat and Rohit," Afridi added.

Afridi also criticized Indian head coach Gautam Gambhir, highlighting past on-field clashes. "The way Gautam started his stint, it looked like he thought that what he thinks and says is right, but after some time, it was proved that you are not always right," Afridi said.

Afridi was equally complimentary of Rohit Sharma's recent milestone, where he surpassed Afridi's own record for most sixes in ODI cricket. "During practice sessions,

hit his 355th six during the second ODI against South Africa at Raipur, breaking Afridi's record of 351 sixes in 398 matches. "Records are meant to be broken, and this too is now bettered. I am happy that a player whom I have always liked has broken this record," he said.

Reflecting on his early interactions with Rohit, Afridi recalled playing alongside him in the 2008 Indian Premier League for the Deccan Chargers.

I watched him bat, and his class impressed me. I knew that one day Rohit would play for India, and he has proved himself as a classy batter," he added.

Afridi's comments underscore the respect and admiration international players have for India's senior stars. With Kohli and Rohit still in prime form, Afridi's message is clear: these stalwarts are vital to India's ODI ambitions and their presence in the team should remain uninterrupted.

# Jitesh Sharma Credits Sanju Samson for Mentorship Ahead of India's T20I Victory Over South Africa

India's wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma opened up about his close bond with Sanju Samson after being named the first-choice wicketkeeper for the opening T20I against South Africa in Cuttack. Despite competing for the same spot, Jitesh described their relationship as warm, respectful, and rooted in mutual growth.

Speaking about Samson's influence, Jitesh said, "I am very grateful that he is in the team and I am under him. Frankly speaking, he is like an elder brother to me and I think because of healthy competition, your talent comes out. I think it's good for the team also."

Jitesh acknowledged the immense depth of talent in Indian cricket and stressed that he and Samson share the same goal of contributing to the team's success. "There is so much talent in the Indian team. You can feel it. Sanju Bhai is out and I am playing. He is a great player. One of the great players. If I have to compete with him, I have to play shoulder to shoulder and bring my A game," he added.

He further highlighted that their bond goes beyond competition. "I think we both are trying to play for India, not for other teams. We are like brothers. We share lots of experience with each other. He helps me a lot whenever I do keeping or batting. That's the thing," Jitesh noted.

Jitesh has been a regular in India's T20 setup since the third T20I against Australia during the tour Down Under.

On the field, India posted a formidable 175/6 after opting to bat first. Hardik Pandya starred with an unbeaten 59 off 28 balls, while Tilak Varma (26 off 32) and Axar Patel



(23 off 21) also contributed significantly. For South Africa, Lungi Ngidi was the pick of the bowlers with 3/31, supported by Lutho Sipmala (2/38).

Chasing 176, South Af-

rica never got going and were bundled out for 74 in 12.3 overs. Only Dewald Brevis offered resistance with 22 off 14 balls. India's bowling was led by Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep

Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, and Axar Patel, who took two wickets each, while Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube chipped in with one apiece.

The comprehensive win

gave India a 1-0 lead in the five-match T20I series, with Jitesh Sharma's partnership with Samson proving to be an important factor both on and off the field.

# Hardik Pandya's All-Round Heroics Lead India to 101-Run T20I Victory, Credits Girlfriend for Support



India's all-rounder Hardik Pandya starred with both bat and ball as the Men in Blue thrashed South Africa by 101 runs in the first T20 International of the five-match series on Tuesday at Cuttack.

Asked to bat first, India found themselves in a precarious position at 78/4 in the early overs. Pandya, however, played a blistering unbeaten 59 off just 28 balls, propelling India to a competitive 175/6 in 20 overs. Later, with the ball in hand, he chipped in with a crucial wicket, helping India bundle out the Proteas for a paltry 74 runs and seize a 1-0 lead in the series.

Following the match, Hardik took a heartfelt moment to acknowledge the role of his partner, Mahieka Sharma, in his life and career. In a video posted on BCCI. TV, he said, "A special mention to my partner. A lot of great things have happened; she's been nothing but the best to me ever since she came into my life."

He further added, "I think I have been a very honest and real person in my life, which has helped me a lot. I don't really sugarcoat anything. It's never about the other person or how others think—it's just about how I feel from inside."

Earlier, Hardik had expressed his anger on social media over paparazzi behavior towards Mahieka Sharma. He criticized photographers for crossing boundaries while capturing her in a Bandra restaurant, calling it "disrespectful and intrusive."

In an Instagram story, he wrote, "I understand that living in the public eye comes with attention and scrutiny—it's part of the life I've chosen. But today something happened that crossed a line. Mahieka was simply walking down a staircase when paps decided to capture her from an angle that no woman deserves to be photographed from. A private moment was turned into cheap sensationalism."

Hardik's performance not only showcased his on-field brilliance but also highlighted his commitment to personal values off the field, earning him praise from fans for both his cricketing exploits and his stand against invasive media behavior.

With India taking a 1-0 lead, the series continues with the second T20I, and all eyes will be on Pandya to see if he can maintain his all-round heroics against the Proteas.

# Smriti Mandhana Returns as India's Vice-Captain for T20I Series Against Sri Lanka



India's star batter Smriti Mandhana is back in action, ready to lead by example as she has been named vice-captain of the Indian women's T20I side for the upcoming series against Sri Lanka, beginning December 21. This series marks India's first bilateral contest since the Women's World Cup final on November 2, where Mandhana played a pivotal role in India's victorious campaign. Her inclusion as vice-captain signals not only her cricketing prowess but also the trust the team management places in her leadership abilities.

Mandhana, who has recently gone through a turbulent personal period, called off her marriage with music composer Palash Muchhal. Despite these challenges, she has quickly refocused on cricket, demonstrating remarkable resilience and dedication. On Wednesday, Mandhana reunited with India captain Harmanpreet Kaur at a public event, where she opened up about her mindset and motivation as a cricketer and leader.

"Well, to be fair, I mean, as Harman said, the love for the game, and I don't think I love anything in life more than cricket. When you go out to bat or represent your country, no other thoughts are there. Once you put on the Indian jersey, the only thing you want to do is represent India and win the match," Mandhana said, reflecting her unwavering focus.

She also spoke about the sense of responsibility that comes with wearing the Indian jersey. "The biggest motivation is that when you put on the jersey and India is written on it, you just keep all your problems aside and focus on the field. You have a responsibility as one among two billion people representing

your country. Just that thought is enough to give you razor-sharp focus and help you perform at your best," she added.

Mandhana also addressed team dynamics and disagreements, stressing that healthy debates are part of a winning environment. "I don't look at it as issues because everyone wants to win the game. Everyone has their own opinion on how we will win. If we don't have those discussions or arguments, it means we aren't passionate enough. Healthy disagreements show commitment to winning for the team," she explained. Her perspective highlights the importance of collaboration and communication within the squad, even when opinions differ.

Mandhana's role as vice-captain comes at a crucial time for Indian women's cricket. The team is transitioning from the high of the World Cup to preparing for upcoming international fixtures, and her experience, skill, and leadership are expected to play a pivotal role in guiding younger players. She is renowned for her aggressive batting style and ability to anchor innings, and her presence in the team provides both stability and inspiration.

Fans and analysts alike are eager to see Mandhana back on the field, combining her signature flair with leadership responsibilities. With the series against Sri Lanka, India aims to continue their winning momentum, and Mandhana's return strengthens both the team's batting lineup and its strategic depth. Her story of resilience and focus serves as a powerful example for aspiring cricketers and fans, emphasizing that dedication to one's sport can help overcome even personal challenges.

## Venkatesh Teams Up with Trivikram Srinivas for 'Aadarsha Kutumbam'; Shooting Begins



Veteran actor Venkatesh is all set to collaborate with director Trivikram Srinivas for the first time, and the upcoming family entertainer has been titled 'Aadarsha Kutumbam'. The makers officially announced the title as shooting for the film commenced on December 10. Produced by Suryadevara Radhakrishna under the banner of Harika and Hassine Creations, the film is slated for a summer 2026 release.

iven Trivikram's track record of delivering both critical and commercial hits, and Venkatesh's immense fan base, expectations are high.

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ns are excited to see Venkatesh bring the classic 'Aadarsha Kutumbam' title back to life, this time under the direction of Trivikram Srinivas.

## Sandeep Raj's 'Mowgli' to Release on December 13; Pre-Release Event Held in Hyderabad



Following the success of 'Color Photo', director Sandeep Raj is back with his new film 'Mowgli', starring Roshan Kanakala, Sakshi Madolkar, and Bandi Saroj Kumar in lead roles. The much-anticipated movie is set to release on December 13, and the makers hosted a pre-release event in Hyderabad on Wednesday night to mark the occasion.

During the event, Sandeep Raj addressed the audience and media, sharing an emotional note about his journey. He revealed that despite the success of his debut film, he had to stay at home and wait for the right opportunity to direct his second movie. His heartfelt words reflected both gratitude and the chal-

lenges faced in making 'Mowgli', emphasizing the persistence and patience required to bring the project to fruition.

The pre-release event also saw the presence of actor Rana, who attended as the chief guest. Rana expressed his best wishes to the team and hoped that the film would become a major success at the box office. His support added excitement to the event and highlighted the camaraderie within the Telugu film industry.

'Mowgli' is expected to appeal to audiences with its engaging storyline and performances. With a talented cast led by Roshan Kanakala, the film is being promoted as a compelling drama that combines emotion, suspense, and entertainment. The

makers have already generated buzz through teasers and promotional content, raising expectations among fans.

The pre-release event not only celebrated the upcoming release but also offered a platform for the team to connect with media and audiences, building anticipation ahead of the theatrical release. The emotional moments shared by Sandeep Raj, along with Rana's presence, made the evening memorable for everyone involved.

With its official release just around the corner, 'Mowgli' is poised to capture the attention of Telugu cinema lovers, and industry insiders are watching closely to see if it matches the success of Sandeep Raj's debut.

## Balayya's 'Akhanda-2' Finally Set for Release; New Teaser Out



After weeks of speculation and controversy, Balakrishna's 'Akhanda-2' is finally set to hit theaters. The makers have officially announced that the movie, the much-awaited sequel to the 2021 blockbuster 'Akhanda', will release on December 12. Directed by Boyapati Srinu, the film

had faced delays due to financial challenges, which have now been resolved, clearing the path for its theatrical release.

In anticipation of the release, the production team has dropped a new teaser, titled "Akhanda-2 Release Teaser", which has already generated excite-

ment among fans. The teaser showcases high-octane action sequences, dramatic moments, and glimpses of Balakrishna in his larger-than-life avatar, reaffirming the mass entertainer vibe that the Akhanda franchise is known for. It also highlights the supporting cast

and sets the stage for the intense storyline expected in the sequel.

The release of the teaser comes at a time when fans were eagerly waiting for updates after the prolonged delays. The earlier film, 'Akhanda', was a massive commercial success and established a

strong fan base for the protagonist, creating high expectations for the sequel. With the teaser's release, the makers aim to generate buzz and build anticipation ahead of the film hitting theaters.

The production team has confirmed that the movie will release across various theaters this Friday, allowing fans to experience the grandeur on the big screen. Advance bookings have already started in many regions, indicating a strong audience interest.

The filmmakers are confident that 'Akhanda-2' will match or even surpass the success of the first installment, thanks to its engaging storyline, action-packed sequences, and Balakrishna's powerful performance. The movie is expected to be a major box-office contender this holiday season, drawing audiences across all age groups.

Overall, the official announcement of the release date and the launch of the teaser have reignited excitement among fans, ensuring that Akhanda-2 will be one of the most anticipated films of the year in Tollywood.
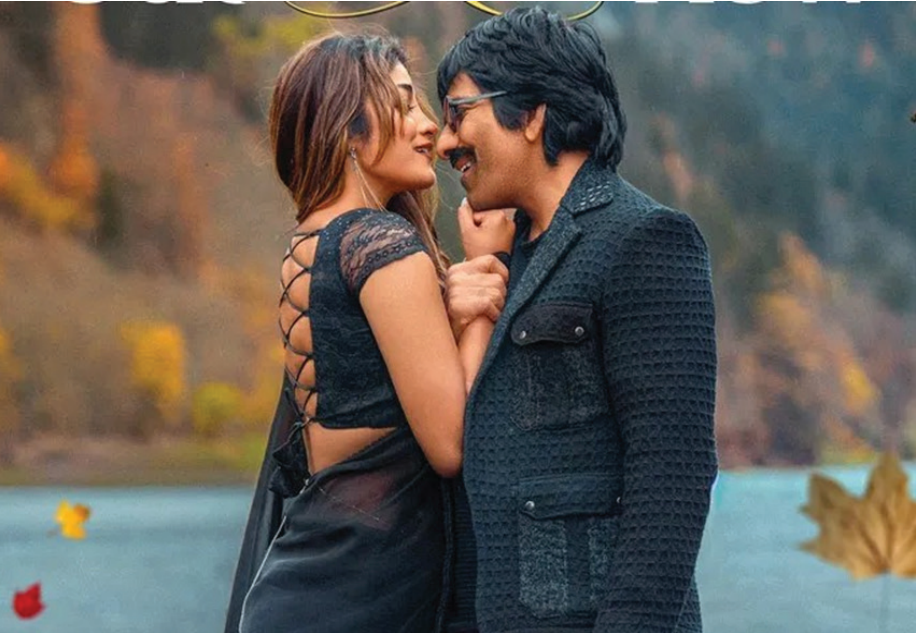
## Darling Prabhas' Most Awaited Film Set for January 9, 2026 Release

The excitement among fans of Darling Prabhas is reaching a fever pitch as his most anticipated film is slated to hit theaters on 9th January 2026. With the Sankranti season bringing multiple releases, expectations for this movie are running higher than for any other festive release this year, largely due to Prabhas' immense fan following.

The film promises to showcase Prabhas in a new avatar, combining his mass entertainer persona with elements of horror-comedy, a genre he has rarely explored in his recent projects. Audiences are particularly curious to see him in a lighter, more comedic role while still delivering the charisma and larger-than-life energy he is known for.

Industry experts predict that the fan base alone will drive impressive footfalls, making it a potential blockbuster of the Sankranti season. With a mix of suspense, comedy, and high-octane entertainment, the film aims to cater to a wide range of audiences, from die-hard Prabhas fans to family viewers seeking a fun holi-



day experience.

As the release date approaches, promotional activities and teasers have already created tremendous buzz online, with

fans eagerly counting down the days. The combination of Prabhas' star power, a fresh horror-comedy theme, and a festive release window has posi-

tioned the film as one of the most awaited releases of 2026.

All eyes are now on January 9, when theaters across the country will

welcome audiences for what promises to be a thrilling and entertaining cinematic experience with Prabhas at his entertaining best.

## Ravi Teja's New Movie Song Released from 'Mass Jathara'; Film to Release for Sankranti

Fans of Telugu cinema are in for a treat as Ravi Teja's upcoming movie, 'Mass Jathara', gears up for a grand release this Sankranti. Adding to the excitement, the makers have released a new song from the film, which has already begun creating a buzz among fans and music lovers.

The song, which features Ravi Teja in his signature energetic style, showcases high-octane action sequences and vibrant choreography, staying true to the mass entertainer persona that the actor is known for. The catchy tunes and engaging visuals have resonated well with audiences on social media, prompting fans to share and comment enthusiastically.

'Mass Jathara' is positioned as a Sankranti spe-



cial, a time when Telugu audiences flock to theaters to watch family-friendly blockbusters and festive

releases. The film promises a mix of action, comedy, and entertainment, a formula that has been a con-

sistent hallmark of Ravi Teja's career.

The makers of the film have been strategically re-

leasing songs and promotional content to build momentum ahead of the theatrical release. The latest song is expected to further increase anticipation and attract audiences to theaters during the holiday season.

Industry insiders say that 'Mass Jathara' has the potential to become one of the major festive blockbusters, thanks to Ravi Teja's massive fan following and the combination of high-energy music, colorful visuals, and entertaining storytelling.

As the countdown to Sankranti 2026 begins, fans are eagerly awaiting the release of 'Mass Jathara' and the remaining songs from the film. With the latest track already making waves, the movie is poised to make a strong impact at the box office.