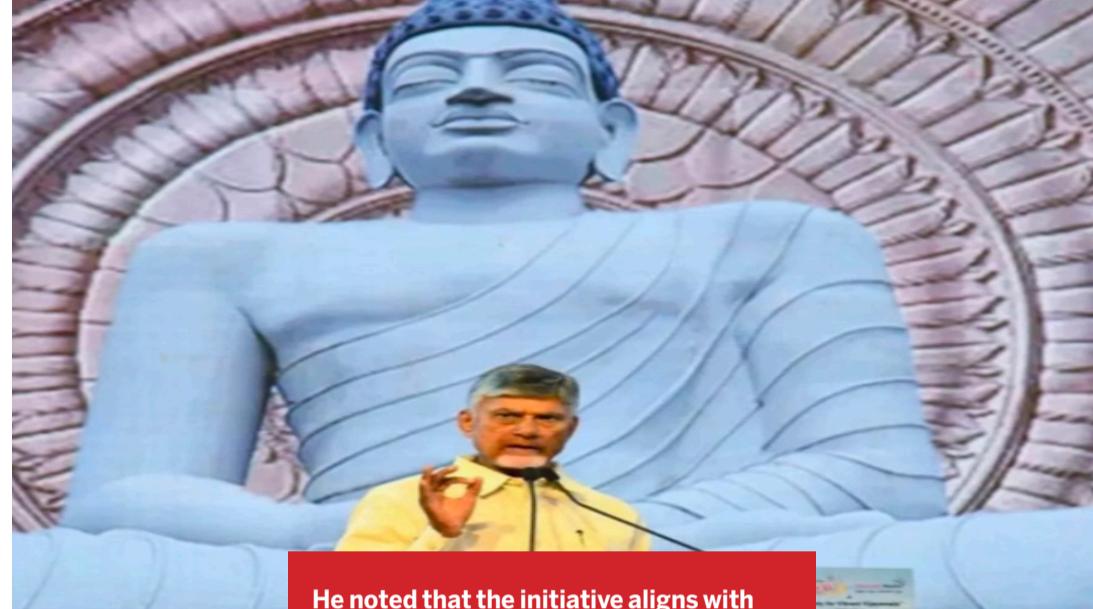


Amaravati Quantum Valley Must Emerge as Global Research Hub: CM Naidu

TPN Bureau |
December 11

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday emphasized that the proposed Amaravati Quantum Valley should transform into a global hub for research, innovation, and advanced technologies, reinforcing the state's ambition to position itself at the forefront of scientific progress. During a meeting in Amaravati, Naidu interacted with a delegation comprising leading academicians, researchers, and representatives from technology firms specializing in quantum computation, wet-lab sciences, and wearable quantum technologies.

The high-level group presented a detailed strategic roadmap for establishing India's first integrated quantum biomedical research ecosystem in the capital region. Highlighting the importance of synergizing science, technology, and entrepreneurship, the Chief Minister said the Amaravati Quantum Valley must serve as a foundation for next-generation breakthroughs in quantum science, artificial intelligence, and biotechology.



He noted that the initiative aligns with Andhra Pradesh's long-term vision to attract high-value research investments and create a knowledge-based economy. Naidu directed officials to extend complete institutional and infrastructural support for the project, including the development of advanced laboratories, data centers, and incubation spaces that can nurture startups and facilitate global collaborations.

They emphasized that their base. Experts from the delegation outlined how the proposed ecosystem could enable multidisciplinary research in quantum materials, biomedical devices, and neuro-computation, paving the way for innovations in healthcare, national security, and digital systems. They emphasized that

Andhra Pradesh's proactive governance and technology-driven policies make it an ideal destination for developing such a pioneering facility. Naidu further stated that Amaravati, envisioned as a "city of knowledge and innovation," must not remain limited to administrative functions but evolve into a center of scientific excellence.

The Chief Minister noted that the Amaravati Quantum Valley initiative would not only boost technological self-reliance but also enhance India's global standing in frontier sciences. He assured that the state government would fast-track necessary clearances and provide robust digital infrastructure to operationalize the project at the earliest.



TPN Bureau |
New Delhi, Dec 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday lauded the administration of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, calling it a "positive development" for the state and for the NDA alliance's governance model.

He also noted that the Centre has received encouraging feedback about the state's performance under the current leadership. The Prime Minister made these remarks at a breakfast meeting he hosted in New Delhi for the Members of Parliament of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Around 15 MPs attended the informal gathering, during which Modi is understood to have reviewed the political and developmental landscape in the southern states. According to reliable sources, Modi expressed satisfaction that Andhra Pradesh has been attracting a growing volume of investments in recent months, reflecting the state's improved policy environment and investor-friend-

ly approach.

"The direction in which Andhra Pradesh is moving under Chandrababu's stewardship is very encouraging," he was quoted as saying. The Prime Minister reportedly remarked that the synergy between the state government and the Centre is helping accelerate industrial growth and infrastructure development. However, Modi also conveyed his displeasure over what he described as the BJP's lack of assertiveness in Telangana. He told the MPs that the party should build a more proactive and visible presence in the state, especially as the main opposition appears weakened.

"Telangana is an opportunity that we are letting slip. Why is the party lagging behind when there is space to grow?" the Prime Minister is said to have asked, urging leaders to strengthen coordination at the grassroots level. The Prime Minister also discussed the ongoing political attacks from YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and his associates on social media.

He directed BJP MPs to effectively counter the narrative spread by opposition forces and

present the achievements of the NDA government more forcefully in public discourse. Modi emphasized that misinformation campaigns should not go unchallenged and that the party's communication teams must be more dynamic and responsive. In addition to state-level affairs, Modi urged Telugu-speaking MPs to play a more active role in national political debates and policy discussions.

He called on them to frequently visit other states, participate in public outreach initiatives, and engage with citizens to raise awareness about national issues. "Being active on the ground brings both credibility and confidence to our leadership," he reportedly told the MPs. The meeting comes at a time when the BJP is recalibrating its southern strategy, particularly after forming alliances with regional partners like the TDP in Andhra Pradesh.

Modi's observations are being viewed within party circles as a signal for greater coordination between the BJP and its regional allies while simultaneously strengthening its independent organizational base in the South.

PM Modi Pulls Up BJP MPs from Telugu States Over Poor Performance

TPN Bureau |
December 11

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reportedly expressed serious dissatisfaction with the performance of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Members of Parliament from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. During a recent dinner meeting specially hosted for the Telugu states' MPs, Modi is said to have issued stern warnings and clear directions on strengthening the party's presence in both states ahead of the upcoming elections.

According to highly placed sources, the Prime Minister's tone was firm despite the informal setting of the dinner. He is believed to have conveyed his displeasure particularly to the Telangana BJP MPs, questioning their inability to expand the party's reach despite having what he described as a "capable team." Modi reportedly told his Telangana colleagues that the state unit's performance has not matched expectations, and he emphasized the urgent need for unity, strategic coordination, and effective communication to boost the BJP's graph in the southern state.

One major area of concern raised by Modi, sources said, was the BJP MPs' weak presence on social media. He drew a sharp contrast with Hyderabad MP Asaduddin



Owaisi of the AIMIM, noting how Owaisi has successfully leveraged social media platforms to amplify his message and connect with voters. The Prime Minister advised his party MPs to become more tech-savvy and proactive in using social media as a political tool. He directed them to build stronger engagement with the public and promote the central government's schemes more aggressively at the grassroots level. Modi reportedly underlined that the coming elections in Telangana would be crucial and that the BJP must aim to capture power in the state "under any circumstances." He called for greater teamwork and more visibility at the constituency level, asserting that internal differences should not come in the way of expanding support among

various sections of society. The Prime Minister's message to the Andhra Pradesh MPs, though less severe, also carried a clear warning tone. He lauded Andhra Pradesh's growth rate and its progress in attracting investments but pointed out that the state BJP leaders were failing to capitalize on these developments politically. Modi is said to have asked why the party's MPs had not effectively countered the criticism being levelled against the central government and the BJP by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and others on social media and in public forums.

Interestingly, Modi is understood to have observed that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has never directly attacked the BJP or the NDA government. Instead, Reddy's political

CM Chandrababu Expresses Strong Displeasure Over Ministers' Delay at Cabinet Meeting



TPN Bureau | December 11

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat concluded earlier today, marked by a rare display of the Chief Minister's visible displeasure towards some of his cabinet colleagues. Sources present in the meeting revealed that the Chief Minister expressed serious dissatisfaction over the tardiness of certain ministers who arrived late for the crucial session. Naidu re-

portedly questioned their commitment to administrative discipline, remarking that lack of punctuality sends the wrong message about the government's work culture. "If ministers fail to respect time, how can the system function efficiently?" the Chief Minister questioned, according to insiders. Observers note that Naidu, known for his strict administrative style and emphasis on time management, has frequently reminded ministers and senior officers about maintaining decorum and efficiency in official duties. Today's re-

upcoming legislative session.

Minister for Information and Public Relations, Parthasarathi, is expected to brief the media on the Cabinet's decisions later in the afternoon. He is scheduled to hold a press conference at 3 p.m. to outline the measures approved during the meeting and provide official details of the discussions. Meanwhile, officials noted that the Chief Minister directed every department to ensure stricter adherence to timelines in implementation of government schemes. Naidu emphasized that the government must set an example in accountability and punctuality, particularly in the delivery of public services. Political analysts interpret this outburst as a reflection of the Chief Minister's determination to tighten governance standards and project administrative seriousness.

With the state's development agenda at a crucial stage, today's Cabinet session highlights the government's intent to maintain efficiency and discipline at all levels of administration.

Government Forms High-Level Committee to Strengthen Medical Services Under EHS Scheme



AP GO.147 Dt:27/04/2016
Further Extension of Employees Health scheme and Medical Reimbursement system w.e.f 01.04.2016 to

TPN Bureau | December 11

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh government has constituted a high-level committee to evaluate and enhance the medical services provided to state government employees under the Employees Health Scheme (EHS).

The initiative, ordered by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu,

aims to resolve existing operational issues in the scheme and ensure the delivery of efficient, transparent, and quality health services to employees and pensioners. According to official orders issued by Chief Secretary K. Vijayanand, the government has formed a seven-member committee to study the functioning of the EHS and submit comprehensive recommendations for improvement.

The Chief Secretary will serve as the committee's chairperson, ensuring inter-departmental coordination and administrative oversight. The committee also includes the Principal Secretaries of the General Administration Department (GAD), Finance Department, and Medical & Health Department as

members. Representing the employees, Andhra Pradesh Non-Gazetted Officers (APNGO) Association state president A. Vidhyasa and Andhra Pradesh Revenue Services Association president Bopparaju Venkateswarlu have been inducted as members.

In addition, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NTR Vaidya Seva Trust has been appointed

as both member and convener of the committee, providing operational input from the implementing agency. The committee has been tasked with undertaking a comprehensive review of the current EHS structure, identifying service delivery gaps, and recommending practical steps to improve patient experience.

It will focus on issues

such as empanelled hospital performance, reimbursement delays, technological integration, and real-time monitoring of medical claims. Improvements to the digital EHS cards system and hospital feedback mechanisms are also expected to be key focus areas. The government has directed the committee to complete its study and submit a detailed report within eight weeks.

Based on the committee's findings, the government intends to initiate policy and procedural changes to strengthen the EHS system further. The Chief Secretary emphasized that the goal is to ensure that government employees and their families receive

timely and quality medical care without bureaucratic hurdles or procedural delays.

The NTR Vaidya Seva Trust CEO has been instructed to extend all necessary support to the committee's study, coordinate with the empanelled hospitals, and initiate preliminary reforms as per the committee's interim recommendations. Officials stated that the government is determined to make the EHS a model health care support mechanism for employees, integrating smart governance and digital monitoring measures to ensure accountability and transparency.

The Employees Health Scheme, which provides cashless treatment to over eight lakh government employees, pensioners, and their dependents, is one of the state's flagship welfare programs. Frequent complaints in recent months regarding delayed hospital reimbursements, technical glitches in the EHS card system, and inconsistent service quality prompted the government to revisit and reform the scheme's implementation framework.

By forming this high-level committee, the Naidu administration signals its intention to revamp the system, reinforcing its commitment to employee welfare and healthcare reform in the state's public sector.

Narasaropet MP Lavou Srikrishna Devarayalu urges Centre to support Cyclone 'Monta'-hit cotton farmers



TPN Bureau | December 11

New Delhi: Narasaraopet MP Lavou Srikrishna Devarayalu on Thursday appealed to the Union government to extend immediate financial and procurement support to cotton farmers in Andhra Pradesh who suffered massive losses due to Cyclone Monta. Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha, the MP said that large tracts of cotton farms across Guntur, Palnadu, and Krishna districts were devastated by the cyclone, leaving farmers in deep distress.

Devarayalu highlighted that around 1.8 lakh acres of cotton farmland were severely affected, with nearly 1.25 lakh tonnes of the harvested crop being damaged due to heavy rainfall and excess moisture content. "Because of the cyclone,

said. Devarayalu also drew attention to the bottlenecks at CCI procurement centers, noting that limited daily slots are preventing farmers from selling their produce on time. He suggested an increase in purchase counters and faster processing to ensure that the damaged cotton can still fetch a reasonable price. Further, he pointed out that the existing quota system for ginning mills is compounding farmers' woes, as several units are unable to process the cotton within the stipulated limits.

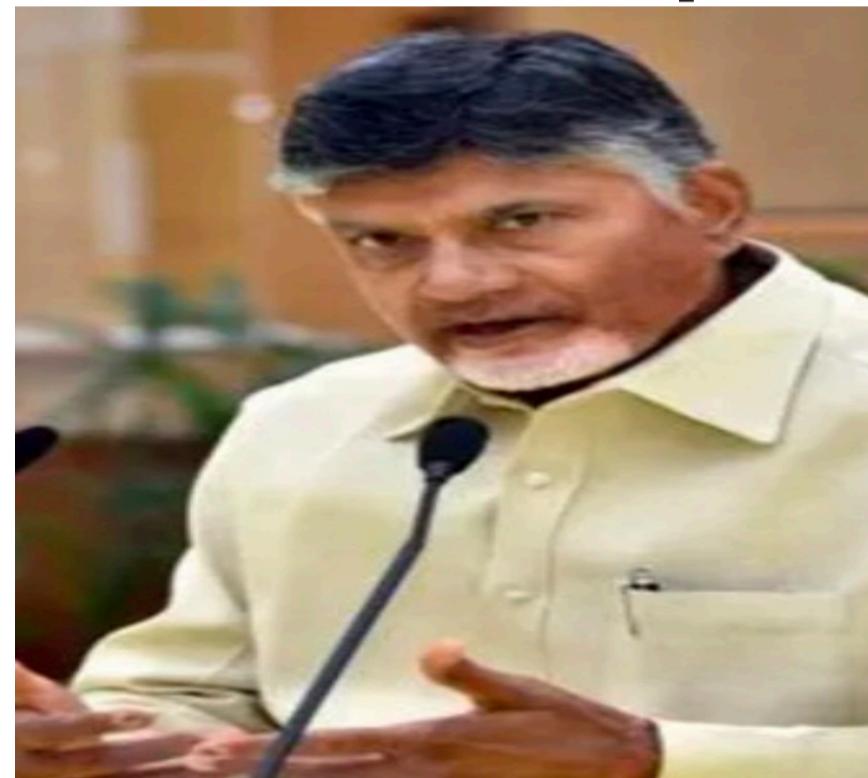
The MP appealed to the government to lift or relax quota restrictions temporarily so that the damaged stock can be quickly processed before further spoilage. Concluding his statement, Devarayalu urged the Union Ministries of Textiles and Agriculture to jointly assess the scale of damage in Andhra Pradesh and extend special relief packages to the cyclone-hit farmers.

"This is not just a procurement issue, it's about protecting the livelihood of thousands of small and marginal farmers," he asserted.

the quality of the cotton has deteriorated. Many bales have turned discolored and carry high humidity levels, making them unfit for procurement under current Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) norms," he told Parliament.

The MP urged the Centre and the CCI to relax quality parameters to allow the purchase of affected cotton from the distressed farmers. He emphasized that unless procurement rules are revised to accommodate the current ground realities, thousands of farmers will face financial ruin. "The government should direct CCI to purchase discolored and high-moisture cotton so that farmers are not forced to sell their produce at throwaway prices to private traders," he

You should be Responsible



TPN Bureau | December 11

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, convened on Thursday at the Secretariat and approved several key projects across multiple departments. The meeting also witnessed in-depth discussions on crucial governance issues including land allocation, pending revenue matters, free electricity for handloom workers, and unresolved housing schemes.

Chief Minister Naidu directed ministers to conduct district-level reviews focusing on land allotments and revenue-related problems. He expressed displeasure that certain issues continued to linger without resolution and questioned ministers on why such tasks were not promptly brought to his notice. Emphasizing accountability, he asked the ministers-in-charge to take direct responsibility for ensuring timely decisions and administrative follow-ups. One of the major topics of discussion was the delay in implementing free electricity for handloom weavers. A few ministers expressed objections to the Finance Department's decision to keep the proposal pending. They pointed out that the scheme's imple-

mentation had been unnecessarily linked with the "Surya Ghar" solar initiative. In response, the Chief Minister ordered immediate execution of the free power scheme for weavers, instructing officials to de-link it entirely from the Surya Ghar project.

He stressed that the welfare of traditional weavers was a priority and should not be held up by technical or bureaucratic constraints. The

Cabinet also took a serious note of the situation concerning Jagananna Colonies, where a large number of beneficiaries have not yet constructed houses on plots allotted to them during the previous administration. Several ministers proposed that the government cancel pattas (title deeds) of those who failed to build houses within the prescribed timeframe.

They argued that many sites remain vacant and idle, denying hous-

ing opportunities to deserving families. However, Minister Kinjarapu Achenaiadu informed the Chief Minister that legally, pattas registered in the beneficiaries' names could not simply be revoked, as ownership had already been conferred. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad supported this view, clarifying that statutory permissions and due process must be followed.

Taking note of both perspectives, Chief Min-

ister Naidu instructed the ministers to hold further deliberations and come up with a legally viable course of action. He suggested issuing formal notices to inactive beneficiaries, seeking confirmation on whether they intend to build houses. In cases where they fail to respond or act, the government may consider reallocating the three-centen plots to new eligible applicants, as previously recommended by the administration. In another important directive, the Chief Minister assigned senior IAS officer Sai Prasad to oversee the resolution of all pending revenue-related cases within a year.

He emphasized the need for officers to work in coordination with district officials to settle disputes in a time-bound manner, bringing relief to citizens awaiting decisions on land and property matters. Thursday's Cabinet meeting reflected the state government's focus on administrative transparency, welfare empowerment, and effective use of public assets.

Chief Minister Naidu reiterated that every pending issue—from weavers' welfare to housing and land administration must be brought to completion within a fixed timeline to maintain public trust in government.

Vajpayee's Leadership a Benchmark for Good Governance, Says MP CM Mohan Yadav

TPN Bureau | December 11

Dharmavaram (Sri Sathya Sai District):

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Thursday described former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee as a timeless symbol of good governance and inclusive development, whose vision continues to guide leaders across the country. Addressing a public meeting in Dharmavaram after unveiling Vajpayee's statue, Mr. Yadav said the late leader's political life was a model of leadership rooted in ethics, foresight, and em-

pathy. The event marked the inauguration of the 'Good Governance Yatra' in Andhra Pradesh, an outreach initiative aimed at showcasing the BJP's governance philosophy and developmental achievements. "Shri Vajpayee ji never saw politics as a struggle for power but as a means to serve the nation. His decisions on telecom reforms, rural connectivity through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, and welfare measures for the poor laid the foundations of a new India," Mr. Yadav said,



drawing applause from the gathering.

He noted that Vajpayee's government ushered in a new era in India's economic and infrastructure landscape, citing landmark initiatives such as the Golden Quadrilateral highway network and the strengthening of rural roads that transformed village connectivity. Mr. Yadav also recalled the Pokhran-II nuclear tests of 1998 as a defining moment that enhanced India's strategic stature globally.

Calling Vajpayee a statesman who bridged

consensus across political and regional lines, he said the former Prime Minister's ability to balance development with dignity and dialogue made him "the architect of modern India's transformation." The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister urged party workers to emulate Vajpayee's ideals of accountability, transparency, and people-centric administration.

"Good governance is not just about schemes; it's about sincerity in execution and commitment to every citizen," he said.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by several BJP leaders from Andhra Pradesh, including district functionaries, and witnessed a large turnout of local residents and party supporters. The event also featured cultural tributes and the presentation of a short documentary on Vajpayee's legacy. Mr. Yadav's remarks set the tone for the 'Good Governance Yatra,' which will highlight success stories from BJP-ruled states, focusing on innovation, welfare, and infrastructure development inspired by Vajpayee's principles.

short documentary on Vajpayee's legacy. Mr. Yadav's remarks set the tone for the 'Good Governance Yatra,' which will highlight success stories from BJP-ruled states, focusing on innovation, welfare, and infrastructure development inspired by Vajpayee's principles.

YSRCP Leaders Condemn “Dictatorial” Rule in Palnadu, Slam Police for House Arrests

TPN Bureau | December 11

Narasaropet (Palnadu District): Tension prevailed across Palnadu district on Thursday as several YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders were allegedly placed under house arrest by the police while attempting to visit Macharla to express solidarity with the Pinnelli brothers, who are facing trial in a double murder case.

Addressing the media at the YSRCP district office in Linganguntla, party coordinators and former legislators including Dr. Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy, former minister Vidadala Rajini, and former MLA Kasu Mahesh Reddy strongly condemned the police action. They accused the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led coalition government of imposing an “unde-



clared emergency” in Palnadu district and branded the state’s law enforcement as acting under political pressure. Dr. Gopireddy said that the leaders were heading to Macharla to meet the Pinnelli brothers, who were appearing in court as per Supreme Court directions, when the police unlawfully obstructed their move-

ment. “Is it a crime to visit our party leaders who are surrendering before the court as per legal orders?” he asked. Alleging that the state under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh was running a “Red Book dictatorship,” he said it had become difficult to differentiate whether they were living in India

or Pakistan. The YSRCP leader claimed that the police had set up multiple check posts across Palnadu, blocking roads leading to Macharla and preventing leaders from leaving their residences. “This government is targeting YSRCP cadres deliberately. Every program planned by the party in Palnadu is be-

ing obstructed, whereas similar rallies including the ‘One-Crore Signature Campaign’ were allowed in other districts like Anantapur and Kadapa,” he said. Gopireddy alleged that police harassment had reached new heights, with party members receiving notices overnight.

“This is political vendetta in the name of law

and order. Once YSR Congress returns to power, every officer and police official who wronged our cadre will be held accountable we will settle every account one by one,” he warned. Former minister Vidadala Rajini joined the criticism, accusing the government of suppressing opposition voice under the guise of

police control. “How can visiting our colleagues be treated as a law-and-order issue?” she asked, calling the restrictions undemocratic and condemnable.

Similarly, former Gurazala MLA Kasu Mahesh Reddy accused the police of intimidating YSRCP members in connection with the Mach-

avaram MPP election. “The police are overstepping their authority under this government. Those indulging in such overaction will face consequences in the future,” he warned.

The leaders said they were even prevented from addressing the press conference in person, calling it an alarming indicator of the decline of democratic freedoms in Palnadu district. “We are determined to fight this oppressive regime through democratic means,” they emphasized.

The YSRCP leaders concluded that the situation in Palnadu resembled a “mini-emergency,” urging the Election Commission and the judiciary to take note of what they called “politically motivated misuse of police powers” against opposition voices.

Pinnelli Brothers Surrender in Macherla Court; Sent to 14-Day Judicial Remand to Nellore jail.



TPN Bureau | December 11

In a major development in the sensational Gundlapadu double murder case, former Macherla MLA and Palnadu District YSRCP president Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy and his brother Pinnelli Venkataramireddy surrendered before the Macherla court on Thursday. Acting in compliance with the Supreme Court’s directive, the duo presented themselves at the court in the afternoon, following which the Additional Junior Civil Judge Prashanth remanded them to 14 days in judicial custody.

Post-surrender, the accused brothers underwent medical examinations at the local Primary Health Centre. Amid tight police security, they were transferred to Nellore Central Jail, where they will remain under remand orders. Large police forces were deployed in and around Macherla to maintain law and order, and Section 144 was imposed to prevent any untoward incidents.

The Pinnelli brothers stand accused in the Gundlapadu TDP leaders’ double murder case, in which J. Koteswara Rao and J. Venkateswarlu were brutally killed on May 24 this year. The incident had triggered shock and outrage across Palnadu district due to its political overtones. In the charge sheet, Ramakrishna Reddy has been named as A6, while his brother Venkataramireddy is A7.

Earlier, the Andhra Pradesh High Court had canceled their anticipatory bail on August 29, noting discrepancies in the investigation process. Challenging this, the brothers approached the Supreme Court, which dismissed their petition on November 28 and ordered them to surrender within two weeks.

The apex court made critical observations during the hearing, expressing surprise over how the accused had accessed the case diary and witness statements (under Section 161) even before the filing of the chargesheet. The court remarked that such privileges indicated possible police support and questioned the influence of “powerful individuals” in evading arrest. When the defense sought an extension of time for surrender, the court refused, noting that “police will not dare

to arrest influential people like you,” before finally giving them a two-week window to comply.

Complying with that deadline, the Pinnelli brothers surrendered at the Macherla court on Thursday. Meanwhile, several YSR Congress Party leaders expressed strong objection to what they termed unlawful police restrictions placed on them while attempting to meet the surrendered leaders. Erragonadapalem MLA Tatikonda Chandrasekhar Rao, former MLAs Anna Rambabu, and constituency in-charge of Ponnur and Sattenapalli, along with YSRCP state youth president Baireddy Siddharth Reddy and party spokesperson Shyamala, alleged that local police had placed them under illegal house arrest since Wednesday night.

Addressing reporters near the Macherla court, they condemned the government’s actions, claiming that “Red Book rule” still prevails in the state. They alleged that police had set up 20 to 25 checkpoints on routes leading to Macherla to prevent party members from visiting the location. “Even though there is no involvement in the case, our party district president surrendered respecting the law, but the government denied us the right to even meet him,” they said. The leaders termed this as a violation of democratic principles and warned that those responsible for these “undemocratic acts” would face public backlash in due course.

The Pinnelli brothers’ surrender marks a pivotal moment in the politically charged Palnadu murder case, likely to have significant political and legal repercussions across Andhra Pradesh in the days ahead.



Expelled TDP Leader Jayachandra Reddy Arrested in Mulakalacheruvu Fake Liquor Racket

TPN Bureau | December 11

Annamayya District: In a major breakthrough in the ongoing probe into the fake liquor manufacturing racket at Mulakalacheruvu, police have arrested expelled Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader Jayachandra Reddy. Acting on credible intelligence, Excise officials apprehended him in Bengaluru and are bringing him back to Andhra Pradesh for further interrogation.

According to investigators, Jayachandra Reddy is suspected to have played a key role in financing and facilitating the illicit operation that came to light last month. He is alleged to be a close associate and key supporter of the prime accused, Addepalli Janardhan Rao, who is believed to have masterminded the large-scale production and distribution of counterfeit liquor in the Annamayya district. Of-

ficials stated that the remand report identified Reddy as a crucial link in sustaining the racket.

“His involvement appears to have gone beyond mere financial assistance. Evidence suggests that the illegal liquor manufacturing activities were carried out under his direct supervision,” said a senior police officer associated with the investigation.

The Mulakalacheruvu racket drew statewide attention after raids uncovered large quantities of spurious liquor, bottling equipment, and fake labels imitating popular brands.

Excise officials have

intensified their crack-

down since the bust, un-

covering a well-orga-

nized network that ex-

tended across multiple

districts and involved do-

zens of operatives. With

Reddy’s arrest, the total

number of accused tak-

en into custody has now

risen to 32. So far, 31 oth-



er suspects have already been remanded, including factory operators, transporters, and local distributors linked to the illegal trade.

Those involved, regardless of their influence or political background, will face the law,” an official stated. The arrest of a former political figure has added a new dimension to the probe, raising questions about political patronage and local-level complicity in the illicit trade. Authorities expect more revelations as the interrogation progresses in the coming days.

TDP Gains Control of Kalyandurg Municipality and Machavaram MPP Post

TPN Bureau | December 11

Kalyanadurgam: In a significant political development in Anantapur district, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has gained control of the Kalyandurg Municipality after a tense and closely contested election. TDP leader Thalari Gouthami was elected as the new Municipal Chairperson on Thursday, marking another local-level victory for the opposition party in Andhra Pradesh. The election was held in the Kalyandurg municipal office on Thursday morning amid high anticipation and tight security.

The municipality has a total of 24 councilors, with the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and TDP each fielding 11 members. The balance of power rested with the ex-officio members, whose support became crucial in determining the out-



come. During the voting, MP Ambika Lakshminarayana and MLA Surendra Babu, both ex-officio members entitled to vote in the election, extended their support to the TDP nominee.

With this backing, Gouthami secured 13 votes, ensuring her victory over the YSRCP candidate. The result tipped the balance decisively in favor of TDP, handing the party administrative control of the Kalyandurg Municipality.

Political observers note that this victory, though local in scale, holds symbolic importance for the TDP as it continues to assert its

hand, was understood to have taken the setback seriously and is expected to review the internal factors that led to its loss despite having equal representation in the municipal body.

Meanwhile, in another development in Palnadu district, the TDP also registered a notable success by securing the Machavaram Mandal Parishad President (MPP) post. Kokkera Anjamma, an MPDC member from Pillutla village, was unanimously elected as MPP after receiving majority backing from the available members.

The Machavaram Mandal Parishad comprises 15 MPDC members, but one seat fell vacant following the member’s death. Of the 14 members who attended Thursday’s meeting, six extended their support to the TDP nominee, effectively sealing Anjamma’s election to the top mandal post.

Political observers note that this victory, though local in scale, holds symbolic importance for the TDP as it continues to assert its

presence across Andhra Pradesh ahead of the 2026 local body polls.

The election atmosphere reportedly remained peaceful, though both parties had mobilized their cadres in anticipation of a close contest.

The Kalyandurg chairperson election reflected the continuing tussle between the TDP and YSRCP in the Rayalaseema region, which has often witnessed intense political rivalries.

Party sources within the TDP described Gouthami’s victory as a “renewed sign of public confidence” in the party’s grassroots leadership. The YSRCP, on the other



Collector Stresses Public Awareness to Eradicate Child Marriages in Guntur District

TPN Bureau | December 11

Vijayawada | Guntur: Guntur District Collector Ms. Tameem Ansaria emphasized the urgent need for collective efforts to eliminate child marriages across the district, calling it a deep-rooted social problem that demands coordinated intervention and sustained public awareness. Chairing a district-level review meeting at the Collectorate on the prevention of child marriages, she called upon officials from various departments to act decisively and work hand in hand with local communities to curb the practice.

Addressing the officials, Ms. Ansaria explained that despite repeated campaigns and awareness drives, instances of child marriages continue to surface in rural pockets of the district, often justified on grounds of tradition, poverty, and social pressure. She stated that every child, especially the girl child, has the right to education, health, and



dignity — rights that are often denied through the regressive practice of early marriage.

"We must treat every report of a child marriage attempt as a matter of priority. Rehabilitation, counseling, and awareness are just as important as enforcement," she said. The Collector reaffirmed the administration's commitment to total eradication of child marriages and called upon every government department to play an active role.

The government machinery should work in close coordination with non-governmental or-

ganizations and community leaders to spread awareness about the ill effects of child marriages, she observed. Officials from the Women Development and Child Welfare Department, the Health Department, Education Department, and Social Welfare Department took part in the meeting.

District Women and Child Welfare Officer Ms. Prasoon, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi, and District Social Welfare Officer Mr. Chennaiyah were among the key participants. The officials discussed inter-de-

partmental mechanisms for surveillance and preventive action, including the strengthening of village-level and mandal-level Child Marriage Prevention Committees.

During the review, it was also decided to intensify awareness campaigns using Anganwadi workers, school teachers, and local volunteers to identify families at risk and counsel them appropriately.

The Collector stressed that child marriage is not merely a legal violation but a violation of child rights that has long-term consequences on health, education, and

economic empowerment especially for girls. Medical experts at the meeting shared concerns about the health implications of early pregnancies, including high maternal mortality, low birth weight, and malnutrition among young mothers and their children.

Officials underlined the need to integrate health awareness with educational and social programs aimed at adolescents. Ms. Ansaria urged panchayat secretaries and field-level officers to remain vigilant and respond swiftly to any tipoff related to potential child marriages. She called for greater public participation to ensure that reforms extend beyond government initiatives.

"This is not just an administrative fight; it is a social movement," she concluded, urging every citizen to stand against child marriage and contribute to building a safer, more progressive Guntur district.

Yarlagadda Venkata Rao Slams YSRCP Over Remarks on Nara Lokesh's US Trip

TPN Bureau | December 11

Amaravati: Taking strong objection to the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders' criticism of Minister Nara Lokesh's meetings with global industry leaders, TDP MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao denounced their comments as baseless and driven by political jealousy. Speaking to the media on Thursday, he said YSRCP leaders were unable to digest Lokesh's growing stature on the international stage, and hence were resorting to "irrational and envious statements."

Venkata Rao clarified that Lokesh was conducting his personal foreign visits using his own funds, not government money. "If anyone proves that Lokesh misused public money, I am ready to resign from my post," he declared, throwing an open challenge to the opposition. Highlighting the ongoing efforts of the government, Venkata Rao said Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was continuously



inviting them to invest in Andhra Pradesh. Notably, he pointed out that NVIDIA alone has a market capitalization of around \$4.6 trillion higher than India's GDP of \$4.19 trillion. The MLA drew a parallel with Naidu's past achievements, recalling how the TDP supremo brought Microsoft to Hyderabad, transforming the city into an IT powerhouse with annual exports of 2.9 lakh crore.

Following in his father's footsteps, Lokesh is now planning to bring Google to Visakhapatnam, making it a future investment hub," Venkata Rao noted. Taking a jibe at the YSRCP leadership, he questioned how many review meetings their ministers had conducted during their tenure. He also criticized a YSRCP leader for disappearing from public view for a year following his electoral loss, remarking that such behavior showed disrespect toward the people's democratic verdict.

During his recent US trip, Lokesh reportedly met CEOs and senior executives of nearly 18 global giants including Google, NVIDIA, Adobe, Intel, and OpenAI, to

Bhavani Deeksha Conclusion Begins at Indrakeeladri: Thousands of Devotees Flock to Vijayawada

TPN Bureau | December 11

Vijayawada: The annual Bhavani Deeksha relinquishment celebrations began in grandeur at Indrakeeladri, the sacred hill in Vijayawada that houses the famous Sri Kanaka Durga temple. The hilltop temple, one of the most revered Shakti shrines in South India, is witnessing a massive influx of devotees as thousands of Bhavani Deeksha holders arrive to complete their spiritual observance in the presence of Goddess Kanaka Durga.

The Deeksha relinquishment festival, which started today, will continue until December 15. Devotees who have undertaken the rigorous Bhavani Deeksha ritual for 41 days come to the temple to conclude their vows. The festive atmosphere on the hill reflects deep devotion, discipline, and religious fervor as devotees participate in elaborate rituals under the supervision of the temple priests and the management of the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasatha.

According to temple authorities, the ceremony began with the Kalasha Jyothis being brought from the sanctum sanctorum of the main temple to the specially arranged Homa Gundams (sacred fire pits) at the foothills. The holy flames were installed at the auspicious muhurtham (time) to mark the commencement of the Viramana Mahotsavam—the formal conclusion of the Bhavani Deeksha.

After completing the Giri Pradakshina, a circumambulation of the sacred hill, Deeksha



holders were allowed into the temple through organized queue lines for darshan of Goddess Kanaka Durga.

Many devotees expressed their joy at being able to complete their vow before the presiding deity after the difficult 41-day observance, which includes strict adherence to vegetarian food, celibacy, and daily prayer.

Temple Executive Officer and officials from the Endowments Department have urged devotees to cooperate with authorities and follow the prescribed guidelines for safety and sanitation.

Additional police forces have been deployed to manage the flow of vehicles and pedestrians around the hill temple, particularly in the Kanakadurganagar area where the main rituals of relinquishment are taking place.

As the Bhavani Deeksha Viramana Mahotsavam unfolds over the next few days, the spiritual energy and devotion of thousands of participants are expected to further enhance the sanctity and significance of the Indrakeeladri shrine—a symbol of divine power and cultural unity in Andhra Pradesh.

Signboards and volunteers are guiding devotees throughout the day-and-night darshan schedule.

The city of Vijayawada has taken on a festive atmosphere as the temple surroundings echo with devotional chants and the scent of incense.

Bhavani Deeksha holders, identifiable by their saffron robes and ritual accessories, can be seen performing pujas and participating

in sacred ceremonies.

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TTD Employee's House Burgled in Tirupati: Gold and Cash Worth Over 10 Lakh Stolen

TPN Bureau | December 11

Vijayawada | Tirupati: A shocking burglary has been reported at the residence of a Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) employee, where thieves made away with around 320 grams of gold ornaments and 10 lakh in cash. The incident took place in Perumulpalli village under the Tirupati Rural Police Station limits on Wednesday night.

According to police, the victim, identified as Murali Mohan, works as a Duffedar in the TTD office at Tiruchanur.

His family resides in Perumulpalli, part of the Tirupati rural mandal.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the house was targeted while the family was away in Bengaluru for wedding preparations.

Police said that Murali Mohan's daughter's marriage had recently been fixed, and his wife and daughter had travelled to Bengaluru on Wednesday to purchase wedding essentials.

Before leaving, they locked the house, and Murali Mohan went to his office at Tiruchanur as usual. When his wife



and daughter returned the next morning, they were shocked to find the main door lock broken and the doors dismantled. Upon receiving a call from his family, Murali Mohan rushed back home and immediately lodged a complaint with the Tirupati Rural Police.

Circle Inspector Chinna Govindu confirmed that a special investigation team has been formed to track down the culprits.

Police teams have begun examining CCTV footage from the neighbourhood to identify suspicious movements during the night hours. Forensic experts have also been called to the scene to gather fingerprints and other evidence. The burglars are suspected to have closely monitored the family's movements before carrying out the theft.

Investigators believe that the incident occurred sometime between Wednesday evening and early Thursday morning.

Speaking to the media, CI Chinna Govindu assured that the police are pursuing multiple leads and are confident of solving the case soon. The incident has caused concern in the area, particularly among TTD employees and residents of nearby localities, who are urging authorities to strengthen night patrols.

This latest incident adds to a series of recent burglaries reported in the rural limits of Tirupati, highlighting the need for enhanced surveillance and preventive policing. Police have advised residents to alert local authorities before leaving town for extended periods and to ensure proper security measures around their homes.

New Electric Double-Decker Bus Service Launched to Simhachalam

TPN Bureau | December 11, 2025

Visakhapatnam | Vijayawada: A new chapter in Visakhapatnam's tourism and public transport development began on Thursday with the launch of an electric double-decker bus service to the sacred hill shrine of Simhachalam. The service, inaugurated by officials from the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department, aims to provide an eco-friendly and comfortable travel experience for both pilgrims and tourists visiting the temple of Lord Appana Swamy.

The introduction of this bus service marks a significant step toward promoting sustainable tourism in the city. The fully electric buses



designed to reduce carbon emissions while offering passengers a panoramic view of the scenic route leading to Simhachalam. Equipped with modern amenities, the double-decker buses are expected to attract both devotees and sightseers who wish to enjoy a unique perspective of Visakhapatnam's urban and natural landscapes.

Officials noted that the route has been planned to connect key tourist spots in the city before culminating at the Simhachalam temple. This will allow passengers to enjoy an integrated travel experience that combines spirituality with sightseeing. The service will operate at regular intervals throughout the day, providing

convenient connectivity for visitors and reducing traffic congestion in the pilgrimage zone.

Speaking at the launch, a senior tourism official said the initiative is part of a broader effort to improve tourism infrastructure and create memorable experiences for visitors. "Simhachalam is one of Andhra Pradesh's most revered temples, drawing thousands of devotees every day. The new double-decker electric buses will not only make the journey more comfortable but also reflect our commitment to green mobility and tourism development," the official stated.

Local residents have welcomed the move,

pointing out that such services add value to the city's growing reputation as a clean and modern coastal destination. Environmentalists, too, appreciate the adoption of electric vehicles, which aligns with Visakhapatnam's ongoing efforts to become a model eco-friendly city.

With this launch, tourism authorities expect an increase in footfall to Simhachalam and better connectivity between the city's major attractions. The initiative also highlights Andhra Pradesh's focus on blending cultural heritage with sustainable transport innovations, reinforcing Visakhapatnam's position as a leading tourism hub in South India.

10 Crore Sanction for Panchayat Roads Modernization

TPN Bureau | December 11

Chirala | Bspatla District: MLA Madduluri Mala Kondayya Expresses Gratitude to CM Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan. In a significant development aimed at improving the rural road infrastructure, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has sanctioned 10 crore for the modernization of panchayat roads in a key constituency. The initiative marks a major step toward strengthening local connectivity and rural development. The announcement has been widely welcomed by residents, local bodies, and public representatives.

Expressing his heartfelt gratitude for this sanction, constituency MLA Madduluri Mala Kondayya conveyed deep appreciation to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for their continued support and commitment to



grassroots development. The legislator said the long-pending demand from various village panchayats for better roads has finally received attention, which will significantly improve transport, agriculture logistics, and public accessibility.

According to MLA Mall Kondayya, the Rs. 10 crore grant will be utilized for the modernization and upgradation of internal and inter-panchayat roads that connect remote habitations. The project will include laying of new bitumen roads, widening of existing routes, and strengthening of damaged stretches in line with modern standards. He said this allocation will particularly benefit farmers, daily commuters, students, and small traders who rely on rural road networks for their livelihoods.

The MLA emphasized that improved roads are crucial for rural economic progress. "When road infrastructure improves,

agricultural produce can reach markets faster, farmers can save transportation costs, and employment opportunities will expand. This allocation from the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister reflects their vision for a modern, well-connected Andhra Pradesh," he added.

He further stated that special attention will be given to ensuring quality standards during the works. Engineering departments have been instructed to prepare estimates and finalize the tender process immediately, so that construction can commence without delay. Supervision committees will be formed to monitor progress and prevent any substandard work. Local panchayat representatives hailed the sanction as a milestone for their region. Villagers reportedly expressed happiness that the government is fulfilling its promise of balanced development.

Many have said that rural roads, often neglected for years, had become nearly unusable during monsoons, severely affecting transport and access to essential services. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, who has been fo-

cusing on rural empowerment and infrastructure in his portfolio, is said to have played a key role in facilitating the release of funds. Sources at the Panchayat Raj Department confirmed that modernization works will be completed in phases across all identified panchayats.

MLA Mall Kondayya reiterated that the government's proactive measures under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership are transforming rural Andhra Pradesh. He expressed confidence that the state's infrastructure push, combined with transparent governance, will boost overall development and improve quality of life in villages.

The 10 crore modernization project stands as another example of the coalition government's focus on inclusive growth, ensuring that rural communities receive the same attention and progress as urban centers.

Drug Smugglers Nabbed at Ongole Bus Stand: Police Seize One Kilogram of Ganja and Cannabis-Infused Chocolates

TPN Bureau | December 11

Ongole, Prakasam District — In a major breakthrough against narcotics trafficking, the Ongole police on Wednesday apprehended two individuals at the Ongole RTC bus stand for allegedly transporting ganja and cannabis-infused chocolates. The accused, both residents of Chennai, were intercepted by the Crime Control Station (CCS) police shortly after arriving from Odisha with a consignment intended for distribution in Tamil Nadu.

According to police reports, the two suspects had boarded a train from Odisha carrying approximately one kilogram of ganja, which they intended to smuggle into Chennai. However, their journey was cut short when railway officials discovered that they were traveling without valid tickets. Upon inspection, the of-

ficials forced them to disembark at Ongole railway station. Stranded and seeking an alternate mode of transport, the duo reportedly proceeded to the Ongole RTC bus stand to board a bus to Chennai.

Acting on a tip-off, the CCS police team conducted a surprise inspection at the depot. During the search, officers discovered packets of ganja and several quantities of cannabis-laced chocolates concealed in their luggage. Ongole DSP (Crime) stated that the arrest was part of an ongoing crackdown on narcotics smuggling networks operating across state borders. "Our personnel have intensified surveillance at transport hubs after receiving intelligence inputs about the movement of contraband through rail and road routes.

The two suspects detained here were attempting to move the



drug consignment into Tamil Nadu in the guise of regular luggage," the official said. During preliminary interrogation, the arrested individuals confessed that they had procured the ganja from suppliers in Odisha's tribal belt, where illicit cultivation remains rampant. They also revealed that the cannabis chocolates were part of a new smuggling trend aimed at targeting urban youth markets, particularly college students in Chennai and other southern cities.

Police sources confirmed that one kilogram of ganja and around two dozen cannabis-infused chocolates have been seized from the accused. Samples have been sent for forensic analysis to confirm the substance's composition. Authorities believe that the duo might be part of a larger interstate drug network, and efforts are underway to trace the suppli-

ers and end-consumers involved.

The Ongole Town Police have registered a case under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The accused are currently under custody and being questioned for further information regarding their contacts in Odisha and Chennai. Local police have urged passengers to remain vigilant and report suspicious activities, especially at railway stations and bus terminals,

which are increasingly being used as transit points for narcotics movement. Meanwhile, the CCS police team received commendation from senior officers for their swift action and effective bust of the trafficking attempt.

The arrests underscore the increasing vigilance of the Ongole police department as they continue to tighten enforcement against drug peddling along the Andhra Pradesh-Tamil Nadu corridor.

Andhra Pradesh Cabinet Approves 9,500-Crore Projects; Major Push to Amaravati Development and Water Management

TPN Bureau | December 11

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, convened a crucial meeting at the Secretariat on Thursday and cleared 44 key agenda items aimed at accelerating infrastructure growth, urban development, and welfare measures across the state. The meeting signaled the government's renewed commitment to strengthening Amaravati's position as the state's administrative capital while ensuring balanced development in other regions.

The Cabinet gave administrative approval for 506 projects across various sectors with an aggregate outlay of 9,500 crore. Among the most significant decisions was the approval for major construction and connectivity projects in the capital region, besides infrastructure development in tribal and rural areas. Boost to Amaravati In-



frastructure. The Cabinet approved several high-value projects for Amaravati, including the construction of Lok Bhavan, the Assembly Durbar Hall, the Governor's office, guest houses, and staff quarters.

These facilities are expected to provide administrative and residential infrastructure for government officials and visiting dignitaries, reinforcing the capital's civic and institutional framework. A major connectivity initiative received a green signal as well. The government cleared administrative sanction for the Seed Access Road project linking Amaravati to National Highway-16 at an estimated cost of 532 crore.

This key highway link

will enhance access to the capital city and support economic and vehicular movement between Amaravati and neighboring districts. Urban Water Management and Development: A significant portion of the Cabinet's agenda focused on urban infrastructure improvement and water management. Under the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department, the Cabinet sanctioned a series of integrated water management projects aimed at better utilization and supply of water in urban areas.

The initiatives are intended to address issues of drinking water, drainage, and resource sustainability amid rapid urbanization. Rural

and Tribal Area Initiatives: In a major step toward strengthening water conservation in drought-prone areas, the Cabinet approved administrative sanctions for the maintenance and management of check dams on the Paleru River in Kuppam constituency. This is expected to enhance irrigation and groundwater levels, offering long-term benefits to local farmers and residents.

The Cabinet also gave its approval to the Tribal Welfare Department for promoting 417 language pundits to the cadre of School Assistants. This decision will strengthen educational infrastructure in tribal and rural schools, improving teaching standards and career progres-

Narasaraopet Gears Up for Grand Bull Race Competitions from December 25 to 31

TPN Bureau | December 11

Narasaraopet: Preparations are in full swing in Narasaraopet of Palnadu district for the traditional bull race competitions scheduled to be held from December 25 to 31 at the Dr. Kodela Siva Prasada Rao Stadium located on the Sattenapalli Road. MLA Dr. Chadalawada Aravind Babu, who is taking a keen interest in promoting rural cultural events, performed the traditional Bhoomi Pooja on Thursday to mark the beginning of the arrangements.



that elaborate preparations are being made to accommodate a large number of participants and visitors. Every year, the event attracts bull owners and enthusiasts from across Andhra Pradesh who bring their prized animals to compete.

The ceremony began amid much devotion and enthusiasm, with priests conducting rituals and participants offering prayers for the successful conduct of the week-long festive event. The MLA, addressing the gathering, said that the bull races are not just a competitive sport but a proud expression of local culture and rural tradition that has been cherished through generations. He also noted that such events strengthen the bond between farmers, cattle owners, and the wider community, while adding vibrancy to the Sankranti celebrations every year.

Organizers revealed

Special seating arrangements and security measures are being planned to ensure a safe and well-organized experience for visitors. Animal welfare and safety proto-

Avanigadda MLA Budha Prasad Urges Government to Introduce New Courses in Agricultural Polytechnic Colleges

TPN Bureau | December 11

Ghantasa (Krishna District): Avanigadda MLA and Legislative Council member Budha Prasad has appealed to the State Government to introduce new technical and

ally inspected the college campus and responded positively to the request for sanctioning funds for new infrastructure development.

Budha Prasad assured that he would continue to work for the overall growth and modernization of the institution. On the occasion, students expressed their gratitude to the MLA for his continuous support from the establishment of the college to the recent transfer of buildings and felicitated him for his efforts in securing CC roads, compound walls, and other amenities for the college.

The cultural performances by students added vibrancy to the Freshers' Day event. Former ZP Vice Chairman Gorrepati Venkata Ramakrishna, senior leaders Paruchuri Subhash Chandrabose, Sarpanch Banavath Venkateswaramma, PACS Chairman Bandi Parappa Rao, College Principal Veeramachineni Satya Priya Lalitha, Vice Principal J. Padmavathi, faculty members, and students participated in the celebrations.

Speaking as the chief guest at the Freshers' Day celebrations at the Agricultural Polytechnic College, Ghantasa, on Thursday evening, Budha Prasad highlighted the need to strengthen technical education in the agriculture sector. He observed that the Fisheries Polytechnic College established at Bhavadevarapalli in his constituency one of the two colleges he initiated—has achieved remarkable success.

He noted that almost

all students from the

college are securing

employment opportuni-

ties in both govern-

ment and private sec-

tors soon after

completing their cours-

es. Stating that



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग Election Commission of India

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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.

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 Preparation:** 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 revision 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:

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

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

3. **Special Focus on Marginalized Groups:** Emphasis is placed on migrants, youth, first-time voters, and persons

with disabilities.

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

5. **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.

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

• 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.

• 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)

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

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

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

8. **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.

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:

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

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

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Benefits of SIR

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

1. **Issuing Notifications and Schedules:** Supervising house-to-house verification and document scrutiny.

2. **Overseeing Grievance Redressal and Final Roll Publication:** Ensuring inclusion of all eligible voters and elimination of errors, under its constitutional authority.

3. **Ensuring Inclusion of All Eligible Voters:** The ECI supervises the SIR at a national level. Its responsibilities include:

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SIR ROW: RAHUL GANDHI LEADS THE PROTEST



toring, 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**

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.

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.

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

1. **Issuing Notifications and Schedules:** Supervising house-to-house verification and document scrutiny.

2. **Overseeing Grievance Redressal and Final Roll Publication:** Ensuring inclusion of all eligible voters and elimination of errors, under its constitutional authority.

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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 at-

Shah Revives Historical Attacks on Nehru-Gandhi Family

“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.

tempting to dictate the flow of Parliamentary proceedings.

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Continuing the attack, Shah accused Indira Gandhi of super-

seding 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 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.

mently 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 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

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.

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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.

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The family's recently constructed, 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 na-

ture 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 in-

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 rec-

ommended 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 com-

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 detention 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 attachés 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, while 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 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 such incursions.

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 ex-

panded 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 Na-

tional Security and Public Safety Threats." The Trump administration has already implemented similar social media disclosure requirements for applicants seeking student visas and H1B visas.

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. Yet experts warn the new requirements could slow ESTA approvals and disourage 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 ad-

ministrative 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. Fall-out 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 De-

fence 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 US 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. Cambo-

dia 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 woken up to find their accounts disabled—while others boast they have already slipped past the new restrictions. The world's 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.

The Albanese govern-

ment 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.

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.

But among teenagers, the reaction is far more negative. Many argue the ban removes their primary means of connection, especially for those who are LGBT+, 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.

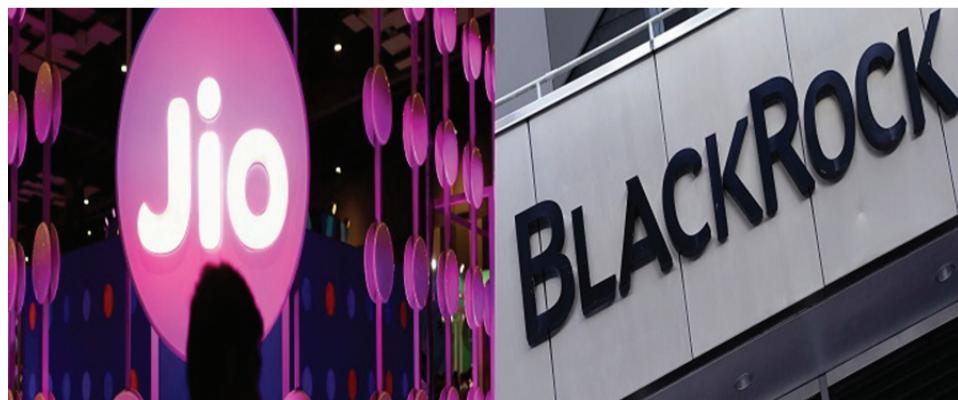
Economists note that while a third cut is expected, any commitment to future reductions will likely be conditional on incoming economic data. Inflation trends, consumer spending, and employment figures will play a decisive role in shaping the Fed's approach in early 2026.

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 capital infusion will primarily sup-

port 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 client segments, and this JV allows us to combine BlackRock's investment expertise with Jio's digital reach," the firm said.

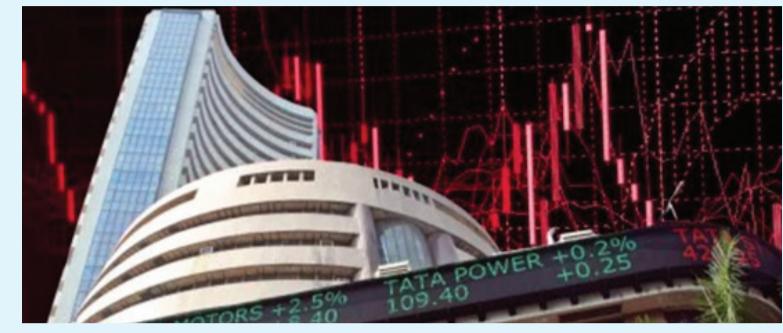
The Indian asset management sector has been expe-

riencing 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.

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 x 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-de-

gree 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 de-

tails 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 Chat-

GPT 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

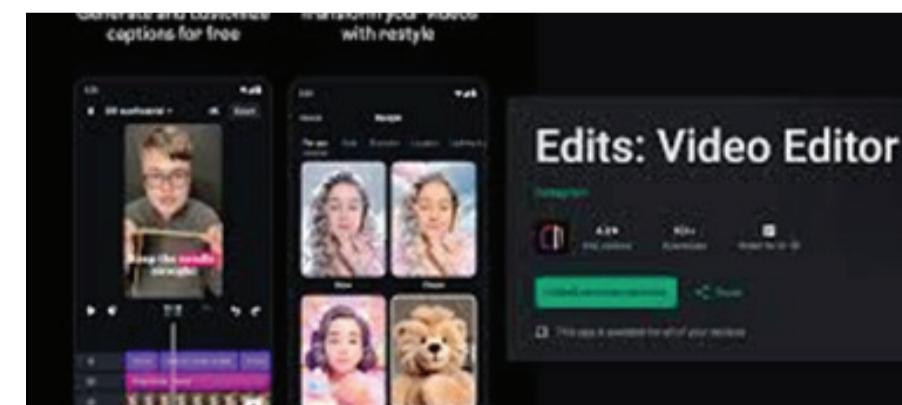
AI page, without requiring access to Search or external applications.

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 al-

ways 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 se-

ries. "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.

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. Rohit

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. "During practice sessions,

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

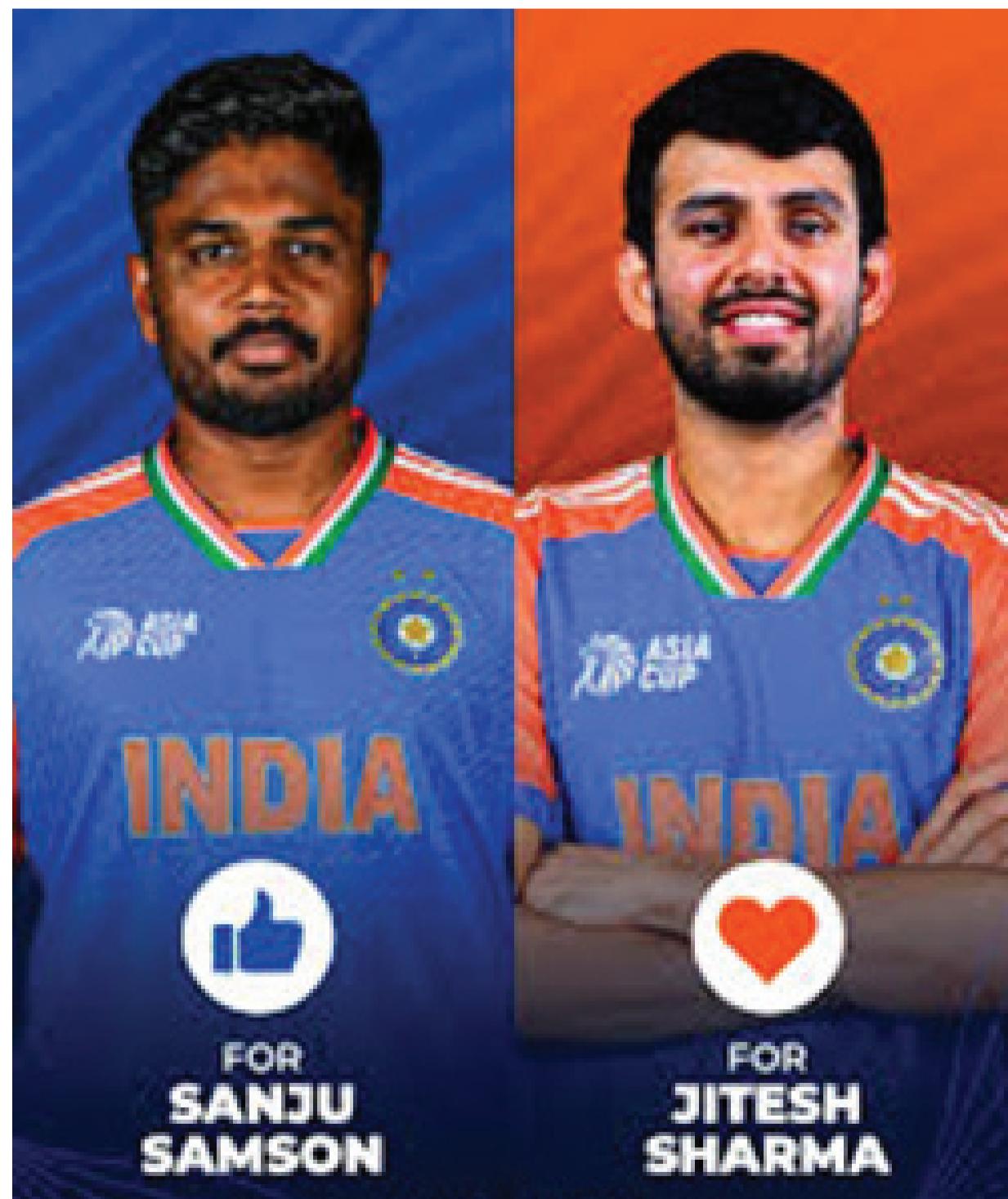
India's wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma opened up about his close bond with Sanju Samson after being named the first-choice wicketkeeper for the opening T20I against South Africa in Cuttack. Despite competing for the same spot, Jitesh described their relationship as warm, respectful, and rooted in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



(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, Malaika 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."

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.

Fans are excited to see Venkatesh bring the classic 'Aadarsha Ku-

tumbam' title back to life, this time under the direction of Trivikram Srinivas.

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

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.

'Mass Jathara' is positioned as a Sankranti spe-

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



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 'Akhand-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 'Akhand-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



day experience.

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

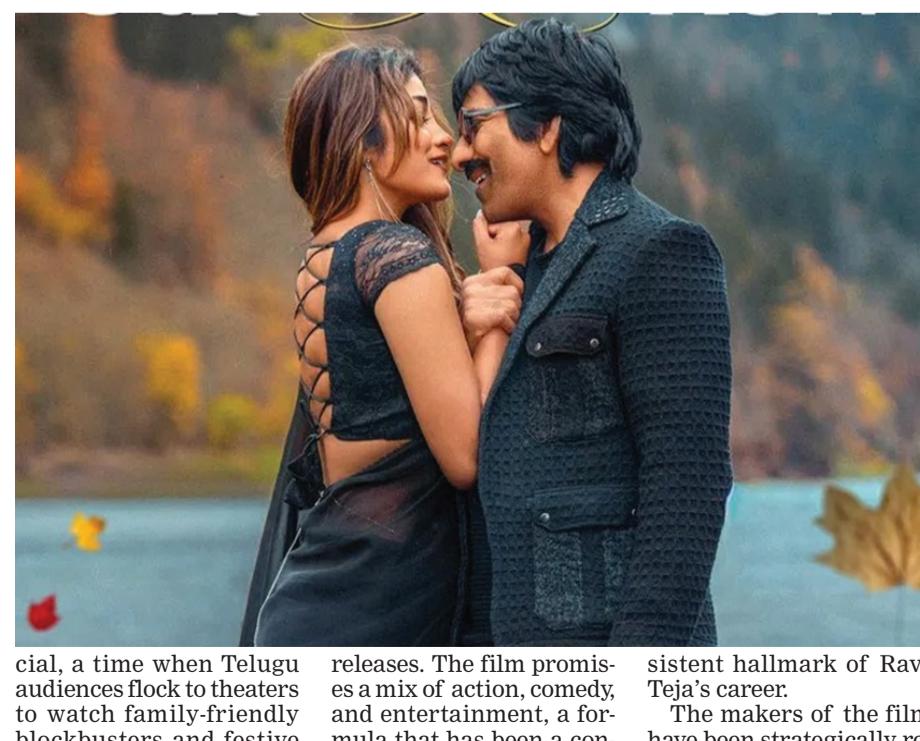
fans eagerly counting down the days. The combination of Prabhas' star power, a fresh horror-comedy theme, and a festive release window has posi-

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



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.