

## AP CM honoured with the prestigious "Business Reformer of the Year" award

TPN Bureau  
December 18

**A**maravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has been honoured with the prestigious "Business Reformer of the Year" award by The Economic Times, one of India's leading English-language business publications. The accolade recognizes Naidu's dynamic leadership and transformative approach to governance, business reforms, and investment facilitation in the state.

The announcement was made public by Andhra Pradesh IT and Industries Minister Nara Lokesh on social media platform 'X,' where he celebrated the achievement as a moment of pride not only for the state but also for their family. "Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu being selected as the Business Reformer of the Year is truly a matter of pride for Andhra Pradesh. This recognition is not just a personal honour but a symbol of the confidence and admiration the national business community has for his governance model," Lokesh stated in his post.

According to Lokesh, the award jury commended Naidu's coura-



geous pursuit of governance and business reforms that have brought accountability, efficiency, and investor confidence to Andhra Pradesh. He said that this recognition reflects Naidu's consistent vision of transforming the state into a hub of innovation, growth, and transparent administration. "The award stands as testimony to his commitment towards reform-driven governance, policy pace, and credible leadership. Under his guidance,

reforms have become a tool not of rhetoric but of real transformation that directly improves people's lives," Lokesh added. Over the years, Naidu has earned a reputation as one of India's most tech-savvy and reform-oriented political leaders. As the architect of modern Hyderabad during his earlier tenure as Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, he is widely credited for turning the city into a major IT and business destination. In his cur-

rent term, Naidu has sought to replicate that success by developing Amaravati as a next-generation capital city and by focusing on industrial corridors, digital governance, and sustainable development.

Policy analysts and business observers have frequently lauded Naidu's strategies for attracting investments, both domestic and international. His government's emphasis on single-window clearances, digital administration, and proactive

industrial policies have been described as key factors that make Andhra Pradesh one of the more business-friendly states in India. The Business Reformer of the Year award from The Economic Times further reinforces Naidu's national stature as a policymaker focused on innovation, economic growth, and governance transparency.

Among the many reforms he has championed are digitization of services, public-private partnership models in infrastructure, and the integration of technology in welfare delivery systems. State government officials expressed confidence that the recognition will further enhance Andhra Pradesh's image as an ideal investment destination.

They also view it as a motivation for the administration to continue implementing forward-looking, reform-based governance. The award will be formally presented to Chandrababu Naidu at The Economic Times Awards for Corporate Excellence ceremony later this month, where he will be joining other national and business leaders recognized for their outstanding contributions to India's growth and transformation.

## Academic and moral knowledge should be equal : AP CM



Amaravati, Dec 18:

**C**hief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu emphasized that along with academic knowledge, students must also imbibe moral and social values to shape themselves into responsible citizens. Speaking on the second day of the Collectors' Conference in Amaravati, the Chief Minister underscored the significance of value-based education and innovative learning practices in building a strong and progressive Andhra Pradesh. Addressing senior officials and district collectors, Chandrababu Naidu directed them to extend the state's successful "Mustabu" program to private educational institutions up to the intermediate level across the state.

The program, which focuses on student discipline, grooming, and life skills, has been gaining recognition in government schools. The Chief Minister said that value-driven initiatives like Mustabu should reach every learner, irrespective of the type of institution, to ensure a consistent standard of holistic education.

"With new ideas, we can achieve meaningful innovations. Every rupee spent for the cause of education should yield visible, quality results," Naidu said, calling for accountability and outcome-based planning in public spending. Emphasizing the need for forward-looking policies, Chandrababu urged officials to adopt modern pedagogical tools and technology while promoting ethics, social behavior, and civic responsibility among students.

"Academic scores alone cannot define

success; value systems should be the foundation of character building," he remarked. The Chief Minister also highlighted the importance of collaboration between the government and private educational institutions in creating an enabling environment for students.

He said that by combining strong administration, innovative practices, and community participation, the education system can transform into a model for other states to follow. Naidu reiterated his government's commitment to strengthening education infrastructure, promoting teacher training, and introducing new learning modules that merge knowledge, practicality, and humanity.

Concluding his address, he called upon district collectors to act as agents of change, ensuring that every educational program under their supervision delivers measurable impact and inspires a culture of excellence rooted in values.

## hundreds of Foreign Nationals Receive Sudden Visa Cancellation Emails from U.S.; Indians Shocked

TPN Bureau  
December 18

**W**ashington, D.C.: In a surprising move that has left hundreds of foreign nationals unsettled, the U.S. government has reportedly sent emails notifying several visa holders that their visas have been "prudentially revoked." The action, understood to be part of precautionary enforcement under the Trump administration's tightened immigration policies, has caused widespread confusion, particularly among Indian H-1B and H-4 visa holders.

The term "prudentially revoked" in the emails signifies a precautionary or temporary cancellation of visas, often pending further security or administrative review. While this does not mean a permanent denial of visa status, it does create uncertainty for those currently living and working in the U.S. Many recipients of the emails said the notices were issued directly from U.S. consulates and embassies, explaining that their employment or dependent visas had been revoked as a preventive measure.

Legal experts note that such revocations are typically triggered when



U.S. authorities have raised concerns or initiated investigations related to an individual's background, though no conclusive wrongdoing may have been found.

### Policy Tightening

Speaking about the issue, U.S.-based immigration attorney Emily Neumann confirmed that a growing number of H-1B and H-4 visa holders have recently reported receiving these notifications. "Even if a person is only under investigation and not proven guilty, their visa can still be prudentially revoked," Neumann said.

This measure itself does not immediately affect their current lawful stay in the U.S., but it may lead to complications if they need to renew their visa or travel abroad." She added that once a visa has been prudentially cancelled, individuals are advised to resolve any pending con-

cerns before attending another visa interview or attempting re-entry to the U.S. Otherwise, they risk being denied future clearance.

**R**eactions to the U.S. government's move remain divided. Supporters argue that it is a necessary step to protect national security and prevent potentially risky individuals from entering or remaining in the country. "It's better to act safely than regret later," one commentator noted, adding that precautionary cancellations help minimize risks while investigations are ongoing. However, others view the decision as excessive and disruptive.

For many highly skilled Indian professionals working in the U.S. on H-1B visas, the abrupt cancellations have created anxiety about job continuity and immigration status stability. Legal advisers are urging affected individuals not to panic but to consult qualified immigration experts to determine their next steps.

As of now, no official statement has clarified how many visas were revoked or whether the measure will continue in the coming weeks. The uncertainty has left many awaiting further clarification from U.S. authorities.

## New participatory model introduced

TPN Bureau  
December 18

**A**maravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu introduced a new participatory model during the fifth Collectors' Conference held at the State Secretariat in Amaravati. In a departure from regular reviews, the Chief Minister asked district collectors themselves to present the best practices being implemented in their respective districts. During the conference, collectors from six districts—Alluri Sitarama Raju, Parvathipuram, Manyam, Eluru, Nellore, Kadapa, and Anantapur—showcased their innovative development projects through PowerPoint presentations.

Impressed by their efforts, Chief Minister Naidu directed officials to replicate these successful district-level initiatives across the entire state. Naidu commended the collectors for introducing innovative, people-friendly programs that go beyond routine administrative functions. He said the conference had been more meaningful this time, as it focused on creative



governance models that bring tangible benefits to citizens. Eluru District Collector Vetriselvi showcased "Marpu," a transformative project aimed at empowering illicit liquor manufacturers by turning them into micro-entrepreneurs. Nellore Collector Himanshu Shukla presented "Champion Farmers," a program that focuses on farmer empowerment, economic advancement, and the adoption of best agricultural practices. Kadapa Collector C.H. Sridhar highlighted the "Smart Kitchens" initiative, which ensures that students are served nutritious and tasty mid-day meals prepared in clean, modern facilities. Anantapur Collector

Anand demonstrated a digital innovation project integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) to prevent revenue record tampering and ensure robust data transparency.

Chief Minister Naidu described these projects as exemplary models that could serve as benchmarks not only within Andhra Pradesh but also for other states. He emphasized that governance must continuously evolve with innovation and a citizen-centric approach. The CM added that the sharing of successful practices would help improve administrative efficiency, strengthen public service delivery, and build a model state.

# Praja Darbar to resolve people's problems

TPN Bureau | December 18 Vizianagaram : Minister Kondapalli Srinivas emphasized that the Praja Darbar program is aimed solely at resolving the problems faced by common people. Participating in the Praja Darbar held at Gantyada Mandal in Vizianagaram district, the minister personally received petitions from the public and interacted with them to understand their grievances. Addressing the gathering, Minister Srinivas said that the government is committed to providing quick and effective solutions to the issues raised by citizens. He directed the district administration and departmental officials to act with sincerity and dedication while addressing public grievances. The minister underscored that the Praja Darbar initiative reflects the government's intention to stay

in close contact with the people and to provide an immediate redressal mechanism for local-level issues.

During the program, the minister received 124 petitions from various individuals across the mandal. The petitions primarily concerned issues related to revenue matters, electricity, pension approvals, and employment opportunities. The minister assured the applicants that all their pleas would be forwarded to the concerned departments for prompt resolution. He stressed that officers must ensure transparency, accountability, and timely follow-up in the process of grievance redressal. Minister Srinivas further stated that the main objective of Praja Darbar is to bring governance closer to the people. By holding such meetings regularly, the administration can identify recurring issues and

take suitable measures to tackle them at the grassroots level.

He urged all government employees and field officers to treat public service as a moral responsibility rather than routine work. To ensure accountability, the minister instructed the office staff to continuously monitor the progress of each petition until it is resolved. He insisted that unresolved issues must be reported back to the higher authorities without delay. This follow-up mechanism, he said, would improve public trust and ensure that no complaint goes unanswered. Speaking on the sidelines of the event, several people expressed appreciation for the initiative, noting that it allows citizens to directly communicate their problems to top officials. They felt that such programs bridge the gap between the public and the administration, particu-

larly in rural areas where access to government offices is often limited. The Praja Darbar witnessed active participation from mandal-level officials, public representatives, TDP local leaders, and a large number of villagers.

Officials from revenue, electricity, and welfare departments took note of the grievances and committed to providing timely solutions as per government policy. Minister Kondapalli Srinivas concluded the session by reiterating that good governance depends on responsive administration and citizen participation. He said the government would soon review the action taken on petitions submitted in the Praja Darbar to ensure genuine problems are solved at the earliest. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to building an accountable system where every citizen's voice is heard and valued.



## CM Chandrababu Naidu to Meet Six Union Ministers in Delhi to Seek Central Support for State Projects

TPN Bureau | December 18

Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is set to leave for New Delhi this evening to hold a series of crucial meetings with top Union Ministers on Friday. The meetings are aimed at seeking enhanced financial assistance and cooperation from the Central Government for ongoing and proposed development projects in the state. According to official sources, the Chief Minister's Delhi schedule has been finalized, and he is expected to hold one-on-one discussions with six key ministers of the Union Cabinet.

During his visit, Chief Minister Naidu will hold separate meetings with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Jal Shakti Minister C. R. Patil, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister

Hardeep Singh Puri, and Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. The discussions are likely to focus on the state's pending proposals related to infrastructure, irrigation, road connectivity, and industrial development, among other issues.

Government officials said that the Chief Minister would emphasize the need for increased central funding and expeditious clearances for key projects being executed in partnership with the Centre. The agenda also includes seeking support for the expansion of national highways, strengthening of irrigation networks under the Jal Shakti Ministry, development of the port and inland waterways sector, and assistance for the energy and natural gas sectors.

Naidu is also likely to raise concerns regarding revenue shortfalls and request a greater share of cen-

tral allocations for Andhra Pradesh's ongoing capital region development. This visit comes at a time when the state government is actively pursuing a comprehensive development plan to boost industrial growth and improve public infrastructure.

It also reflects the Chief Minister's strategy of strengthening ties with the Central Government to secure long-term investment and cooperation for flagship state initiatives. After completing his series of meetings in the national capital, Chief Minister Naidu is scheduled to return to Amaravati on Friday night.

On Saturday, December 20, he will take part in the 'Swarna Andhra-Swachh Andhra' program to be held in Anakapalli district, where he is expected to address the public and outline the state government's vision for a cleaner and more developed Andhra Pradesh.

Mallu Karjun will oversee Bapatla district, Gantham Chandrudu has been assigned to Sri Sath-

Yoga Sai district, and C.H. Sridhar has been designated as the in-charge for Nandyal district. According to official sources, the appointment of senior IAS officers as district in-charges is intended to strengthen the administration's reach at the

grassroots level. These officers will monitor the progress of government schemes, ensure inter-departmental coordination, and work closely with district collectors to achieve the development goals set by the government.

such as education, health-care, agriculture, and rural development. By assigning senior IAS officers to oversee multiple districts, the government aims to bring greater oversight and strategic direction to local governance.

The appointed officers, known for their administrative experience and service record, are expected to bring in-depth supervision and collaborative leadership to their respective regions. The appointments take effect immediately. Officials at the district level have been instructed to extend full cooperation to the newly appointed in-charge officers to facilitate smooth coordination and accelerated progress on all state-driven initiatives.

## Narasa Raopet MLA Dr. Chedalawada Aravinda Babu Leads Swachh Bharat-Swachh Andhra Cleanliness Drive

TPN Bureau | December 18

Narasa Raopet (Palnadu District): Continuing his sustained efforts to promote cleanliness and public hygiene, Narasa Raopet legislator Dr. Chedalawada Aravinda Babu personally supervised a massive cleanliness programme on Thursday as part of the Swachh Bharat-Swachh Andhra Mission. The event, held in the Narasa Raopet court premises, drew enthusiastic participation from municipal staff, officials, and local residents. The Swachh Bharat Mission, launched in 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, turned Mahatma Gandhi's dream of a clean India into a nationwide civic movement.

The program's emphasis on sanitation awareness, waste management, and open defecation-free environments has transformed urban and rural landscapes across India. The Andhra Pradesh government has been im-

plementing the state-specific Swachh Andhra Mission on the same lines, with consistent guidance from the Swachh Andhra Corporation. Regular sanitation drives have been organized in cities and villages alike to embed cleanliness into daily life. In line with these efforts, Dr. Aravinda Babu took the initiative to conduct a special drive in the Narasa Raopet court campus.

Equipped with JCB machinery and supported by groups of sanitation workers, teams removed accumulated garbage, stones, and wild vegetation from the premises. The coordinated operation turned the entire court compound into a clean, verdant, and orderly space, reflecting the MLA's personal attention to detail and commitment to the mission's values.

After overseeing the clean-up, Dr. Aravinda Babu engaged in a light-hearted tennis session at the court's own tennis facility,

sharing a moment of relaxation with staff and local youth. His friendly gesture and active participation symbolized his "clean and healthy lifestyle" message—encouraging citizens to see cleanliness not just as a civic duty, but as part of everyday living.

Later, the MLA visited the busy Market Centre area, where he interacted with small traders, shopkeepers, and street vendors. Listening attentively to their issues, he assured them

of active support from the local administration, stating that "I am always here for you." The personal contact drew warm responses from the crowd, reinforcing his image as an accessible public representative deeply connected with the people of his constituency. Local citizens and civic groups lauded Dr. Aravinda Babu's initiative, noting that his visible participation inspired people to take up cleaning drives voluntarily.

## Government Appoints Senior IAS Officers as In-charges for Five Districts

TPN Bureau | December 18

Amaravati: In a significant administrative move aimed at improving coordination and ensuring effective implementation of state policies, the Andhra Pradesh government has appointed senior IAS officers as in-charges for five districts. The Government Chief Secretary, K. Vijayanand, issued formal orders announcing these appointments on Thursday. As per the notification, G. Veerapandian has been appointed as the in-charge officer for East Godavari district, while Prasanna Venkatesh will take charge of Kakinada district.

Mallu Karjun will oversee Bapatla district, Gantham Chandrudu has been assigned to Sri Sath-

Yoga Sai district, and C.H. Sridhar has been designated as the in-charge for Nandyal district. According to official sources, the appointment of senior IAS officers as district in-charges is intended to strengthen the administration's reach at the

such as education, health-care, agriculture, and rural development. By assigning senior IAS officers to oversee multiple districts, the government aims to bring greater oversight and strategic direction to local governance.

The appointed officers, known for their administrative experience and service record, are expected to bring in-depth supervision and collaborative leadership to their respective regions. The appointments take effect immediately. Officials at the district level have been instructed to extend full cooperation to the newly appointed in-charge officers to facilitate smooth coordination and accelerated progress on all state-driven initiatives.



# TDP Leaders Allege “One Crore Signatures” of YSRCP are Fake; PPP Model Misunderstood by Govt

TPN Bureau | December 18

Narasaraopet (Palnadu District): Telugu Desam Party (TDP) district president Kommalapati Sridhar has launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), alleging that the much-publicized “One Crore Signatures” campaign is an orchestrated drama filled with forged and fabricated entries. Speaking to the media at the TDP district office in Palnadu, Sridhar claimed that the YSRCP, facing an existential crisis and declining popularity, was resorting to political theatrics in

the name of mass signature drives.

He stated that many of the so-called “voluntary signatures” were, in reality, created or manipulated by YSRCP functionaries to project artificial public support. “The truth will soon come out. The people will know how many signatures were genuinely given by citizens and how many were created by YSRCP leaders and workers themselves,” Sridhar asserted. He further remarked that even street vendors were eagerly waiting to see the copies of these signatures to know whether their names were forged with-



out their knowledge.

Accusing Chief Minister Jagan of authoritarian tendencies, Sridhar said, “Even YSRCP’s own leaders are frustrat-

ed with Jagan’s one-man rule and unilateral style of functioning. This government operates not for development but for deception.” Turning his

focus to the controversy over the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, Sridhar criticized the YSRCP’s opposition to PPP-based developmen-

tal projects, particularly in the construction of medical colleges.

He lamented that while the world has recognized the PPP model as a universally acclaimed method for efficient infrastructure development, the ruling party seems ignorant of its merits and broad social benefits. “It is a shame that the Chief Minister and YSRCP leaders do not understand the value and purpose of PPP. Their opposition only exposes their lack of understanding or their opportunistic politics,” Sridhar commented.

He questioned whether YSRCP leaders could claim that there was no

private participation or non-governmental involvement in the infrastructure projects initiated during their regime.

Sridhar emphasized that even in Parliament, committees have endorsed the PPP system for its potential to strengthen public infrastructure through private collaboration. “If Jagan really believes PPP is harmful, does he have the courage to make his party MPs protest against parliamentary committee recommendations?” Sridhar challenged. He concluded by urging people to see through what he called the “false propaganda and hypocrisy” of the ruling party.

Sridhar called upon citizens to recognize the value of transparent governance and evidence-based development, suggesting that the TDP remains committed to people’s welfare and accountability. The TDP district chief’s remarks signal an intensification of the party’s campaign against the YSRCP ahead of the upcoming local elections.

Political observers say the issue of fake signatures and rejection of the PPP model could become flashpoints in the ongoing political tussle between the two major parties in Andhra Pradesh.



## Hindupur Activists Mount Campaign to Make Town District Headquarters

TPN Bureau | December 18

ANANTAPUR: With the reorganization of districts in Andhra Pradesh gaining momentum, Hindupur-based organisations, civic groups, and activists have intensified their efforts to ensure that Hindupur town is declared the headquarters of the newly proposed Satya Sai district. The local campaign, which has picked up pace over the past two weeks, is now drawing widespread attention from residents, traders, and political circles alike.

Leaders of the movement argue that Hindupur has all the necessary infrastructure and resources to function as an administrative headquarters. They point to the town's existing government offices, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities as strong reasons for selection. The town already hosts major institutions including a government hospital, a long-standing municipal setup, and extensive rail and road connectivity linking it to Bengaluru and Anantapur.

Activists have also highlighted the availability of vast government lands on the outskirts of the town suitable for the construction of new administrative complexes. “Hindupur is geographically well-positioned and has been a key commercial and political centre for decades. Declaring it as the headquarters would be both practical and beneficial for the people of the region,” said a local civic activist associated

with the campaign.

The campaign expects major political backing, particularly from Hindupur MLA and film actor Nandamuri Balakrishna. Local groups are urging Balakrishna to take an active role in representing their demand before the state government. “Balakrishna garu has always worked for the development of Hindupur. We are confident he will support this cause and ensure the town gets its due recognition,” said one organiser.

Meanwhile, some residents and local organisations from other parts of the district have been lobbying for P. Uppataparti to be named the district headquarters, citing its global recognition as the birthplace of spiritual leader Sri Sathya Sai Baba and its established tourism infrastructure. However, Hindupur campaigners maintain that administrative convenience and population density should guide the government's decision.

Officials from the district administration have not yet issued any official statement regarding the final decision on the headquarters. With growing pressure from various groups, the state government is likely to take a final call after assessing logistical feasibility, population concentration, and political consensus. For now, Hindupur's residents remain united in their appeal, hoping the town's historic significance and strong infrastructure will swing the decision in their favor.

## Jagan Submits One Crore Signatures to Governor Opposing Privatization of Medical Colleges

TPN Bureau | December 18

Vijayawada: YSR Congress Party president and former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has described the Andhra Pradesh government's move to privatize state-run medical colleges as “the biggest scam in the country.” On Thursday, Jagan submitted to Governor Abdul Nazir at Raj Bhavan a memorandum containing over one crore signatures collected from people across the state opposing the decision.

Speaking to media outside Raj Bhavan, Jagan said the signature campaign reflects the widespread public outrage against what he called an “unjust and anti-people” decision by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's government. “Privatizing government medical colleges is not just a policy change—it is an assault on access to affordable healthcare and education for poor and middle-class families,” he said.

Jagan added that the submission of 1,04,11,136 signatures marks a historic moment in the country's democratic movements. “Such a massive people's campaign might be unprecedented in Indian history,” he said. The campaign began on October 10, following the YSRCP's call for a state-wide movement against



privatization.

Through the program titled ‘Rachabanda,’ party leaders and volunteers visited every village, town, and ward to explain the likely consequences of the privatization plan and collect public signatures. According to Jagan, large rallies were organized across all Assembly constituencies on November 12 and December 10, followed by district-level marches on December 15 displaying the signed petitions.

TPN Bureau | December 18

Vijayawada: Former Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has called the privatization of medical colleges in Andhra Pradesh “the biggest scam in the country,” while leading a massive people's movement against the state government's decision. On Thursday, Jagan submitted over one crore signatures collected from citizens opposing the privatization move to Governor S. Abdul Nazeer at the Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada.

Addressing the media later, he said the initiative reflects the voice of the people and their resolve to safeguard public education and healthcare. “This is a historic moment,” Jagan said, noting that exactly 1,04,11,136 signatures were gathered in protest. “Never before in the country's history has such a large-scale people's movement taken place for a cause like this,” he added.

According to Jagan, the YSRCP launched the anti-privatization campaign on October 7, following the government's proposal to hand over certain medical colleges to private hands. From October

10 to December 10, the party organized ‘Rachabanda’ awareness programs across villages, towns, and wards, explaining the negative consequences of privatization to the public and mobilizing their participation through signatures. Subsequent to the grassroots campaign, large rallies were held in every Assembly constituency on November 12 and again on December 10.

The collected signature documents were then brought to district centers, displayed in public rallies on December 15, and later transferred to the party headquarters before submission to the Governor. Explaining the purpose of the movement, Jagan said, “We appealed to the Governor not only to understand the injustice being done by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu through privatization but also to take note of the people's aspirations.”

Criticizing the state government's policy, Jagan questioned the rationale behind privatizing vital public institutions. “Why does the government run schools, hospitals, and RTC buses across the country? Because the poor and middle-class people cannot afford private institutions. The government has a responsibility to serve and protect them,” he asserted.

Calling the privatization decision “irrational and short-sighted,” Jagan urged the government to reconsider its stand in the best interests of future generations, emphasizing that welfare and access to education and health must remain the government's duty, not a commercial concern.

# Venkaiah Naidu Urges Citizens to Fulfil Their Duties for India's Progress

TPN Bureau | December 18

Vijayawada | Gudivada, Krishna District: Former Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu called upon every citizen to perform their respective duties responsibly to help India move forward as a stronger and more developed nation. He said that the country has already made significant progress across multiple sectors and is now entering a new era of comprehensive growth.

Speaking at the valedictory celebrations of the AANR College in Gudivada, Naidu observed that India's transformation over the past decade has been remarkable. Citing the latest report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he pointed out that India is the fastest-growing major economy in the world. "India has emerged as one of the leading nations driving global growth. The IMF's report clearly shows our economic resilience and potential," he remarked.

Highlighting the con-



tribution of Indians abroad, Naidu said that nearly half of the leading doctors in the United States are of Indian origin. "This shows the strength, intelligence, and hard work of our people. We are succeeding abroad because of our strong foundation at home that is why we are winning at home and shining globally," he said, drawing applause from the audience. He urged the younger generation, particularly students, to take full advan-

tage of opportunities in the digital era. "Nine years ago, only 15 percent of people were using digital services. At the same time, he reminded that the nation still faces challenges that demand collective attention. "Eighteen percent of our population still lives below the poverty line. We must ensure that prosperity and welfare reach every section of society. True development will be achieved only when it becomes inclusive," he emphasized. Naidu praised India's progress not only in the economic domain but also in diplomacy, technology, and social re-

forms. "The country is unveiling a new era — economically, socially, and diplomatically. Our achievements in foreign policy, infrastructure, and technology are a testament to India's rising stature," he said.

He reiterated that good governance, moral values, and civic responsibility are vital to sustaining this momentum. "Governments can make policies, but people must practice discipline, honesty, and duty in everyday life. If everyone performs their role responsibly from politician to teacher, farmer to student, our country will march ahead with confidence and pride," he said.

High Court Judge Justice Battu Devanand, former MP Kavuri Sambasiva Rao, MLAs Venigandla Ramu and Kamineni Srinivas, and several local dignitaries attended the event. The celebrations concluded with felicitations to distinguished alumni and cultural programs showcasing local talent.

# AP Youth Festival 2025 Begins at KL University Tadepalli

TPN Bureau | December 18

Tadepalli, News Today: A vibrant celebration of talent, innovation, and youth power is set to unfold as the Andhra Pradesh State Youth Festival 2025 begins on December 18 at the KL Deemed University campus in Vadodwaram, Tadepalli Mandal. The three-day festival (December 18-20), organized by the Andhra Pradesh Youth Services Department, will bring together students, entrepreneurs, and NRIs in a dynamic forum titled "Andhra Yuva Sankalp 2K25."

Over a hundred student volunteers from various colleges have taken charge of organizing the event, working in three committees to prepare and beautify the campus for the grand occasion. Youth from all 26 districts of Andhra Pradesh are set to participate, making it one of the largest youth gatherings in the state in



recent years. The festival will be inaugurated on Thursday morning at 10 a.m. by Education Minister Nara Lokesh, in the presence of several cabinet ministers, senior officials, and university representatives.

In addition to cultural showcases, the festival will include several thematic seminars and workshops focused on future-oriented topics such as sports, physical fitness, lifestyle and wellness, technological innovation, artificial intelligence, and green energy. The highlight sessions—"Golden Andhra - Vikasit Bharat 2047" and youth innovation showcases—aim to spark meaningful dialogue about Andhra Pradesh's role in India's growth story.

# Negligence at Vijayawada Bus Stand: RTC Officials' Apathy Putting Lives at Risk

TPN Bureau | December 18

Vijayawada: A shocking incident at the Pandit Nehru Bus Station (PNBS), popularly known as Vijayawada Bus Stand, has once again raised serious concerns about passenger safety and administrative negligence within the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC). A woman sustained severe injuries after being hit by a speeding RTC bus inside the station premises, leaving both her legs crushed.

According to eyewitnesses, the woman was attempting to cross the internal bus lane near Bay No. 14 when a bus driven at high speed ran over her feet. Onlookers rushed to assist the victim and alerted the local police and ambulance services. She was immediately taken to Government General Hospital, Vijayawada, where doctors confirmed multiple fractures and severe tissue injuries to both legs. Her condition is said to be critical but stable. Passengers and bystanders blamed the reckless driving of some RTC drivers

and the complete lack of enforcement by officials.

"Buses move at dangerous speeds even inside the stand. Passengers have no safe walkway. Accidents keep happening, but no one takes responsibility," complained a regular commuter. This is not the first time such a tragedy has occurred at the Vijayawada Bus Stand. In previous incidents, several passengers have lost their lives under similar circumstances. Reports indicate that in one major mishap earlier this year, five people were killed when a bus lost control while entering the stand.

Despite repeated warnings and previous accidents, no concrete safety measures have been implemented. The sprawling PNBS handles thousands of passengers and hundreds of buses daily, making it one of the busiest transport hubs in South India. However, despite its volume and importance, safety protocols appear grossly inadequate. There are no dedicated pedestrian lanes within the main bus movement areas, and speed-control mechanisms such as rumble strips or automatic barriers are

either dysfunctional or absent.

When contacted, APSRTC officials claimed that drivers are regularly instructed to slow down inside station limits and follow safety protocols. However, commuters allege these guidelines remain only on paper. "The focus seems to be entirely on maximizing revenue and turnaround time for buses. Passenger safety is clearly being neglected," said a local trade union leader representing transport workers.

Experts say the need for a comprehensive safety audit at Vijayawa-

da Bus Stand is urgent. They recommend strict implementation of speed limits, installation of surveillance cameras with penalty mechanisms, and better lane segregation for pedestrians. Additionally, there is growing demand for periodic driver training and refresher courses emphasizing passenger safety and station discipline.

Local citizens' groups have now demanded immediate action from the APSRTC management and city traffic police to prevent such incidents. They urge authorities to introduce mandatory safety drills and appoint safety marshals to monitor driver conduct within the bus stand premises.

The latest accident has once again exposed the dangerous mix of negligence, apathy, and lack of accountability that continues to endanger thousands of daily commuters. Unless officials act swiftly and decisively, the Vijayawada Bus Stand may continue to be a danger zone rather than a gateway for safe public transport.

# Digital Transformation at Vijayawada's Kanaka Durga Temple: All Services Go Online

TPN Bureau | December 18

Vijayawada: In a major step toward promoting cashless transactions, the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam (Kanaka Durga Temple) in Vijayawada has announced that all temple-related services, including darshan and offerings, will now be fully managed through online and digital payment systems. Acting on government directives to enhance transparency and convenience through digitization, temple authorities have put comprehensive arrangements in place to replace cash-based operations with digital alternatives.

By streamlining paddy procurement, inter-district coordination, and milling operations, the government aims to both support farmers with fair price realization and ensure uninterrupted rice supply to welfare schemes across Andhra Pradesh.

Temple Executive Officer (EO) Siva Shree-



nath Nayak revealed on Wednesday that devotees can now avail of all major services digitally. These include darshan tickets, direct and indirect seva bookings, accommodation services, prasadam purchase, hair tonsure payments, and donations. "We appeal to devotees to make use of the online services and support the government's initiative toward a

cashless ecosystem," he said. To ensure smooth implementation, special targets have been assigned to major temples across Andhra Pradesh to encourage digital payment usage.

Each temple is being ranked based on the volume of online transactions recorded daily. In the latest rankings released on Wednesday, the Srisailam Bhramaramba

temple management has ensured that a wide range of payment methods including UPI, debit and credit cards, and online wallets will be available for devotees to complete transactions seamlessly.

This initiative marks a significant stride in the government's mission to digitalize temple management systems statewide, reinforcing transparency, efficiency, and convenience for millions of devotees who visit Andhra Pradesh's renowned temples each year.



# District Steps Up Paddy Procurement; Government Sends Excess Stock to Kakinada Mills for Milling

TPN Bureau | December 18

Vijayawada: The ongoing paddy procurement drive in the district has gained momentum, with officials reporting that nearly 30,000 metric tonnes of paddy have already been purchased from farmers at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). However, due to the limited milling capacity of the local mills, the government has decided to shift a part of the stock to Kakinada district for processing.

As part of this initiative, around 2,700 metric tonnes of paddy were dispatched from Tenali to Kakinada on Wednesday evening through railway wagons. This marks the first phase of large-scale transportation of paddy outside the district for milling. Officials explained that under the Custom Milling Rice (CMR) system, paddy is usually processed in local mills

before being supplied to the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme in government schools.

However, this season, the 20 rice mills operating under CMR in the district have been found inadequate to handle the current procurement volume.

District authorities expressed confidence that the remaining procurement will be completed soon, ensuring that all eligible farmers benefit from the MSP program. They also emphasized that shifting the milling operations to Kakinada is a temporary measure aimed at preventing delays and ensuring timely processing of the grain for various welfare programs.

By streamlining paddy procurement, inter-district coordination, and milling operations, the government aims to both support farmers with fair price realization and ensure uninterrupted rice supply to welfare schemes across Andhra Pradesh.

Temple Executive Officer (EO) Siva Shree-

Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple stood first in the state, while the Kanaka Durga Temple secured the second position by recording the sale of 947 online tickets in a single day. EO Sreenath Nayak further informed that devotees can easily book tickets through two official websites, a dedicated mobile application, and even via WhatsApp. These multiple digital touchpoints are designed to increase accessibility and ease for visitors coming from across the region and beyond. The move also targets the eradication of malpractice and irregularities that have occurred in physical ticket sales in the past.

Until now, most transaction activities were handled manually, leaving

# SS & N College Students Shine at ANU Inter-Collegiate Athletics Meet – Win 8 Medals Including Two Golds

TPN Bureau | December 18  
Narasaraopet (Palnadu District): Students of Sri Subbaraya and Narayana (SS & N) College, Narasaraopet, brought laurels to their institution by clinching eight medals – two gold, two silver, and four bronze – at the 48th Acharya Nagarjuna University (ANU) Inter-Collegiate Athletics Championships 2025. The three-day event was held from December 10 to 12 at KVR & MKR College, Kharajipalem. In a press release on Thursday, College Principal Dr. M.S. Sudheer congratulated the medal-winning athletes and praised their dedication.

and discipline. "Our students have showcased exceptional performance at the university level, reflecting the standard of sports training and academic balance maintained at SS & N College," he stated. Among the standout performers was K. Prasanna Kumar, who emerged as a double medalist. He sprinted to gold in the 100 meters with an impressive timing of 10.70 seconds. He also bagged the silver medal in the 110 meters hurdles, clocking 14.90 seconds.

Additionally, he was part of the 4x100 meters relay team that secured the bronze medal for the college. Another remarkable



able athlete, CHVM Gurushankar, dominated the middle-distance track events. He won the gold medal in the 800 me-

ters with a timing of 2.02 seconds and added a silver medal in the 200 meters, completing the sprint in 23.19 seconds. He

also contributed to the 4x100 meters relay team, helping them clinch a bronze medal alongside his teammates.

The relay team, which included MV Raviteja and P. Vamsi in addition to Prasanna Kumar and Gurushankar, displayed strong coordination and speed, earning bronze medals for their performance in a tough competition that saw participation from several top colleges under Acharya Nagarjuna University. The management of SS & N College expressed immense pride in their students' accomplishments.

Managing Committee President K. Vijay Kumar, Secretary and Correspondent (and former Municipal Chairperson) N. Subbarayagupta, and Joint Secretary U. Ven-

kata Appa Rao extended their heartfelt congratulations to the young athletes. They commended the physical education department for its continuous efforts in encouraging sports and fitness culture on campus. Vice-Principal Dr. P. Srinivasa Sai, Physical Director Dr. Yakkala Madhusudana Rao, teaching, and non-teaching staff members joined in felicitating the winners.

The management reiterated its commitment to promoting sporting talent and providing advanced training facilities to nurture future champions. The Principal concluded by noting that the students' suc-

## TDP Conducts IVRS Survey on MPs' Performance; Bapatla Constituency Becomes Talking Point



TPN Bureau | December 18

Chirala | Bapatla: The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) high command has initiated a performance review of its Members of Parliament through an IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System) survey conducted on Tuesday, triggering extensive discussion across the state. The move is seen as part of the party's broader strategy to evaluate its representatives' public image and efficiency ahead of upcoming political developments.

According to sources, the survey covered all TDP Lok Sabha MPs, seeking public feedback on their performance in their respective constituencies. Among them, Bapatla MP and Lok Sabha Panel Speaker Tenneti Krishna Prasad has become the subject of widespread local attention after numerous voters reported receiving calls asking them to rate his performance. In Bapatla constituency, many residents received IVRS calls from the number 86453 19463, inviting them to participate in the public feedback initiative.

The automated message reportedly asked voters to press 1 if the MP's performance was good, 2 if it was average, and 3 if they were dissatisfied with his work. Within hours, social media platforms and local circles were abuzz with dis-

cussions about these survey calls – with many interpreting it as a "mid-term evaluation" by the TDP leadership.

Political observers believe that this exercise is part of the TDP's attempt to understand ground-level perceptions directly from the electorate rather than relying solely on local reports or leaders' claims. The party, which is keen on strengthening its performance-driven image, seems determined to identify both popular and underperforming MPs before the next election cycle.

In the case of Tenneti Krishna Prasad, who has been active both in Delhi and within his constituency, the feedback process has drawn particular interest. Many see this as a test of his ability to balance parliamentary responsibilities with local development and outreach. Party insiders suggest that the results of this IVRS survey will help the central leadership strategize future roles, candidate selection, and constituency focus areas.

However, the open nature of the survey has also made it a subject of public debate and curiosity in political and media circles. As discussions continue, the Bapatla constituency remains in the spotlight, symbolizing how modern political parties increasingly turn to technolo-

## Vajpayee's Bronze statue unveiled in Bapatla



TPN Bureau | December 18

BAPATLA: The Atal Modi Suparipalan Bus Yatra continued in Bapatla on Tuesday, with ruling coalition leaders unveiling a bronze statue of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and addressing a large public gathering.

Energy Minister Gotipati Ravi Kumar, Ministers Anagani Satyaprasad and Kotsu Parthasarathi, and BJP State President PVN Madhav unveiled the statue as

part of the programme. Madhav said unveiling Vajpayee's statue in the presence of three ministers was a proud moment. He said coalition leaders were actively participating in the yatra and public meetings to reach out to people. Recalling Vajpayee's political journey, Madhav referred to his role in the freedom movement, early imprisonment and lifelong dedication to the nation. He highlighted Vajpayee's ability to unite non-Con-

gress parties and earn respect across political lines.

Madhav also spoke about Vajpayee's parliamentary career, his advocacy for national integration, his stand on issues such as Kashmir, his role in Goa's liberation movement and his strong interventions on national security.

He said Vajpayee's leadership during the 1998 nuclear tests firmly placed India on the global stage.

Energy Minister Got-

tipati Ravi Kumar described Vajpayee as an "Ajata Shatru" of Indian politics and recalled his long parliamentary career, including three terms as Prime Minister. He said Vajpayee prioritised infrastructure-led development, citing the Golden Quadrilateral project and rural road expansion that strengthened national connectivity. Minister Anagani Satyaprasad praised Madhav for strengthening coordination within the coalition and steering the yatra. He said the coalition government, after completing one year, was engaging with the public to explain its development initiatives and added that installing Vajpayee's statues across districts would help younger generations understand his legacy.

Minister Kotsu Parthasarathi said Vajpayee consistently placed national interest above personal or party considerations and upheld high standards of parliamentary discipline.

Leaders urged party workers to take the coalition government's development programmes to the public.

## Bapatla Girl Komala Sai Vadalashetti Shines as Miss Andhra Pradesh 2025 Runner-Up



TPN Bureau | December 18

Bapatla: Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh – Bringing pride to her hometown, Bapatla's own Komala Sai Vadalashetti has emerged as the runner-up in the prestigious Miss Andhra Pradesh 2025 beauty pageant, held recently in Vijayawada. Daughter of Amalapura Municipal Commissioner Nirmal Kumar who earlier served as the Bapatla Municipal Commissioner Komala impressed judges and audiences alike with her elegance, intelligence, and confidence. The event, held at SS Convention Hall in Vijayawada, witnessed participation from over 25 contestants representing districts across the state.

Across multiple rounds focusing on fashion, culture, and talent, Komala stood out with her distinct poise and personality. Her grace on the runway combined with thoughtful articulation during the question-and-answer segment won her wide acclaim from both the jury and spectators. Hailing from Bhimavaram in Bapatla town, Komala reflected on her journey as one defined by hard work and dedication.

She acknowledged the unwavering support of her family as a key factor in her success. Speaking after being crowned run-

## Durgi Police Under Fire for Alleged Corruption and Civil Interference

TPN Bureau | December 18



settlement. The situation has generated deep fear among locals, who see the police station not as a protector of citizens but as a source of intimidation. Many allege that caste considerations and favoritism have further poisoned the fairness of local policing. Adding to the controversy, locals charge that the Durgi Police have turned a

blind eye to illegal activities such as ration rice smuggling, gutkha trade, and granite transport. These illicit operations, they claim, continue unhindered as long as the operators pay regular bribes.

"No crime happens here without police knowledge," said one resident. A recent property dispute in Obulesunipalle village has escalated the de-

bate. Two brothers reportedly clashed over ancestral land, and police allegedly took sides after receiving money from one of them. The elder brother's son has now approached the High Court, citing harassment and police abuse. When the family raised objections, police officers allegedly used foul language and issued threats, vowing to "trap" them in false cases.

Further outrage has spread as locals accuse some officers of tolerating or even supporting illegal gambling and card dens in the mandal. Critics argue that, instead of curbing vices, police have indirectly facilitated them. Residents have now called upon district police authorities and the State Home Department to launch an impartial investigation. "We want justice, not extortion," said a local activist. The allegations, if proven, point to a disturbing erosion of trust in law enforcement a dangerous sign for democracy itself.



# AVISIONARY LEADER WHO CONFIGURED POLITICS WITH DEVELOPMENT



Hyderabad, India — In recognition of his unparalleled contributions to transforming Andhra Pradesh into one of India's most business-friendly states, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has been selected for the prestigious Business Reformer of the Year award by The Economic Times. This highly esteemed recognition celebrates Naidu's relentless efforts to modernize the state's industrial ecosystem, foster an environment conducive to large-scale investments, and implement forward-thinking policies that have helped shape

consistent track record in promoting business reforms. The jury was composed of some of the most influential figures in Indian business, including Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman of Bharti Group; Sajjan Jindal, Chairman of JSW Group; Uday Kotak, Founder and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank; Dr. Devi Shetty, Founder of Narayana Health; senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi; and Noel Tata, Chairman of Tata Trusts. Deloitte, a leading global professional services firm, acted as the knowledge partner for the jury.

for the Business Reformer of the Year award highlights the deep impact of his vision, which has reshaped Andhra Pradesh into a state with a thriving business environment.

Naidu's tenure as Chief Minister, which began in 1995 and continued through various terms, has been characterized by a focus on modernization, technological adoption, and infrastructure development. One of his most notable achievements is his successful implementation of industrial policies that promote ease of doing

business, attract foreign investments, and encourage the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Naidu's industrial reforms have played a crucial role in transforming Andhra Pradesh into one of India's leading industrial hubs. One of his most significant achievements has been his focus on simplifying the business environment through regulatory reforms and digital innovation. Under his leadership, Andhra Pradesh became one of the first states in India to implement the e-Office system, which digitized government operations, making the state administration more transparent, efficient, and accountable.

To further support industrial growth, Naidu's government implemented several incentive programs aimed at attracting investments from global companies. His emphasis on developing industrial corridors and creating Special Economic Zones (SEZs) has significantly boosted the state's manufacturing sector. Naidu also made strategic efforts to develop sectors such as information technology, biotechnology, and pharmaceuticals, attracting

leading companies to set up their operations in the state. Furthermore, his administration introduced a range of policy measures to make Andhra Pradesh one of the easiest states to do business in India. These included simplifying the process for obtaining licenses, reducing the time required to start a business, and implementing single-window clearance systems for businesses. The focus on improving the ease of doing business not only attracted domestic investors but also positioned Andhra Pradesh as an ideal location for multinational corporations seeking to enter the Indian market.

**Focus on Innovation and Technology**

Naidu's policies have consistently prioritized innovation and technological advancement. As a forward-thinking leader, he recognized early on the potential of the technology sector in driving economic growth. Under his leadership, Andhra Pradesh has seen the rapid growth of the IT and IT-enabled services (ITES) sectors, with cities like Visakhapatnam and Tirupati emerging as important hubs for the technology industry.

Naidu also championed the development of Andhra Pradesh as a destination for digital innovation, pushing for the establishment of new tech parks, innovation centers, and educational institutions that could support the growing demand for skilled talent in the technology sector. His focus on technology has not been limited to just the IT sector but also extended to the fields of renewable energy and digital governance.

The state's success in attracting IT giants such as Microsoft, Wipro, and Infosys can be attributed to the policies Naidu implemented to make Andhra Pradesh an attractive destination for high-tech businesses. The Andhra Pradesh Information Technology Investment Region (AP-ITIR) is one of the key projects under Naidu's leadership, which aims to create a robust ecosystem for technology companies and entrepreneurs.

**A Sustainable Future for Andhra Pradesh**

Naidu's vision for Andhra Pradesh is not limited to industrial growth but also includes a commitment to sustainable development. He has long been a proponent of renewable energy and environmental preservation, and his government has launched several initiatives to promote the use of solar energy, wind power, and other renewable resources.

His administration's efforts in the renewable energy sector have been notable, with Andhra Pradesh becoming one of the leading states in India in



terms of installed solar power capacity. Naidu's commitment to green energy reflects his understanding of the need to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility.

Additionally, Naidu's policies emphasize inclusive growth, focusing on creating job opportunities for all sections of society, from rural farmers to urban professionals. His focus on skill development, particularly in rural areas, has helped bridge the urban-rural divide, providing rural youth with the tools to participate in the state's industrial and economic growth.

**Recognition from the Business Community**

The recognition of Naidu with the Business Reformer of the Year award by The Economic Times is a testament to the significant impact he has had on Andhra Pradesh's economic transformation. The jury, composed of business leaders like Sunil Bharti Mittal and Sajjan Jindal, recognized Naidu's tireless work in creating an ecosystem where business and entrepreneurship can flourish.

Naidu's leadership has earned him the respect of the business community, as well as recognition for his ability to create policies that not only attract large-scale investments



Andhra Pradesh's economic landscape.

The award will be officially presented to Naidu during a special event set to take place in March. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to confer the honor on the Chief Minister, marking the occasion as a significant milestone for both Naidu and the state of Andhra Pradesh.

The selection process for this coveted award involved a high-profile jury of leading industrialists, financial experts, and legal professionals, who unanimously agreed on Naidu's selection based on his

**A Visionary Leader Who Redefined Andhra Pradesh's Business Landscape**

Chandrababu Naidu's political and administrative career has been marked by a keen understanding of the need to blend governance with economic strategy. As Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Naidu has worked tirelessly to ensure that the state not only keeps pace with national economic growth but also stands out as a leading example of industrial progress, infrastructure development, and business innovation. His selection

for the Business Reformer of the Year award highlights the deep impact of his vision, which has reshaped Andhra Pradesh into a state with a thriving business environment.

Naidu's approach has been to create an environment where businesses—both domestic and international—can thrive, by reducing bureaucratic hurdles, improving transparency, and providing incentives for sectors such as information technology, manufacturing, and renewable energy. His proactive approach to policy reform has made Andhra Pradesh one of the most attractive destinations for investment in India, especially



**ANDHRA PRADESH**  
India's Sunrise State

## Satellite Images Show Major Reconstruction at Pakistan's Murid Airbase After IAF Strike

### SATELLITE IMAGES SHOW MASSIVE DAMAGE TO PAK'S MURID AIR BASE



New high-resolution satellite imagery accessed by NDTV has revealed extensive reconstruction activity at a key command-and-control building at Pakistan's Murid Airbase, which was struck by the Indian Air Force during

Operation Sindo in the early hours of May 10. The latest image, dated December 16 and sourced from Vantor, shows a massive red tarpaulin covering the damaged structure, indicating large-scale repair or rebuilding work. The

building is located next to a major complex used by Pakistan for operating unmanned aerial vehicles, highlighting its strategic importance. Damage caused by the Indian Air Force strike is believed to have been severe, with earlier post-

strike images showing sections of the roof collapsing and extensive structural damage that likely affected internal systems as well. In June, satellite images showed a smaller green tarpaulin covering only part of the structure, but the lat-

est visuals suggest the entire building is now under repair. Military experts note that heavy-duty tarpaulins are often used to conceal sensitive damage, debris removal, or reconstruction work from satellite surveillance. Initial imagery after the strike showed precise impact points, strengthening the assessment that the Indian Air Force may have used precision-guided missiles with roof-penetrating warheads and delayed-fuse penetrators. Although the Indian Air Force has not officially disclosed the weapons used during Operation Sindo, the pattern of destruction indicates a high level of accuracy and planning. The rebuilding effort underscores the effectiveness of the strike and highlights how satellite imagery continues to play a crucial role in assessing military operations and strategic outcomes in modern warfare.

## Cars to Cross Toll Plazas at 80 Kmph Under New Satellite-Based Toll System

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that by 2026, vehicles in India will be able to cross toll plazas at speeds of up to 80 kilometres per hour using a new satellite-based toll collection system. The system will rely on high-speed cameras that capture images of vehicle number plates and FASTag stickers, automatically deducting toll charges from linked bank accounts with-

out requiring vehicles to stop. Gadkari explained that the technology will not only reduce congestion and waiting time at toll plazas but also improve enforcement of traffic rules. Vehicles that reach the next toll plaza too quickly will be flagged for speeding and fined automatically, making rule violations easier to detect. The system will be supported by artificial intelligence and satellite tracking, al-

lowing accurate monitoring of speed and distance. According to the minister, the new technology will save fuel worth approximately ₹1,500 crore and contribute nearly ₹6,000 crore to government reserves by reducing operational costs and leakages. The move is expected to transform highway travel by improving efficiency, safety, and transparency while reducing long queues and travel delays.

## Indian-Origin Cab Driver Arrested in US for Assault on Unconscious Passenger



## Priyanka Gandhi Meets Nitin Gadkari to Push for Key Road Projects in Kerala

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra met Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari at Parliament to press for the approval and progress of key road infrastructure projects in Kerala. Representing Wayanad in the Lok Sabha, Priyanka Gandhi raised concerns related to six major road projects that pass through the state, highlighting the need for better connectivity and infrastructure development. During the meeting, Gadkari clarified that some of the projects fall under the jurisdiction of the Kerala state government and therefore cannot be directly handled by the Centre. However, he assured her that the remaining proposals would be reviewed and necessary action would be taken. The meeting was marked by a light-hearted moment when Gadkari joked about having already addressed road-related requests from Rahul Gandhi in Rae Bareli, saying that he could not ignore Priyanka



Gandhi's concerns after helping her brother. The remark drew laughter and reflected a cordial atmosphere despite political differences. The discussion

also included informal conversation and food tasting, giving the meeting a relaxed tone. The interaction highlighted how infrastructure development often re-

quires coordination between state and central governments, irrespective of political affiliations. Priyanka Gandhi's outreach signals the Congress party's

focus on development issues in Kerala, while Gadkari's response reinforced the Centre's position on cooperative federalism in infrastructure planning.

## Giriraj Singh Sparks Outrage With Remark in Nitish Kumar Hijab Controversy

Union Minister Giriraj Singh triggered widespread outrage after making a controversial remark while defending Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar amid a hijab-related row. Singh strongly backed Nitish Kumar, stating that identity verification is a routine process for jobs, passports, and air travel, and argued that asking a woman to show her face was not inappropriate. He emphasised that India follows its own laws and rejected comparisons with other countries. However, his remarks took a sharp turn when he responded aggressively to a question about what would happen if the woman refused to take the job, saying she could either refuse or "go to hell" before walking away from reporters. The comment drew immediate backlash from opposition leaders and social media users, who criticised it as insensitive, misogynistic, and offensive. PDP leader Iltija Mufti strongly condemned the statement, warning against interference with Muslim women's religious attire and accusing Singh of using unacceptable language. The controversy has reignited debates around



religious freedom, women's rights, and the responsibilities of public representa-

tives. While Giriraj Singh and his supporters defended his position as being about ad-

ministrative procedure, critics argued that his words crossed a line and further

polarised an already sensitive issue.

## India Closes More Visa Centres in Bangladesh Amid Rising Security Concerns



### INDIA VISA CENTRES CLOSE IN B'DESH

India has shut down two additional visa application centres in Bangladesh, located in Rajshahi and Khulna, citing a worsening security situation in the country. The closures follow earlier restrictions in Dhaka and come amid rising tensions and protests by radical groups near the Indian High Commission. An official notification stated that all applicants with appointments would be given new dates at a later time. The move

comes against the backdrop of growing anti-India sentiment, particularly targeting India's northeastern states, under Bangladesh's interim government led by Muhammad Yunus. India has expressed concern over increasing hostility and threats, including remarks by a student leader who spoke about severing India's "seven sisters" region. Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Advisor Touhid Hossain dismissed India's concerns, distancing the government from the remarks and insisting that law and order remains under control. He clarified that the individual who made the comments does not represent the government's position. Despite these assurances, India's decision reflects serious concerns over diplomatic security and regional stability, especially as Bangladesh seeks closer ties with Pakistan, impacting its traditionally strong relationship with India.

# Family of Young Bondi Shooting Victim Urges Peace and Love Over Anger



The family of Matilda, the youngest victim of the Bondi Beach shooting in Sydney, has made an emotional appeal to the public not to allow her death to become a reason for anger or hatred. Matilda, just 10 years old, was among 15 people killed when two gunmen opened fire during an event marking the start of Hanukkah. At her funeral, her aunt Lina Chernykh spoke about Matilda's joyful personality, describing her as a child who spread happiness, warmth, and love wherever she went. While she acknowledged that the Jewish community is justified in demanding stronger action against rising antisemitism, she said that Matilda's spirit stood for unity, kindness, and compassion rather than revenge or violence. The family urged people to honour Matilda's memory by choosing empathy over division and understanding over hostility. Community members, religious leaders, and mourners attended the funeral, highlighting the deep shock and grief felt across Sydney. The incident has once again raised concerns about gun violence, hate crimes, and public safety in Australia. Authorities continue to investigate the attack, while political leaders face renewed pressure to address extremism and protect minority communities. Amid the grief, Matilda's family hopes their message will help heal wounds and prevent further hatred, reminding society that responding with humanity is the strongest tribute to a life lost too soon.

## Zelensky Warns EU as Leaders Debate Use of Frozen Russian Assets

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has issued a strong and urgent warning to European Union leaders as they meet in Brussels to discuss the possible use of frozen Russian assets to support Ukraine. Zelensky has urged the EU to approve loans worth billions of euros using Russian money that has been frozen since the start of the war. Around €10 billion in Russian assets are currently held in the EU, with a large portion stored by Belgium-based financial services firm Euroclear. However, Belgium and several other EU member states remain opposed, arguing that using the funds could set a dangerous legal precedent and expose the bloc to retaliation. Russia has also warned of serious consequences if its assets are used. Zelensky warned that without additional funding, Ukraine's economy and military operations could face major difficulties within months. He stressed that financial support is as crucial as weapons in sustaining Ukraine's resistance. The debate has highlighted divisions within the EU over how far it should go in supporting Ukraine while managing legal risks and geopolitical tensions. As the war drags on, Ukraine's dependence on Western financial backing continues to grow, making the outcome of these talks critical for the country's short-term stability and long-term survival.



## US Announces \$11 Billion Arms Sale to Taiwan, Angering China



The United States has announced a major arms sale to Taiwan worth around \$11 billion, further escalating tensions between Washington and Beijing. The weapons package includes advanced rocket launch systems, self-propelled howitzers, and various missile systems designed to strengthen Taiwan's defence capabilities. This is the second arms deal approved since Donald Trump returned to the White House, and it still requires approval from the US Congress. Taiwan's defence ministry welcomed the announcement, stating that the equipment would help the island build stronger deterrence and improve its ability to respond quickly to potential threats. China

strongly condemned the move, saying it violates its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as Beijing considers Taiwan a breakaway province. Chinese officials warned that the sale could damage US-China relations and destabilise the region. The announcement comes amid rising military activity around Taiwan, including frequent Chinese military drills. Analysts say the deal reflects Washington's commitment to supporting Taiwan amid growing regional tensions, while also highlighting the fragile balance of power in the Asia-Pacific. The issue remains one of the most sensitive flashpoints in global geopolitics.

## French Anaesthetist Sentenced to Life for Poisoning Patients

A French court has sentenced former anaesthetist Frédéric Péchier to life imprisonment after convicting him of intentionally poisoning 30 patients, including 12 who died. The crimes occurred at a hospital in Besançon in eastern France, where Péchier tampered with medical infusion bags by injecting toxic substances that led to cardiac arrest or severe internal bleeding. His actions affected patients of all ages, from a four-year-old child who narrowly survived two cardiac arrests during routine surgery to elderly patients in their late 80s. Prosecutors described him as "Doctor Death," accusing him of abusing his position of trust and turning a place meant for healing into a site of terror. The court heard that Péchier acted out of jealousy and professional rivalry, seeking to damage the reputation of colleagues. The case has deeply shaken public confidence in the medical system and sparked widespread debate in France about hospital safety, oversight, and monitoring of healthcare professionals. Authorities have promised to review internal controls to pre-



vent similar crimes in the future. The verdict brought relief to victims' families but also left lingering questions about how such actions went undetected for years.

# Stock Market Ends Lower as Volatility and Global Uncertainty Dominate Trade

Indian stock markets closed slightly lower after a highly volatile session, with the Sensex ending 78 points down while the Nifty managed to hold the important 25,800 level. The trading day began on a positive note after three consecutive sessions of decline, supported by value buying in select stocks and a mild recovery in the rupee, which was aided by intervention from the central bank. Early gains gave investors some relief, but the mood soon turned cautious as uncertainty over a possible US-India trade deal continued to weigh heavily on sentiment. As the session progressed, profit booking emerged, particularly in large-cap stocks, causing benchmarks to slip into negative territory by the close. Mid-cap and small-cap stocks performed relatively better, suggesting selective buying rather than broad-based participation. Sector-wise, information technology and financial services stocks

attracted buying interest due to expectations of stable earnings and clarity on global interest rates. In contrast, auto, oil and gas, chemicals, and pharmaceutical stocks witnessed sustained selling pressure. Market experts pointed out that investors remain highly sensitive to global developments, especially upcoming US core inflation data and jobless claims, which could influence future monetary policy decisions. Interest rate announcements from major central banks such as the Federal Reserve, Bank of England, European Central Bank, and Bank of Japan are also expected to play a key role in shaping near-term market direction. From a technical perspective, the Nifty remains weak after failing to reclaim its 200-day moving average, with bearish indicators such as lower tops and weak momentum suggesting further downside risk if key support levels are breached.



## Sitharaman Introduces Securities Markets Code Bill to Simplify



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Securities Markets Code Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha with the aim of simplifying and unifying India's securities market regulations under a single framework. The proposed Bill seeks to replace multiple existing laws, including the SEBI Act of 1992, the Securities Contracts Regulation Act of 1956, and the Depositories Act of 1996, which currently govern different aspects of the securities market. By merging these laws, the government aims to reduce regulatory fragmentation, remove overlapping provisions, and create a clearer and more efficient system for investors, companies, and intermediaries. The Bill also places strong emphasis on investor protection by strengthening disclosure norms and im-

proving regulatory oversight. Another key objective is to make it easier to do business in India's financial markets by simplifying compliance requirements and modernising outdated legal provisions. Opposition leaders expressed concerns that the new framework could concentrate excessive power in the hands of a single regulator, raising questions about checks and balances. In response, Sitharaman clarified that the Bill would be referred to a parliamentary standing committee, where such concerns could be examined in detail. The idea of a single securities market code was first announced in the Union Budget 2021-22, and the introduction of this Bill marks a significant step towards reforming and modernising India's financial regulatory architecture.

## Elan Group Plans 1,600 Crore Investment in Ultra-Luxury Housing Project

Real estate developer Elan Group announced plans to invest 1,600 crore in an ultra-luxury residential housing project in Gurugram, highlighting strong demand for premium homes in key urban markets. The project will be located

in Sector 49, Gurugram, and will be developed across six acres of land. In the first phase, the company plans to construct 230 four-bedroom apartments spread across five towers, with unit sizes ranging from approximately 4,300 to 4,500 square feet. These large-sized homes are aimed at high-net-worth individuals seeking spacious, design-focused living spaces. While Elan Group has not yet disclosed the expected pricing, sales potential

on completion

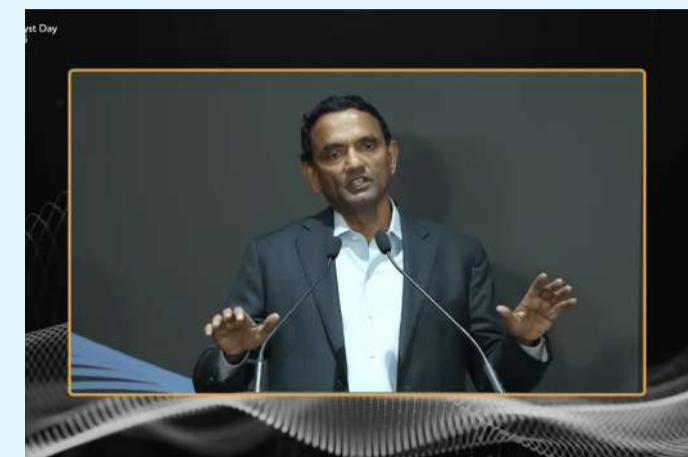
timeline, industry sources indicate that these details will be finalised after the company appoints a construction partner. The project has been designed by a London-based architectural firm, with a strong fo-

cus on premium design, modern amenities, and experience-driven living. The announcement reflects growing confidence among real estate developers in the luxury housing segment, driven by rising disposable incomes and strong

demand from affluent buyers. Gurugram continues to attract such investments due to its proximity to Delhi, strong infrastructure, and presence of corporate and commercial hubs.



## TCS Reports \$1.5 Billion Annualised Revenue from Artificial Intelligence



Tata Consultancy Services revealed that its annualised revenue from artificial intelligence stands at approximately \$1.5 billion, growing at a strong sequential pace. This marks the first time India's largest IT services company has publicly disclosed a specific revenue figure related to AI, addressing growing investor curiosity about returns from large-scale investments in this space. With total annual revenue of around \$30 billion, TCS highlighted that AI has become an integral part of its overall business strategy rather than a standalone offering. The company stated that AI is now embedded in almost every client engagement, including new deals as well as contract renewals, where it is used to im-

## Banking Stocks Poised for Strong Gains Heading into 2026

Market experts believe the banking sector remains one of the strongest performers from a technical and structural perspective, with both private and public sector banks showing encouraging trends. Private banks are currently consolidating within long-term uptrends, offering relative stability and steady growth potential for investors. At the same time, public sector banks are witnessing gradual accumulation after sharp rallies seen in recent years, making them attractive for higher-return opportunities. Analysts suggest that if the banking index manages to sustain above key support levels, the sector could deliver returns ranging from 18 to 30 percent

## Brokerages Turn Positive on TCS as It Pushes AI-Led Growth Strategy



Brokerage firms have expressed a positive outlook on Tata Consultancy Services after the company detailed its long-term AI-focused growth strategy during Investor Day 2025. TCS outlined its ambition to transform itself into a global leader in AI-led technology services by moving beyond a traditional digital-first approach. The strategy is built around multiple pillars, including internal transformation through an AI-first operating model, creation of AI-led service offerings, and large-scale upskilling of employees to build AI fluency across the organisation. The company also plans to develop

## Samsung Exynos 2600 Chip Specifications Leak Ahead of Galaxy S26

A fresh leak has revealed key details about Samsung's upcoming Exynos 2600 chipset, which is expected to power the Galaxy S26 series. Although Samsung has not officially confirmed the specifications, the leaked information suggests that this processor could be a major advancement in the company's in-house chip development.

The Exynos 2600 is expected to be manufactured using a 2nm process, making it one of the most advanced smartphone chipsets to date. According to the leak, the processor will feature a 10-core CPU with a tri-cluster design. This includes one high-performance prime core clocked at up to 3.9GHz, three performance cores running at around 3.25GHz, and six efficiency cores operating at

2.75GHz. This design aims to deliver strong performance while maintaining power efficiency.

On the graphics side, the chipset is expected to feature an AMD-based GPU, likely branded as the Xclipse 960. The GPU is said to be based on AMD's RDNA architecture, which could significantly improve gaming performance and visual quality. Support for modern graphics technologies such as Vulkan 1.3, OpenGL ES 3.2, and OpenCL 3.0 has also been reported.

If these details are accurate, the Exynos 2600 could help Samsung better compete with other flagship processors. It reflects Samsung's ambition to lead in semiconductor innovation and strengthen its own chipset ecosystem.



## Vivo Y50s 5G and Vivo Y50e 5G Spotted Ahead of Launch



Vivo appears to be preparing the launch of two new smartphones, the Vivo Y50s 5G and Vivo Y50e 5G. Both devices were recently listed on the Google Play Console's supported devices list, which usually indicates that a launch is approaching. This follows the earlier release of the Vivo Y50 5G and Vivo Y50m 5G in China.

As suggested by their names, both smartphones will support 5G connectivity. While the Google Play Console listing does not reveal detailed specifications, it confirms that the devices are in the final stages of development. In addition, an unidentified Vivo smartphone has been spotted on a Chinese certification website, further supporting rumours of upcom-

ing launches.

The Vivo Y-series is generally aimed at users looking for affordable smartphones with reliable performance. These devices usually focus on offering a balance between performance, battery life, and modern features. With the increasing availability of 5G networks, Vivo's strategy seems to be focused on making 5G technology accessible to more users.

Although official details are still limited, expectations include decent cameras, long battery life, and smooth everyday performance. If priced competitively, the Vivo Y50s 5G and Vivo Y50e 5G could become strong options in the budget 5G smartphone market.

## Google Integrates Opal AI Tool Into Gemini Platform

Google Labs' experimental AI tool, Opal, has gained significant popularity since its release in July, and Google has now taken an important step by integrating it directly into the Gemini website interface. With this move, users can create AI-powered mini applications inside the Gemini chatbot itself. This makes AI development easier and more accessible, even for users with little or no technical background. Google refers to this approach as "vibe coding," where users simply describe what they want in natural language, and the AI handles the technical work.

Opal allows users to generate structured prompts that function like small AI tools. These tools, also called mini apps, can perform specific tasks such as reviewing essays, checking project reports, summarising content, or giving feedback on writing quality. Once a mini app is cre-

ated, it is saved as a "Gem" within Gemini. This means users can reuse the same app multiple times without recreating it, making

the experience more efficient and personalised. When Opal was first launched, it was available only as a public beta for users in the United

States. Google Labs usually releases experimental tools in limited regions to test performance and gather feedback. However, Opal received

strong responses from users, leading Google to expand its availability quickly. By October, the tool was introduced in 15 countries, and by No-

vember, it became available in more than 160 countries worldwide. This rapid expansion highlights the growing demand for easy-to-use AI creation tools.

The integration of Opal into Gemini also shows Google's broader vision for the chatbot. Gemini is no longer just a platform for asking questions or generating text. It is evolving into a complete AI workspace where users can brainstorm ideas, build tools, and solve problems in one place. This saves time and encourages creativity by reducing the need to switch between different platforms.

Overall, Opal's integration into Gemini reflects a larger trend in the tech industry. AI tools are no longer limited to developers or experts. By simplifying AI creation, Google is empowering students, professionals, and everyday users to use artificial intelligence in practical, meaningful, and creative ways.

# Gemini

## Redmi Pad 2 Pro 5G Confirmed to Launch in India Soon

Redmi has officially confirmed that the Redmi Pad 2 Pro 5G will soon be launched in India, creating excitement among tablet users. The tablet was first introduced in select global markets in September, and its arrival in India signals Redmi's intention to strengthen its presence in the premium tablet segment. The company has also announced that it will start revealing the tablet's key features and specifications from December 22.

A dedicated microsite for the Redmi Pad 2 Pro 5G is already live on the Xiaomi India website, confirming that the device will be available online. It is also expected to be sold through popular e-commerce platforms and offline retail stores. In European markets, the tablet was launched at a starting price of around EUR 379.9, which roughly converts to Rs. 40,000 for the base variant with 6GB RAM and 128GB storage.

One of the main highlights of the Redmi Pad 2 Pro 5G is its large 12.1-inch

display. The screen offers a 2.5K resolution and supports a smooth 120Hz refresh rate, making it ideal for watching videos, browsing, and gaming. With a 16:10 aspect ratio and up to 500 nits of brightness, the tablet is suitable for both en-

tertainment and productivity. Redmi has also included TUV Rheinland certifications to reduce flicker and harmful blue light, improving eye comfort.

In terms of performance, the tablet is powered by Qualcomm's Snapdragon 7s

Gen 4 processor, paired with an Adreno 810 GPU. It includes LPDDR4x RAM and UFS 2.2 storage, with support for storage expansion up to 2TB using a microSD card. Audio performance is enhanced by a quad-speaker setup with Dolby Atmos and

Hi-Res Audio support.

Overall, the Redmi Pad 2 Pro 5G aims to offer a premium tablet experience with a large display, strong performance, and 5G connectivity, making it a strong option for Indian consumers.



## Samsung to Showcase AI-Powered Home Appliances at CES 2026



Samsung has announced that it will showcase a new range of AI-powered home appliances at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2026. The event will take place in Las Vegas from Jan-

uary 6 to January 9. At the exhibition, Samsung will present upgraded products from its Bespoke AI lineup, highlighting its focus on smart, efficient, and user-friendly home solutions.

One of the key products to be showcased is the 2026 Bespoke AI Laundry Combo. This updated model includes several improvements in washing and drying performance. Samsung

has introduced a Speed Spray feature that allows clothes to be washed faster without affecting cleanliness. The laundry combo also includes a Booster Heat Exchanger, which improves

drying efficiency while saving energy. Another useful feature is Auto Open Door+, which opens the door automatically after a cycle to prevent moisture buildup and unpleasant odours.

Samsung will also unveil the Bespoke AI Jet Bot Steam Ultra robot vacuum cleaner. This device is powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon processor and features AI-based object recognition. The robot vacuum can identify obstacles more accurately and adjust its cleaning path accordingly. The inclusion of steam cleaning helps improve hygiene and removes stubborn dirt more effectively.

Other products expected at the showcase include the Bespoke AI AirDresser, which refreshes clothes using intelligent care cycles, and the WindFree Air Conditioner, designed to provide cooling without direct airflow.

Through these products, Samsung aims to demonstrate how artificial intelligence can improve daily life. By combining automation, smart sensors, and AI decision-making, Samsung is working toward creating more convenient and efficient smart homes.

# IPL Remains the Only Franchise League for Indian Players

The Indian Premier League stands apart from all other franchise-based T20 leagues in the world because of its exclusive access to Indian cricketers. Unlike players from other countries who freely participate in leagues such as the Big Bash League, SA20, or The Hundred, active Indian players are not permitted to play in overseas franchise tournaments unless they officially retire from international cricket. This policy ensures that global stars like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and Shubman Gill appear only in the IPL



overseas leagues. The IPL itself provides world-class competition, financial security, and global visibility, making it unnecessary for Indian players to look elsewhere. While this policy often sparks debate among fans and former cricketers, the BCCI continues to prioritise player fitness, national duty, and the strength of its domestic structure. As things stand, the IPL will remain the only franchise stage for Indian players, reinforcing its position as the most powerful T20 league in the world.

## Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer Clash as England Struggle in Ashes Test

England captain Ben Stokes and fast bowler Jofra Archer were involved in a tense on-field exchange during Day 2 of the third Ashes Test against Australia, highlighting England's growing frustration as the match slipped further out of control. Australia resumed their innings at a strong position, with Mitchell Starc producing an aggressive counter-attacking performance from the lower order. Starc struck boundaries with ease, bringing up a quick half-century and exposing England's inability to contain the Australian tail. As pressure mounted, television cameras captured Stokes in an animated

discussion with Archer, seemingly unhappy with the pacer's lack of discipline in line and length. Stokes appeared to urge Archer to stick to the field settings and bowl more accurately, reflecting the captain's desperation to regain control of the match. Archer responded in the best possible way by dismissing Starc soon after, but the exchange did not completely cool down, as the discussion continued even during the celebration. The moment revealed the intense pressure within the England camp, where expectations are high but execution has often fallen short in this Ashes series. While such confrontations are not un-



## Haryana and Jharkhand Set for Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Final Clash

Haryana and Jharkhand are set to face each other in the final of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2025, promising an exciting contest between two well-matched domestic sides. The final will be played at the MCA Stadium in Pune, with both teams earning their place after consistent performances throughout the tournament. Haryana, led by Ankit Kumar, booked their spot in the final with a strong win over Hyderabad in the semifinals, powered by explosive half-centuries from Ankit himself and Samant Jakhar. Their batting has been supported well by a disciplined bowling unit, with Amit Rana and Anshul Kamboj delivering crucial spells at important moments. Haryana's campaign has been built on balance, combining aggressive top-order batting with reliable pace options that have regularly put opposition teams under pressure.



Jharkhand, captained by Ishan Kishan, reached the final after topping Group B, showing resilience and tactical awareness across the league stage. Despite suffering a loss to Andhra Pradesh in their final group match, Jharkhand finished level on points with their rivals and advanced due to a superior net run rate. Their journey to the final reflects consistency rather than dominance, with multiple players contributing across matches. Ishan Kishan's leadership and experience have played a vital role in guiding a relatively young side through high-pressure situations. The final is scheduled to begin at 4:30 PM IST and will be

## Shashi Tharoor Suggests Moving North India Matches to South India Due to Fog Issues

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has urged the Board of Control for Cricket in India to reconsider its scheduling strategy after the fourth T20 International between India and South Africa was abandoned due to heavy fog in Lucknow. The match, held at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, had to be called off because visibility conditions made play impossible, frustrating players, fans, and broadcasters alike. Reacting to the situation, Tharoor questioned the logic of hosting international matches in North India during winter months, when fog and pollution regularly disrupt sporting events. He suggested that matches scheduled

during this period should instead be moved to South Indian venues, where weather conditions are far more favourable. According to him, South India does not face the same visibility problems during winter, allowing uninterrupted play and a better experience for spectators. Tharoor highlighted that cricket fans invest time, money, and emotional energy into attending or watching matches, and repeated abandonments due to environmental factors undermine the spirit of the game. At the time of abandonment, India was leading the five-match T20I series 2-1, with one match remaining, making the washed-out fixture even more disappointing for supporters.

His comments have reopened a broader discussion about climate, pollution, and sports scheduling in India. In recent years, fog and poor air quality have repeatedly affected matches in cities like Delhi, Lucknow, and Kanpur. While the BCCI has not officially responded to Tharoor's suggestion, the incident has increased pressure on the board to adopt a more weather-sensitive approach to scheduling. Moving winter matches to cities in the south could help avoid such disruptions while also ensuring player safety and match quality. Tharoor's proposal reflects growing awareness that environmental conditions can no longer be ignored in modern sports planning.



## Aakash Chopra Surprised by Overseas Stars Going Unsold in IPL Auction

Former Indian cricketer and commentator Aakash Chopra expressed surprise over several well-known overseas players remaining unsold at the IPL 2026 auction, calling it one of the unexpected outcomes of the event. Among the notable names were New Zealand all-rounder Michael Bracewell and England wicketkeeper-batters Jamie Smith and Jonny Bairstow, all of whom failed to attract bids despite their international

experience and proven abilities. Chopra pointed out that franchises spent heavily on certain players, with Australian all-rounder Cameron Green grabbing headlines after being bought by Kolkata Knight Riders for a massive sum of Rs 25.20 crore. At the same time, domestic Indian talents such as Aquib Nabi, Prashant Veer, Karthik Sharma, and Mangesh Yadav were rewarded for their strong performances in state and domestic leagues, earning lucrative

contracts with top IPL teams. Chopra acknowledged that franchises increasingly value versatility, team balance, and long-term planning, but he still found it surprising that experienced overseas players went unsold, especially when teams were actively looking to fill roles suited to their skill sets. Players like Bracewell offer all-round value, while Bairstow brings explosive batting and wicketkeeping experience at the highest level.

According to Chopra, the auction dynamics may have worked against these players due to factors such as age, injury concerns, availability issues, and changing team strategies that now prioritise younger or more flexible options. He also noted that the increasing depth of Indian domestic talent has reduced teams' dependence on overseas players in certain roles. While the IPL auction often produces unexpected results, Chopra felt that the absence of bids for such established names highlighted how competitive and unpredictable the league has become. The episode serves as a reminder that reputation alone does not guarantee selection in the IPL, where form, fitness, and strategic fit matter more than ever. As the league continues to evolve, auctions are likely to remain ruthless, rewarding adaptability while leaving even big names vulnerable.



