



PPS Employees' Union Demands Uniform DA Arrears Payment for All, Cites Technical Glitches



TRUE POINT

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APRTC Runs 500 Special Buses for Sankranti Return Travel from Vijayawada

04



TIRUMALA

A/C Hostel Day Scholar

E. M. SCHOOL Jr. COLLEGE IIT & MEDICAL ACADEMY

కామవేది, కామవేదిపేట, మార్కెట్ గోడారం వద్ద, ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్. Call : 79979 89322, 79979 89323, 79979 89324.

కామవేది, కామవేదిపేట, E. M. 18 ప్రభుత్వం. ☎: 7799954622, 7799954624

కామవేది, కామవేదిపేట, E. M. 18 ప్రభుత్వం. ☎: 91333 32103, 91333 32104

కామవేది, కామవేదిపేట, కామవేది, E. M. 18 ప్రభుత్వం. ☎: 73309 69423, 73309 69424

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నిరంతరం శ్రమించే అధ్యాపకులు - నిర్విరామంగా కృషిచేసే విద్యార్థులు అచంచల విశ్వాసం గల తల్లిదండ్రులు - అందుకే ఈ ఘన విజయాలు

ఏప్రిల్-2025కు దేశవ్యాప్తంగా 22 లక్షలకు పైగా విద్యార్థులు పాజరుకాగా ఓపెన్ కేటగిరీలో **ఇండియా 19వ** ర్యాంకు మరియు ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ **స్టేట్ 1st** ర్యాంకు సాధించి రాష్ట్రవారీ గర్వకారణంగా నిలిచిన విద్యార్థి **"ఇరుమల"**

NEET - 2025 పరిణామంలో **OPEN CATEGORY**లో **ALL INDIA** ర్యాంకు **19th**

OPEN CATEGORYలో **ALL INDIA** ర్యాంకు **19th**

STATE 1st RANK

D. K. RAM KIREETI

THE GLORY OF TIRUMALA

ఇరుమల 18 సంవత్సరాల అత్యున్నత విజయం

సంవత్సరం	ర్యాంకు
2014	87
2015	112
2016	123
2017	133
2018	236
2019	253
2020	458
2021	458
2022	891
2023	846
2024	833
2025	926

TOTAL : 4829

2025 లో ప్రభుత్వ IIT/NIT/IIIT/BITS లో ఈ విద్యార్థుల సాధించిన విజయం

926

IIT-402 **NIT-366** **IIIT-144** **BITS-14**

IIT Admissions 402

IIT - Ahmedabad	10
IIT - Bombay	12
IIT - Delhi	15
IIT - Guwahati	4
IIT - Hyderabad	12
IIT - Kanpur	12
IIT - Kharagpur	9
IIT - Madras	1
IIT - Roorkee	16
IIT - Varanasi	13
IIT - Patna	13
IIT - Thiruvananthapuram	4

NIT Admissions 366

NIT - Agartala	10
NIT - Allahabad	4
NIT - Anna University	24
NIT - Bhopal	4
NIT - Calicut	7
NIT - Coimbatore	12
NIT - Durgam	3
NIT - Gangtok	17
NIT - Goa	1
NIT - Guwahati	17
NIT - Jalandhar	1
NIT - Jamshedpur	1
NIT - Kharagpur	1
NIT - Kozhikode	1
NIT - Lucknow	1
NIT - Manipal	1
NIT - Nagpur	1
NIT - Patna	1
NIT - Raipur	1
NIT - Rourkela	1
NIT - Surathkal	1
NIT - Thiruvananthapuram	1
NIT - Varanasi	1
NIT - Vellore	1
NIT - Visakhapatnam	1
NIT - Warangal	1
NIT - Yamunanagar	1

IIIT Admissions 144

IIIT - Allahabad	2
IIIT - Bhopal	4
IIIT - Calicut	2
IIIT - Coimbatore	2
IIIT - Durgam	2
IIIT - Guwahati	2
IIIT - Hyderabad	2
IIIT - Kanpur	2
IIIT - Kharagpur	2
IIIT - Madras	2
IIIT - Roorkee	2
IIIT - Varanasi	2
IIIT - Patna	2
IIIT - Thiruvananthapuram	2
IIIT - Vellore	2
IIIT - Visakhapatnam	2
IIIT - Warangal	2
IIIT - Yamunanagar	2

BITS Admissions 14

BITS - Pilani	2
BITS - Hyderabad	4
BITS - Patna	2
BITS - Ranchi	2
BITS - Varanasi	2
BITS - Vellore	2
BITS - Visakhapatnam	2
BITS - Warangal	2
BITS - Yamunanagar	2



2025 లో **IIT/ NIT/ IIIT/ BITS** లలో సెట్లు సాధించిన **926** మందిలో కొందరు విద్యార్థులు

For Registration 5,6,7,8,9,10 & తరగతులు పూర్తిచేస్తూ విద్యార్థులకు మరియు వారి తల్లిదండ్రులకు **JEE Advanced, JEE Main & NEET** పరీక్షల్లో

అవగాహన సదస్సు

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కామవేది, కామవేదిపేట వద్ద కామవేదిలో 18.01.2026 ఆదివారం ఉదయం 10 గంటలకు ☎ 79979 89322, 79979 89323	నికాబుపేట వద్ద కామవేదిలో 18.01.2026 ఆదివారం ఉదయం 10 గంటలకు ☎ 91333 32103, 91333 32104	కామవేది, కామవేదిపేట వద్ద కామవేదిలో 25.01.2026 ఆదివారం ఉదయం 10 గంటలకు ☎ 73309 69423, 91826 23317
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BUZZ POINTS

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BUZZ POINTS

APSRTC Bags Prestigious National Award for Digital Transformation in Governance

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Andhra Pradesh Sets Global Benchmark in Clean Fuel with AM Green's 1.5 MTPA Green Ammonia Project

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Krishna District Native Makes History as First Indian-Origin AMA President

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Krishna District Native Makes History as First Indian-Origin AMA President

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Mysterious Disappearance of Teak Trees Sparks Corruption Allegations Against Rajanagaram Revenue Officials

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AP Govt plans to reduce the cost of electricity by 1.19 per unit in three years



TPN Bureau | January 17

Amravati: The Andhra Pradesh Energy Department is intensifying efforts to slash electricity procurement costs by 1.19 per unit over the next three years, bringing it down to 4 from the current 5.19 per unit when the NDA government took office. Officials revealed that in 2025-26 alone, they achieved a 29 paise reduction per unit, saving approximately 2,320 crore annually on purchases of around 80,000 million units (MU) needed yearly for state requirements.

This strategic push builds on post-YSRCP governance reforms.

The previous YSRCP administration spent 8,600 crore in 2023-24 on high-cost open market purchases. In contrast, the NDA coalition government prioritized expenditure control, using advanced forecasting to buy only as needed. This reduced open market buys to 3,000 crore in 2024-25 and further to 1,700 crore this year.

Plans are underway to cut another 1,000 crore in 2026-27 by boosting internal capacity and curbing unnecessary expenses. Current distribution losses stand at 10.2%. Trimming even one percentage point could save 1,000 crore in procurement, estimates suggest. The department aims to reduce these losses, targeting

at least 30 paise per unit savings by 2026-27, with ongoing exploration of paths to cut 20 paise annually.

Boosting Thermal Power Capacity Key to this is maximizing thermal plants, especially GENCO facilities, which currently supply only 45-48% of daily demand despite potential for more. Using high-quality coal with at least 5,800 gross calorific value could push output to 80%, allowing cuts in expensive open market buys.

The target is 85% plant load factor across GENCO thermal centers. Pending works at Vijayawada VTPS (800 MW) and Krishnapatnam (800 MW) have been fast-tracked, adding 1,600 MW to the grid. DISCOMs inked

deals with SECBOM for 625 MW. Hinduja Thermal's second 540 MW unit is operational, delivering 1,080 MW from both units. During peak demand, DISCOMs import 700 MW via swapping from other states, curbing high-cost purchases where rates can hit 15 per unit. Tackling Peak Demand with Storage Solutions Peak hours often force buys at premium prices, but own plants could slash costs if optimized. Relief is coming: Two phases of 3,000 MWh battery energy storage projects will roll out next year, with tenders already floated. These will meet morning and evening peaks. An Upper Sileru pumped storage project, proposed earlier, is slated for completion in three to four years, supplying 1,350 MW during peaks.

Daytime surplus of about 1,500 MW solar power will feed battery storage. Government Principal Secretary K. Vijayanand emphasized utilizing excess power this way. PM Suryaghar and PM Kusum schemes are expected to add 4,000 MW in two to three years.

By then, PSP and battery projects will be ready, storing surplus for low-cost peak supply. These measures promise fiscal prudence, reduced tariffs, and reliable power for Andhra Pradesh's growing needs.

Andhra Pradesh Leads Nation in Skill Training and Job Placements Under DDUGKY Scheme

TPN Bureau | January 17

Amravati: A stark skills gap persists between college curricula and industry demands in Andhra Pradesh, leaving many graduates jobless. To bridge this divide, the state government's Society for Employability Skills Development and Placement (SESDP), known as CEDAP, is delivering targeted skill training. Operating under the Centre's Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), the program receives 60% funding from the Union government and 40% from the state.

Experienced institutions provide youth with training ranging from three months to a year, followed by job placements. From last year to date, CEDAP has skilled 13,778 individuals, securing jobs for 10,609 of them. Andhra Pradesh tops National Rankings.

Andhra Pradesh claims the top spot nationwide for job placements under DDU-GKY. While ranking third in training completions, it leads in employment generation. In March last year, the Centre approved funds for 16,177 trainees; CEDAP met this target by August.

Requesting support for another 6,000, the state received prompt approval. From this year, plans aim to train 40,000 annually. Training for German Job Markets CEDAP is also preparing youth for overseas opportunities, particularly in Germany as nurses and electricians. Training begins with German language instruction. So far, 175 nurses have been trained: 31 secured jobs in Germany, 78 found local employment, and 12 have arrived there. Another 19 are set to depart in February. For electricians, 60 have completed training, with 13 in visa processing for Germany and 47 placed locally. New Skills Portal for Graduates

To aid B.Tech and degree holders, the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation has launched a "Naipenam" portal. Users upload resumes, and job opportunities matching their qualifications appear. Officials target one lakh engineering and degree students to register by month-end. Aspirants can sign up online easily.

This initiative underscores Andhra Pradesh's commitment to employability, transforming unskilled youth into industry-ready professionals and boosting the state's economy.

CM Naidu Unveils Ambitious Land Reforms, Development Plans in Sankranti Address

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Tirupati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, speaking to the media during Sankranti celebrations in his native Sonthuru Naravaripalle, outlined sweeping reforms to overhaul the state's land records system, vowing to eradicate disputes by 2027. Accusing the previous government of creating chaos by arbitrarily adding 22 lakh entries, Naidu announced a comprehensive one-year survey program backed by QR coding and blockchain technology under the "Rajamudra" initiative.

"No tampering of records will be possible henceforth," he declared, emphasizing that collectors must prioritize this as their top duty, with monthly passbook distributions starting from the 9th of each month and strict action against errors. Naidu stressed inclusive



growth through the "P-4" (Public-Private-People-Partnership) model, urging affluent individuals to adopt villages and poor families.

Already, 10 lakh families have been supported via skill-building for income enhancement. In agriculture and dairy, he highlighted tech-driven gains: milk yield has risen from 5.7 to 8.8 liters per cow a 33% jump through artificial insemination and drone usage. Water security features prominently, with a "Plus 3" groundwater target: levels should not drop below 3 meters below ground by monsoon

end, avoiding minus 8 meters.

Krishna waters will be diverted via Handri-Neeva to fill Chittoor district tanks, alongside projects like Gandikota and Kandleru. Development blueprints include solar power and battery storage, chemical-free farming with geo-tagging certification, 10,000 crore road projects, and transforming Tirupati into a wedding destination hub alongside mega-city visions: Tirupati as "City of Tanks," Vijayawada "City of Canals," and Visakhapatnam "City of Beaches." Naidu expressed concern over population decline, announcing studies on youth hesitancy toward children and incentives to boost birth rates. Health gets a tech boost via the "Sanjeevani" project with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation support. AI doctors, real-time monitoring, nutrition advice, and personalized "Health Scores" aim for preventive care at low cost.

High-risk individuals get quarterly checks, others annual—already piloted in Kuppam and expanding statewide by 2026. In Sonthuru, Naidu recommitted to "Swarn Naravaripalle," achieving 100% waste collection for compost, 50% dry waste recycling, and power generation from the rest. Liquid waste will be treated scientifically, with household taps, cement roads, and highway links creating a model village. He reflected on cultural roots, noting his family's 17-year Sankranti tradition honors his wife Bhuvaneswari's decision, urging remembrance of origins amid festivities. Naidu's vision blends technology, sustainability, and equity to build a "healthy, wealthy, happy society," repaying his "birth soil debt."

primary off-taker, while partnerships with Malaysia's Petronas, Singapore's GIC, and UAE's ADIA bolster the project's global reach. "This project marks a new chapter in sustainable development for Andhra Pradesh," said Chief Minister Naidu during the virtual foundation-laying ceremony. "It will create thousands of jobs and drive economic growth while advancing India's net-zero goals." Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan echoed the sentiment, emphasizing the initiative's role in leveraging Kakinada's strategic port location for logistics and storage advantages. Construction is set to generate direct employment for 8,000 people during the build phase. Once operational, the facility will create thousands more jobs in logistics, port services, storage, and ancillary sectors, according to AM Green's proposals. The project aligns with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission, targeting phased capacity expansion: 0.5 MTPA by 2028 and an additional 1.0 MTPA by 2030, reaching the full 1.5 MTPA.

Chief Minister Chandrababu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan Launch India's Largest Green Ammonia Project in Kakinada



TPN Bureau | Jan 09

Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh: In a major boost to India's green energy ambitions, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan laid the foundation stone today for the country's largest green hydrogen-based green ammonia complex in Kakinada. Developed by AM Green Energy, a subsidiary of the Greenko Group, the project promises to position Andhra Pradesh as a global hub for clean fuel exports. The ambitious initiative will see an investment of approximately 18,000 crore (around \$2 billion).

It aims to produce 1.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of green ammonia annually, powered by 1,950 megawatts of electrolyzers. Spanning 495 acres, the complex will export green ammonia to key international markets including Germany, Japan, Singapore, and others. Uniper from Germany has already signed on as a

Green ammonia, produced using renewable energy-powered electrolysis to split water into hydrogen and oxygen, serves as a carbon-free alternative to traditional ammonia. It holds immense potential for decarbonizing sectors like fertilizers, shipping, and power generation. By exporting to energy-hungry nations, the Kakinada complex will help India tap into a burgeoning global market projected to reach \$50 billion by 2030. The state government's proactive policies, including land allocation and single-window clearances, have been pivotal. Kakinada's deep-water port and proximity to renewable energy zones make it ideal for scaling green hydrogen production. Industry experts hail the project as a game-changer. "This isn't just infrastructure—it's a blueprint for green industrial corridors," noted a Greenko spokesperson.

With operations ramping up, Andhra Pradesh eyes leadership in the green molecule economy, potentially attracting further investments.

APSRTC Bags Prestigious National Award for Digital Transformation in Governance

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026
Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) has earned national acclaim for its pioneering use of digital technology in public service delivery, clinching the prestigious “Governance Now 6th Digital Transformation Summit” award for 2025. Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy hailed the achievement as a matter of immense pride, praising the corporation’s staff for their dedicated service to passengers.

Speaking at a press conference here, the minister commended

APSRTC officials, supervisors, and employees for their unwavering commitment. “This recognition underscores how APSRTC is leveraging technology to enhance passenger experience,” Reddy said. He highlighted the rollout of the Automatic Announcement System (AAS) across all major bus stations, which provides real-time, advance information on bus schedules, routes, and arrivals.

This initiative has significantly improved service quality, reducing wait times and confusion for commuters. The award, presented in New Delhi, celebrates APSRTC’s innovative governance model un-

der Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s vision of technology-driven administration. APSRTC Managing Director Dvaraka Tirumalaravu, who received the honor on behalf of the corporation, played a pivotal role in implementing these reforms.

Minister Reddy extended special congratulations to him, noting that the success reflects a team effort aligned with the state’s push for smart mobility. APSRTC’s digital leap began intensifying post-2024, following the TDP-led government’s return to power. The AAS, a cornerstone of this transformation, uses automated voice announcements in Telu-

gu, English, and Hindi at key terminals like Pandit Nehru Bus Station in Vijayawada, Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station in Vijayawada, and others across Andhra Pradesh.

Integrated with GPS-enabled buses and a centralized passenger information system, it delivers accurate updates on delays, platform changes, and connecting services. This has not only boosted efficiency but also passenger satisfaction, with feedback surveys showing a 25% rise in positive ratings since rollout.

The Governance Now award, one of India’s top honors for public sector innovation, rec-



ognizes entities excelling in digital governance. APSRTC stood out among state transport undertakings for its scalable, cost-effective tech adoption amid financial recoveries. The

corporation, which operates over 10,000 buses and serves 50 lakh passengers daily, has digitized ticketing via the ‘APSRTC Gamyam’ app, introduced cashless payments, and launched

real-time tracking moves that align with Naidu’s ‘Swarna Andhra Pradesh’ agenda. Reddy assured that more advancements are on the horizon. “APSRTC will continue

adopting cutting-edge tech to offer modern, comfortable services,” he said, hinting at electric buses, AI-driven route optimization, and expanded AAS to rural depots. This positions Andhra Pradesh as a leader in sustainable public transport, especially as the state eyes infrastructure boosts like the upcoming Amaravati capital revival and Bhogapuram airport links. The award comes at a crucial time, with APSRTC reporting record revenues in 2025 after reversing prior losses. It validates the corporation’s shift from legacy operations to a passenger-centric, tech-forward model, inspiring other PSUs.

Andhra Pradesh Sets Global Benchmark in Clean Fuel with AM Green’s 1.5 MTPA Green Ammonia Project



TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026
Amaravati: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu hailed Andhra Pradesh’s breakthrough in the global clean fuel sector as the state inches closer to becoming India’s green hydrogen hub. Speaking ahead of the groundbreaking cer-

emony in Kakinada, Naidu emphasized that the launch of the state’s Comprehensive Clean Fuel Policy in October 2024 marked a firm commitment to lead the nation in green hydrogen production.

The milestone event centers on AM Green’s ambitious 1.5 million

tonnes per annum (MTPA) green ammonia project, with construction set to commence today. “This is a game-changer, positioning Andhra Pradesh as a net exporter of green energy,” Naidu stated in a post on X (formerly Twitter). He announced his participation along-

side Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, underscoring the coalition government’s unified push for sustainable development.

Valued at \$10 billion, the integrated project exemplifies an end-to-end clean fuel ecosystem entirely within Andhra Pradesh. It fea-

tures 7.5 gigawatts (GW) of solar and wind power capacity, complemented by a 1 GW pumped storage hydroelectric plant. All infrastructure will be developed locally, from renewable energy generation to ammonia synthesis and export facilities.

The green ammonia produced manufactured using hydrogen from electrolysis powered by renewables will be shipped to high-demand markets like Germany and other international buyers, reducing global reliance on fossil fuel-based fertilizers and fuels. Naidu described it as the world’s first-of-its-kind initiative, integrating massive renewable capacity with



ammonia production at this scale. “From policy vision to execution, Andhra Pradesh is scripting history,” he added.

The project aligns with India’s National Green Hydrogen Mission and the state’s Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor ambitions,

aiming to create over 10,000 direct jobs and attract ancillary industries in green tech. This development builds on Andhra Pradesh’s aggressive green energy roadmap.

Since the TDP-led government’s return in 2024, the state has fast-tracked investments exceeding \$50 billion in renewables, including offshore wind farms and battery storage. The Kakinada facility, located in a strategic port city, leverages the region’s deep-water harbor for seamless exports. Experts predict it could generate \$2-3 billion in annual export revenue once operational by 2029, bolstering the state’s GDP and posi-

tioning it as a top contender against Gujarat and Tamil Nadu in the green hydrogen race. Environmentalists applaud the move for slashing carbon emissions equivalent to millions of tonnes annually, while critics from the opposition YSRCP question the fiscal burden on subsidies.

However, Naidu reaffirmed the project’s viability through public-private partnerships, with AM Green a joint venture of Greenko Group and others leading the charge. As Naidu and Kalyan break ground, Andhra Pradesh signals to the world: the future of clean energy is here.

Eluru TDP Cadres Lament Delayed Nominated Posts Amid Alliance Tensions

TPN Nureau | January 17, 2026
Eluru: Long-time Telugu Desam Party (TDP) workers in Eluru district are voicing growing discontent over unfulfilled promises of nominated posts, nearly 1.5 years after the NDA alliance assumed power. Despite enduring harassment under the previous YSRCP regime, these second-rung leaders feel sidelined, questioning the party’s high command and alliance commitments.

“We stuck with the party through thick and thin, facing countless cases from the YSRCP government without flinching,” said one senior cadre. “We marched forward with hope for the future, expecting positions soon after the TDP took office. But even after a year and a half, there’s no recognition. They’re pushing us aside in the name of alliance dharma. When will we get nominated posts?”

When will dawn break in our political lives?” District-wide grievances target TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for ignoring nominations. While some balance exists at the mandal level and TDP dominates temple committees, aspirants in segments like Denuluru, Unguturu, and Eluru express frustration. JSP workers, too, complain of being shortchanged. Mudaraboina’s Lingering Hopes

Former MLA Mudaraboina Venkateswarao from Nuziveedu has met Naidu and Lokesh multiple times seeking a post. He eyed the Durga temple chairman role, but

it went to Balayya’s ally Radhakrishna. Now, he hopes for a spot in upcoming corporation boards. Chintalapudi and Polavaram Discontent

In Chintalapudi and Polavaram, TDP veterans lead the complaints. Jangareddigudem’s Mandava Lakshmanarao, a loyalist since TDP’s inception, tops the list after selfless service during tough times. Critics say the party is placating him with internal roles. Former Chintalapudi MLA Ghanata Murali, recently overlooked for district president, remains dissatisfied despite proximity to Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy. A former APIDC chairman under Congress, he joined TDP a decade ago and seeks a key district-level post like Waqf Board chairman. Others in the fray include Sheikh Mustafa (ex-Waqf Board), BC leader Dasari Shyamchandrasekhara, ex-Telugu Rythu district president Abbina Datatreyra, state secretaries Sheelam Venkateswararao and Jayavarapu Sreeramamoorthi (for-

mer library chairman), and ex-Telugu Mahila district president Gangireddi Meghaladevi from Koyyalgudem.

Eluru’s Internal JSP Strife: Eluru sees TDP securing most posts, sparking JSP infighting. Seatsacrificer Reddy Appalanayudu got Vijayawada RTC zonal chairman, but his followers remain empty-handed. He recently led 100 cadres to MLA Baddeti Radhakrishna (Chanti)’s office, demanding shares like SC/ST monitoring committee seats for JSP women allegedly denied to favor TDP. Two temple chairman posts went to JSP, but more clarity is awaited.

Meanwhile, the MLA’s allocation of city TDP president, co-option, and roads corporation director roles to his caste kin has irked “senior” Telugu brothers, fueling anti-incumbency murmurs within ranks. As cabinet expansion and fresh nominations loom, these rumblings could test alliance unity in West Godavari ahead of local polls.



Another feather in the cap of AP



TPN Bureau | January 17, Vijayawada: The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) has added yet another national honour to its tally, winning the prestigious Governance Now 6th Digital Transformation Summit Award for its successful implementation of an Automatic Announcement System (AAS) across bus stops in the state.

The award recognises APSRTC’s effective use of digital technology to enhance commuter convenience and improve the overall quality of public transport services. Under the AAS initia-

tive, major bus stops have been equipped with automated systems that provide passengers with real-time, clear, and timely information on bus arrivals, departures, routes, and schedules. Officials say this has significantly reduced confusion and waiting-time anxiety for passengers, especially in busy bus stations and urban hubs. Reacting to the recognition, Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy expressed pride over APSRTC being chosen for the Governance Now digital transformation honour. He said the award is a testament to the dedica-

tion and commitment of APSRTC officials, supervisors, and staff, who have been consistently striving to deliver people-centric services with a high degree of professionalism. The minister underlined that the real-time announcements system has substantially improved service quality by ensuring advance and accurate information for passengers.

He noted that digital initiatives like AAS complement the government’s broader vision of integrating technology into public service delivery and governance. Ramprasad Reddy specially congratulated APSRTC Managing Director Dwaraka Tirumala Rao and the entire APSRTC workforce for playing a key role in achieving this national-level recognition. He said APSRTC is moving ahead in line with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s vision of modern, technology-driven public transport

in Andhra Pradesh.

The minister further stated that the corporation is committed to introducing more advanced and commuter-friendly services in the coming days. He reiterated that APSRTC will continue to position itself as a role model in the country’s public transport sector by combining social welfare with operational efficiency.

Highlighting the government’s pro-people approach, Ramprasad Reddy pointed to key initiatives such as free bus travel for women and maintaining normal fares even during festival seasons. Such measures, he said, not only ease the financial burden on common people but also reinforce APSRTC’s image as a public service institution dedicated to inclusive and affordable mobility.

With this latest award, APSRTC’s digital transformation efforts have once again received national visibility and acclaim.

Dense Fog and Chilly Winds Disrupt Life Across Andhra Pradesh

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026
Vijayawada | Ongole | Visakhapatnam: Thick fog blanketing several districts of Andhra Pradesh, combined with biting cold winds, has thrown daily life into disarray, posing serious risks to commuters and vulnerable populations. Temperatures have plummeted suddenly across the state, turning early mornings into hazardous zones for travel, particularly in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Alluri Sitharama Raju (Manyam), Eluru, East Godavari, and West Godavari districts.

Dense fog has drastically reduced visibility on national highways and rural roads, making driving perilous. Motorists are forced to

switch on headlights and crawl at snail’s pace, with authorities warning of heightened accident risks. “Fog is thickest from dawn till late morning, especially on key routes like NH-16 and state highways,” said a traffic police official from Vizianagaram.

“We’ve deployed additional patrols and fog lights at critical junctions, but drivers must exercise extreme caution.” The India Meteorological Department (IMD) attributes the conditions to a western disturbance bringing cold northerly winds, with minimum temperatures dipping to 12-15°C in coastal areas and even lower in agency regions. “This cold spell will persist for another 3-4 days, with fog



likely until January 21,” IMD Vizag center warned.

Commuters are advised to avoid early morning travel if possible, maintain safe distances, and use fog lamps. Heavy vehicles have been restricted on certain stretches, and airport operations at Rajahmundry and Vijayawada faced minor delays today. Health experts are urging precautions amid the chill. “Elderly people, children, and those with respiratory issues should stay indoors,

wear warm clothing, and avoid exposure,” advised Dr. Lakshmi from Eluru Government Hospital.

Common colds, flu, and asthma flare-ups are already rising, with hospitals reporting a 20% uptick in cases. Rural areas are hit hardest, where unlit roads and lack of awareness amplify dangers. Farmers in Godavari districts delayed fieldwork, while fishing communities curtailed early sea voyages.

ED Issues Summons to Ex-MP Vijayasai Reddy in Massive AP Liquor Scam Probe

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Amaravati: In a significant escalation of the high-profile Andhra Pradesh liquor scam investigation, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to former Rajya Sabha MP and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader V. Vijayasai Reddy. The notices, sent this week, direct Reddy to appear for questioning on January 22 at the ED's Hyderabad zonal office. This move intensifies scrutiny on top YSRCP figures amid allegations of a multi-crore corruption racket during the previous government's tenure.

The case, often dubbed the "liquor syndicate" or "madyam kumbhakonam," revolves around systemic irregularities in the state's excise policy from 2019 to 2024 under the YSRCP regime led by former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Probes allege that private liquor barons, politicians, and officials colluded to manipulate

tenders, evade taxes, and siphon off billions through overpriced contracts, fake invoices, and illicit cash flows. The scam's estimated scale exceeds 3,000 crore, involving money laundering via hawala networks, shell companies, and benami properties.

Vijayasai Reddy, a close aide to Jagan and YSRCP general secretary, finds himself in the spotlight due to his alleged role in financial dealings linked to the syndicate. Sources indicate ED sleuths are probing his connections to key accused like Aurobindo Realty promoters and other liquor license holders.

Reddy's name surfaced in earlier raids, where documents purportedly tied him to offshore accounts and unexplained wealth. "He must explain the money trail," an ED official told reporters anonymously, emphasizing the summons under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). This is not Reddy's first brush with central agencies.

In 2021, the ED at-



tached assets worth 9.4 crore belonging to him in a related money laundering case stemming from the same liquor policy flaws. Reddy has denied wrongdoing, terming the probes "politically motivated vendettas" by the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led NDA government. In a recent social media post, he accused the ED of acting at the behest of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, vowing to challenge the summons legally.

The broader investigation has already led to arrests, including YSRCP MLC P. Ven-

kateswara Rao and several excise officials. Over 20 search operations since mid-2025 have uncovered digital trails of kickbacks funneled through unaccounted cash and luxury assets. Andhra Pradesh's new administration, which revoked the controversial excise policy upon assuming power in June 2024, has hailed the ED's actions as a cleanup drive. "Corruption choked our state's revenues; justice is now unfolding," tweeted Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra recently. Political ripples are intensifying ahead of local elections. YSRCP

Andhra Pradesh to Become Green Hydrogen Valley: CM Chandrababu Naidu

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Kakinada: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced ambitious plans to transform Andhra Pradesh into a global "Green Hydrogen Valley," spotlighting a massive 18,000 crore AM Green Ammonia project in Kakinada. Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan laid the foundation stone for the facility, hailed as the world's largest green ammonia plant, during a ceremony attended by industry leaders and officials.

Speaking at a post-event public meeting, Naidu emphasized green energy's pivotal role in India's future. "Prime Minister Modi urges scaling up green energy production, and we started this journey



in 2014 under our government," he said. The project marks a leap into green hydrogen and ammonia, with the first phase of production slated for June 2027.

Naidu described it as a "game-changer" for the state, addressing coal pollution's environmental toll on oceans and Andhra's 1,000 km coastline. Plans for 20 ports will leverage abundant sunlight for solar, wind, and pumped storage energy. Naidu praised entrepreneur Chala-

malasetty Anil for turning vision into reality, crediting Telugu resilience for rewriting history. He recalled NTR's role in bringing Nagarjuna Fertilizers to Kakinada decades ago, predicting the port city will soon dominate global discussions. "Our coalition government implements people-centric ideas swiftly," he added, envisioning a "Swarandhra" by 2047. Benefits extend to agriculture through eco-friendly fertilizers, reducing chemical pes-

ticides for healthier farming and exports. Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan echoed the optimism, stressing that "strong resolve achieves anything." Hailing Anil's perseverance in establishing AM Green amid challenges, he lauded Kakinada—his hometown—for fostering such ventures. "We're advancing green hydrogen while protecting the environment," Kalyan said. The clean energy policy attracts investments, marking a milestone in pollu-

tion-free fuel and sustainable growth. The project promises thousands of direct and indirect jobs. Kalyan contrasted the current supportive ecosystem with past industrial hurdles under the previous regime. "Parties change, but government systems are permanent," he noted, urging sustained momentum for Andhra's prosperity. This initiative aligns with national green goals, positioning Andhra as a renewable energy hub.

Andhra Pradesh High Court Permits Interrogation of Chhattisgarh Maoists at Krishna District Police Station



TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh High Court has granted police permission to interrogate three Chhattisgarh-origin Maoists, U. Raghu, O.M. Jyoti, and Madakam Divakar, currently lodged in Rajamahendravaram Central Jail. The court allowed the questioning to take place at Penamaluru Police Station in Krishna district on January 16 and 17.

This decision modifies an earlier order from the Vijayawada court, which had restricted interrogations to the jail premises. Justice Dr. Y. Lakshman Rao delivered the ruling on Friday, emphasizing strict safeguards. The court clarified that the security of the accused remains the responsibility of Gannavaram DSP. It explicitly prohibited the use of "third-degree" methods during questioning.

If the accused's lawyers request to be present, police must conduct the interrogation within their line of sight. This balanced approach ad-

resses police needs while protecting the detainees' rights. The trio faces allegations of links to Hidma's protection squad, a notorious Maoist faction. They were among several individuals arrested by police from a building in Penamaluru mandal, Krishna district.

Hidma, a top Maoist leader, has long been a target in anti-Naxal operations across central India. Initially, Penamaluru police sought custody of the three for interrogation in a related case. They approached the Vijayawada court, which had restricted transit remand. However, the lower court denied station-based questioning, permitting it only within Rajamahendravaram jail to minimize risks.

Dissatisfied, Gannavaram DSP filed a petition in the High Court challenging this restriction. During Friday's hearing, Additional Public Prosecutor Marri Venkataramana argued on behalf of the DSP. He dismissed claims of life threats to the accused or potential third-degree tactics, calling them

baseless. "There is no evidence supporting these fears," he stated, urging the court to allow station interrogation for effective probe progress.

The defense countered, highlighting safety concerns amid the accused's high-profile Maoist ties. The High Court's nuanced order overrides the Vijayawada directive just enough to enable station questioning while imposing oversight. It mandates lawyer visibility but stops short of full presence, aiming to prevent tampering or coercion. Security protocols fall squarely on the DSP, underscoring accountability. This development intensifies Andhra Pradesh's crackdown on Maoist infiltration from Chhattisgarh, where the group remains active in border regions. The arrests stem from intelligence on urban Naxal networks, with police probing arms smuggling and recruitment. Similar cases have surged post-2024, as state forces coordinate with central agencies like the CRPF. Legal experts view the ruling as a precedent for handling high-risk interrogations.

It reinforces human rights norms—no torture—while equipping law enforcement. The accused, remanded earlier, now face deeper scrutiny into Hidma's Andhra operations. Police sources indicate the January 16-17 window is critical for extracting leads on fugitive networks.

Outcomes could ripple into neighboring states' operations. As the sessions unfold under court watch, all eyes remain on compliance and revelations.

TDP Leaders Attacked by YSRCP Cadres in Two Separate Incidents in East Godavari; One Dead, Several Injured



TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Rajamahendravaram: Tension gripped parts of East Godavari district following two violent clashes involving TDP and YSRCP workers on the eve of Sankranti celebrations. In a shocking incident in Alipoodi village, Kotananduru mandal, three TDP leaders were brutally assaulted by a group of YSRCP cadres, resulting in one death and two critical injuries.

The attacks have sparked widespread outrage, with police stepping up security to prevent further escalation. The first incident unfolded late Friday night in Alipoodi village. TDP leader Lalam Bangaraya (30), along with two others, was returning from a birthday party when

around 20 assailants allegedly YSRCP workers ambushed them with knives and iron rods. Eyewitnesses described a fierce clash between the rival groups.

Bangaraya sustained severe stab wounds and collapsed on the spot. He was rushed to Tuni Government Hospital but succumbed to injuries within minutes. The other two victims, including one named Shriram whose condition remains critical, were shifted to a private hospital in Kakinada for advanced treatment. Local TDP sources condemned the attack as "premeditated barbarism," claiming the assailants hurled abuses before launching the assault. Several YSRCP workers from the village reportedly fled the scene. Police have

registered a case and launched an investigation, deploying heavy security in the area amid rising unrest. In a related flare-up in A. Kothapalli East Street, Thondangi mandal, YSRCP factions clashed over the distribution of "Gundata" funds (party welfare aid). As TDP leaders arrived to mediate and pacify the warring groups, they were mistaken for opponents and attacked with beer bottles, sticks, and stones.

TDP workers Konjarla Govind and Namala Gopi suffered injuries in the melee. Police arrived promptly, shifting the injured to a local hospital, and registered a case for probe. These back-to-back incidents have ignited political fury across the district, with TDP accusing YSRCP of fostering a culture of violence. "We went to resolve disputes, but were targeted brutally," a TDP spokesperson said.

YSRCP leaders have not yet commented. Authorities urge calm and warn of strict action against perpetrators. The district remains on high alert as investigations continue.

Minister Parthasarathi Slams YSRCP for Disrespecting Constitution and Democracy



TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Minister Kolu Parthasarathi Reddy launched a scathing attack on YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing him of showing no respect for the Constitution and democratic principles. Speaking at a press conference here today, the minister condemned

Jagan's repeated criticism of Amaravati as the state's capital, likening it to "spewing venom" against the project.

Parthasarathi challenged YSRCP leaders to demonstrate genuine concern for public and farmers' issues by attending Assembly sessions and raising questions there, rather than indulging in political rhetoric. "If they truly

care about the people, let them come to the legislature and hold the government accountable," he asserted.

The minister highlighted what he called Jagan's "Tughlaq-style" governance during his five-year tenure, where the three-capitals proposal led to prolonged delays and chaos. "Jagan stalled development for five years in the name of three capitals

but failed to build even one. The people witnessed this mismanagement firsthand," he said. He pointed out that in the 2024 elections, YSRCP faced public wrath over Amaravati, securing just 11 seats—a stark contrast to their previous dominance.

Responding to Jagan's recent queries on why the capital should be on a riverbank, Parthasarathi drew global parallels. "Does Jagan not know that world cities like London, Washington, and Cairo flourished along riverbanks? It's astonishing that this basic fact escapes him," he remarked. He praised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision, noting how Naidu transformed Hyderabad into an IT hub in the past and is now set to develop Amaravati as a "Quantum Valley" to shape the state's future.

Parthasarathi detailed the coalition gov-

ernment's swift action post-2024 victory. "Immediately after coming to power, we secured thousands of crores from the World Bank, ADB, and NABARD to accelerate Amaravati works," he said. He emphasized the economic strategy: rising land values in Amaravati will generate revenue to fund development across Rayalaseema, Utarandhra, and all regions of the state.

The minister underscored the government's clear financial vision, aimed at balanced growth without regional bias. "Amaravati isn't just a capital; it's an engine for statewide prosperity," he concluded, urging YSRCP to support this unified development agenda.

This exchange reignites the capital debate, with TDP-led NDA pushing Amaravati as the sole capital, reversing YSRCP's earlier three-capitals policy.

Tamil Nadu Dominates South Zone Asmita Khelo India Soft Tennis League Finals in Vijayawada

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Vijayawada: Tamil Nadu athletes claimed top honors in the women's singles categories at the South Zone Asmita Khelo India Soft Tennis League, hosted by the Andhra Pradesh Soft Tennis Association at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium's Tennis Complex here. The event, part of the national Khelo India initiative aimed at promoting grassroots sports among women, showcased fierce competition from states across South India, with Tamil Nadu emerging as the undisputed powerhouse.

In the Junior Singles category, Ragashree



from Tamil Nadu clinched the championship title after a commanding performance. She defeated Shweta, also from Tamil Nadu, 3-0 in the final, underscoring the state's depth in talent. Shweta had ad-



vanced by overcoming Sanju from Kerala 3-0 in the semifinals, while Ragashree blanked Sonika from Karnataka 3-0 in the other semi. Sonika and Sanju secured third place, highlighting Karnataka and Kerala's competitive edge.

The Senior Singles saw Narumugai from Tamil Nadu rise to glory, defeating A.S. Shalini from her home state 3-1 in a thrilling final. Narumugai's path included a 3-0 semifinal win over Sadhana (Ta-



mil Nadu), while Shalini edged out Yazhini (Tamil Nadu) 3-1 in the first semi. Shalini took second place, with Yazhini and Sadhana sharing bronze. These results reflect Tamil Nadu's rigorous training programs and dominance in soft tennis, a paddle-based variant gaining popularity for its accessibility and low-impact nature.

The finals drew enthusiastic crowds, with local officials and sports enthusiasts praising the Andhra Pradesh Soft Tennis Association's organization. "Events like this not only foster talent but also boost women's participation in sports," said D. Naveen Kumar, General Secre-



tary of the association. He announced that doubles matches would kick off today, setting the stage for more action.

Tomorrow (Sunday) and Monday will feature Sub-Junior, Junior, and Senior Doubles categories, promising intensi-

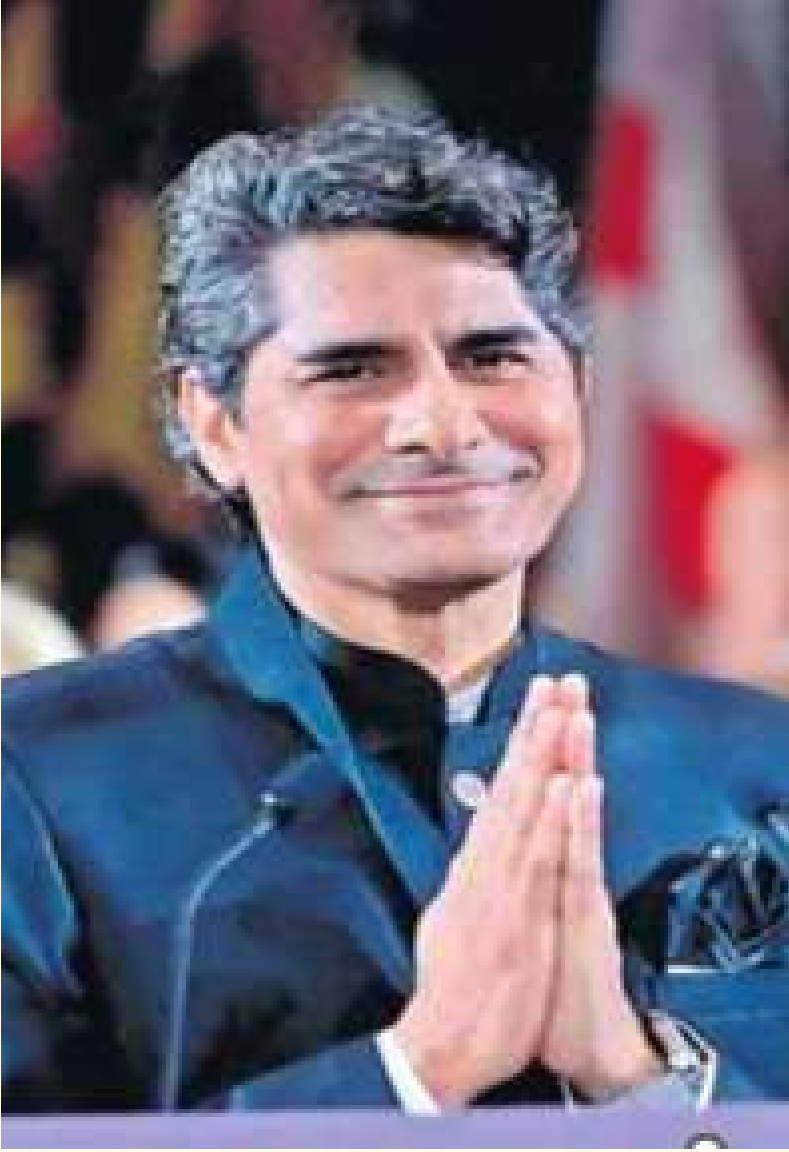
fied team rivalries. Soft tennis, distinct from traditional lawn tennis due to its softer ball and smaller court, aligns perfectly with Khelo India's mission to identify and nurture young athletes. Andhra Pradesh's hosting role under-

scores the state's growing sports infrastructure, with the IGMC Stadium complex serving as a hub for regional tournaments.

Tamil Nadu's sweep claiming all top spots in both singles divisions signals their preparation for national championships, while runners-up from Karnataka and Kerala vow stronger comebacks in doubles.

As the league progresses, eyes are on potential upsets in doubles, where partnerships could shift dynamics. The event wraps up key preparations for the national Asmita Khelo India circuit, emphasizing empowerment through sports.

Krishna District Native Makes History as First Indian-Origin AMA President



TPN Bureau | January 16, 2026

Vijayawada: In a landmark achievement for Indian-Americans, Dr. Bobby Mukkamala from Krishna district has been elected as the President of the American Medical Association (AMA), becoming the first physician of Indian origin to hold this prestigious position in the organization's 180-year history. Hailing from Buddhawaram in Gannavaram mandal, Dr. Mukkamala's elevation marks a significant milestone.

Previously, only American-born doctors had served as AMA presidents since its founding in 1847. The AMA, representing over 1 million physicians across the United States, plays a pivotal role in shaping healthcare policy by advising the government on vital issues like medical reforms, service delivery, and regulatory frameworks.

Dr. Mukkamala, an ENT specialist, currently practices at

Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Michigan. His parents, Dr. Apparao and Sumati, both accomplished medical professionals, emigrated from their native Buddhawaram to the US. Dr. Apparao specialized in radiology, while Sumati worked as a pediatric nurse. Bobby was born and raised in America, embodying the success story of Indian diaspora in the medical field. Before his presidency, Dr. Mukkamala served as an AMA Trustee for eight years, gaining invaluable experience in the organization's leadership.

Elected unanimously by AMA's vast membership through its annual process, he will serve a three-year term. This overwhelming support from peers underscores his dedication and expertise. The AMA's influence extends far beyond its membership. It formulates policy recommendations on critical areas such as healthcare accessibility, physician training, ethical standards, and re-

sponses to public health crises.

Under Dr. Mukkamala's leadership, the organization is expected to advocate for innovative policies addressing evolving challenges like telemedicine expansion, mental health integration, and equitable resource distribution amid ongoing debates over healthcare costs.

Dr. Mukkamala's roots in Andhra Pradesh add a layer of pride for the region. Local leaders and the Indian-American community have hailed his accomplishment as inspirational, highlighting the global impact of talent from Krishna district. "This is a proud moment for Andhra Pradesh and India," said a spokesperson from Gannavaram.

As he steps into this role, Dr. Mukkamala is poised to bridge cultural perspectives with American healthcare priorities, potentially influencing policies that resonate worldwide.

APRTC Runs 500 Special Buses for Sankranti Return Travel from Vijayawada



TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Vijayawada: In anticipation of heavy return travel rush during the Sankranti festival, the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APRTC) has decided to operate 500 special buses from Vijayawada to hometowns across the state. These buses will run on Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, with officials expecting the maximum demand on Sunday. APRTC authorities, who ran only 35 special buses to Hy-

derabad before the festival, are now focusing intently on return routes.

They plan to maintain at least 85 specials daily to Hyderabad post-festival, ensuring smooth travel for passengers heading back after celebrations. Additional Buses on Key Routes To handle the surge, APRTC will deploy 85 buses to Hyderabad, 10 to Chennai, and 5 to Bengaluru until Tuesday.

More buses will be arranged if needed. From regions like Rajama-

hendravaram, Narasapuram, Bhimavaram, Repalle, Amalapuram, Kakinda, and Nidamavolu, 70 special buses will run daily to major pickup points (PNBS). Demand-based specials will also ply from Vijayawada to Rayalaseema districts. Student Travel Considerations Thousands of students from Rayalaseema study in and around Vijayawada, typically causing congestion on these routes during holidays. However, Intermediate second-year students have not

received outings due to JEE Mains exams starting January 28, resulting in lighter traffic.

Still, APRTC remains prepared to run specials based on demand. Railways Joins with Extra Trains Railway officials are supporting the effort by extending special schedules and adding two more trains: Vijayawada-Guntakal and Machilipatnam-Dharmavaram specials. Additional trains will operate between Kakinada Town-Charlapalli, Vijayawada-Visakhapat-

nam (with 17 Jan Sadharan trains already running), Hyderabad-Sirpur Kagaznagar, Vijayawada-Hyderabad, Hyderabad-Vijayawada, and Sirpur Kagaznagar-Hyderabad.

Sankranti specials will also run between Visakhapatnam-Charlapalli and back. These measures aim to ease the post-festival rush, helping families return safely amid high demand. Passengers are advised to book tickets early via the APSRTC app or counters.

PPS Employees' Union Demands Uniform DA Arrears Payment for All, Cites Technical Glitches

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Vijayawada (Gandhinagar): The Andhra Pradesh unit of the PPS Employees' Union has urged the state government to eliminate disparities and technical hurdles in the payment of Dearness Allowance (DA) arrears. In a statement issued on Friday, union state president Baaji Pathan and general secretary Rajeshwar Rao expressed delight over the release of approximately 1,100 crore to around four lakh CPS employees as a Sankranti gift for the 2018-19 fiscal year on January 14.

The leaders extended heartfelt thanks to the state government on behalf of CPS employees for this timely gesture. However, they highlighted ongoing issues in the disbursement process. "While the government has initiated cash payments for six instalments of arrears across the state, the amounts credited to individual accounts vary widely," Pathan said in the release.

"One employee re-

ceives payment for all six instalments, while another gets only partial credit due to technical glitches in the system. "Rajeshwar Rao echoed these concerns, demanding immediate rectification.

"Such inequalities must be addressed without delay. The government should ensure uniform payment of all six instalments to every eligible employee, regardless of location or department," he stated. The union pointed out that these discrepan-

cies have caused widespread frustration among workers, many of whom have been awaiting these dues for years amid rising inflation.

DA arrears stem from revisions announced by the previous YSRCP government but delayed due to fiscal constraints. The current TDP-led administration, under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, has prioritized clearing these pending dues as part of its pro-employee agenda. The

1,100 crore payout covers the first instalment for 2018-19, with five more pending.

Similar payments were made to other categories like teachers and pensioners earlier this month, boosting festive cheer during Sankranti. Union officials warned that unresolved issues could lead to protests. "Technical problems in treasury software and bank linkages are no excuse. A one-time uniform settlement is essential for morale and trust in gov-

ernance," they added.

The government has yet to respond officially, but sources indicate IT department teams are troubleshooting the glitches. This development underscores ongoing efforts to stabilize employee finances in Andhra Pradesh, where over 10 lakh government workers and pensioners await full arrears clearance. The union has called for a meeting with Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad to expedite solutions.





Mysterious Disappearance of Teak Trees Sparks Corruption Allegations Against Rajanagaram Revenue Officials

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Rajanagaram Mandal, East Godavari District: Fresh suspicions have surfaced over the conduct of revenue officials in Rajanagaram mandal, with locals alleging the mysterious vanishing of valuable teak trees from land adjacent to a national highway. The incident, reportedly facilitated with the help of the local Village Revenue Officer (VRO), has reignited accusations against the tahsildar, who faces a history of corruption charges, including five prior memos and a show-cause notice. Residents claim the teak trees, located on government land near the highway in the Ra-



janagaram constituency, disappeared without the knowledge of senior officials. Questions abound: How many trees were there? When were they removed? Were permissions obtained from the Forest Department, revenue higher-ups, or panchayat authorities?

Were relevant departments informed? No answers have emerged yet, fueling claims of collusion involving the tahsildar and VRO. This is not the first controversy for the tahsildar. Previously, revenue officials attempted to convert an Inam cheruvu (tank) in



Nee Gramam village into zirayati (private) land, a move exposed and halted only after higher authorities intervened. Recent allegations also accuse her of falsely marking public grievances as resolved during Praja Darbar sessions without actual resolution,

prompting five memos and a show-cause notice following media exposure. Adding to the intrigue, the tahsildar has been posted to the same Rajanagaram office four times three prior stints followed by her current role as Deputy Tahsildar and in-charge Tahsildar.



Such repeated assignments are unusual for officials facing corruption complaints, sparking criticism of political influence at the time of her latest posting. The teak tree saga raises serious procedural lapses. National highway-adjacent land requires strict over-

sight for tree felling, yet no records of approvals or notifications to the Forest or Revenue Departments have surfaced. Locals demand a thorough probe, questioning if illegal logging occurred under official cover for personal gain. "This isn't isolated it's a pat-

tern of misuse of power," said a senior villager, speaking anonymously. "Valuable resources vanish, and accountability evaporates." Despite multiple media reports, memos, and notices, no comprehensive inquiry has been launched. Public demands grow for action against those responsible, with fears the issue might fade into obscurity. Will higher authorities respond decisively, or will this join the list of unresolved scandals in Rajanagaram? Revenue Department officials were unavailable for comment as of press time. The district collectorate has yet to issue a statement.

Ports, Railways, Airport to Drive Srikakulam's Growth: Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu



TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Srikakulam: Connectivity is the key to Srikakulam's rapid development, Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu declared today. Inaugurating a new halt for the Brahmapur-Visakhapatnam Brahmapur Express (18525/18526) at Tilak Railway Station alongside State Minister Apana Achchennai, Narasannapeta MLA Baggu Ramanamurthy, and railway officials, Naidu flagged off the service amid cheers from locals.

The event began with a public meeting where Achchennai praised Naidu's efforts in advancing railway infrastructure in the Srikakulam parliamentary constituency. He urged

the introduction of future-oriented projects and highlighted local woes, such as underpasses causing severe inconvenience during monsoons. Achchennai called for permanent solutions from railway authorities and reminisced about the pioneering work of former MP Kinjarapu Erranna, who introduced numerous new services and halts from Dusi to Ichchapuram.

He specifically advocated developing Kotabommali, Harischandrapuram, and Tilak stations, noting Harischandrapuram's strategic location along a national highway and requesting 2-3 additional stops there soon. In his address, Naidu expressed delight at the new halt benefiting Tilak's surrounding are-

as. He hailed Erranna as synonymous with Srikakulam's railway progress, vowing to carry forward his legacy.

Recent upgrades at Tilak include a new building, raised platforms, basic amenities, and this halt. Naidu promised further enhancements: approach roads, additional shops, and beautification to make it more passenger-friendly. Emphasizing Harischandrapuram's potential as North Andhra's only railway station adjacent to a national highway, Naidu said its development would uplift nearby regions. Funds have already been allocated for basic facilities, with efforts underway for new halts. He assured a Prasanthi Express stop at Kotabommali and



thanked Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for approving the most additional stops in Srikakulam. Addressing underpass flooding a nationwide issue Naidu noted he has repeatedly raised it in Parliament. A permanent fix is imminent, he assured. Naidu outlined a broader vision: Moolapeta Port will propel Sikkolu's growth to new heights, while his ministry advances an airport in the district. "With ports, highways, and an airport, Srikaku-

lam will reverse migration trends," he said. "People from other districts, states, and even abroad will flock here."

Committed alongside Achchennai to the district's progress, Naidu credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for making these goals achievable. The initiatives signal a transformative phase for Srikakulam, long known as a migration hub, positioning it as an investment destination.

Tirumala Witnesses Grand Parvetotsavam and Goda Parinayotsavam on Kanuma Day

TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Tirumala: Devotees thronged the sacred hills of Tirumala on Friday as the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple celebrated the auspicious Parvetotsavam on Kanuma day, coinciding with the vibrant Goda Parinayotsavam. The festivities, steeped in tradition, drew large crowds seeking divine blessings during the ongoing Sankranti celebrations. The highlight unfolded at the Govindaraja Swamy temple in Tirupati, where Andal Sri Godadevi—revered as the divine consort offered special garlands to Lord Venkateswara. These exquisite floral tributes were reverently transported to Tirumala and adorned on the Moolavirat (main deity), symbolizing the eternal bond between the divine couple. The event underscored the temple's rich customs, blending devotion with cultural grandeur. Post the pristine Pratahkal Aradhana (morning rituals), Sri Malayappaswami and Sri Krishnaswami were carried in a majestic Thiruchilai procession to the Parveta-mandapam. Devotees



watched in awe as archakas performed Purnahavachanam, detailed Aradhana, and Naivedya offerings, culminating in sacred Haratis. Honors were extended to the Ubhayadharlu of Tallapaka, descendants of the Tallapaka poets, and representatives from the Matham, preserving age-old protocols. A key ritual involved Sri Krishnaswami being escorted to the Sannidhi Yadava Puja site, where Venchupu (a ceremonial hunt) was enacted, followed by Haratis. Subsequently, Sri Malayappaswami set out for the symbolic hunt. After proceeding a short distance, archakas hurled the Eetu (spear) on behalf of the Lord and returned, marking the completion of three meticulous parayams (cycles). With this, the Parvetotsavam drew to a triumphant close, leaving an aura of spiritual fulfillment. The ritu-

als not only revived ancient Vaishnava traditions but also highlighted the temple's role in fostering community devotion during festivals. TTD Additional EO Venkayachoudari, Board Member Bhanuprakash Reddy, and hordes of pilgrims graced the occasion, adding to its solemnity. These events are part of Tirumala's packed Sankranti calendar, which emphasizes agrarian prosperity and marital harmony through Goda Parinayotsavam. Temple authorities ensured seamless arrangements amid heightened pilgrim footfall, with enhanced security and darshan facilities. As the celebrations continue, devotees are reminded of the spiritual significance of Kanuma, a day dedicated to cattle worship and family bonds in Andhra Pradesh's cultural tapestry.

Vizianagaram Workers at Closed Sugar Factories Lament Festival Without Wages



TPN Bureau | January 17 Jami, Vizianagaram: Workers and employees of the shuttered sugar factories in northern Andhra Pradesh Thandava, Etikoppaka, Chodavaram, Bhimasingi, and Sahakara are spending the Sankranti festival in distress without their dues, lamented Lok Satta State President Bhishsetti Babji.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday in Jami alongside Bhimasingi Sugar Factory workers, he accused local MLAs and ministers within the factories' jurisdictions, along with alliance leaders, of failing farmers, workers, and their families.

Babji highlighted that since the alliance government came to power, he has repeatedly written letters to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu as Lok Satta State President, urging state intervention and action from local

representatives. Despite these appeals, there has been no response even now, mirroring the neglect under the previous regime, he expressed with anguish. He noted that even a small advance from pending Provident Fund (PF) and gratuity payments would have allowed workers to celebrate the festival joyfully with their children. The outstanding amounts are staggering: Thandava Sugar Factory owes 12 crore to 361 worker families; Etikoppaka Factory 13 crore to 386 families; Chodavaram Factory 7 crore to 341 families; and Bhimasingi 9 crore to 279 families.

Additionally, Chodavaram Factory alone has 28 crore in dues to farmers, while other locations have cleared farmer payments, Babji clarified. Bhimasingi Sugars has been closed for five years, during which many

workers have died amid financial hardships and anxiety, he revealed. Warning that unless the state government acts swiftly on these five cooperative sugar factories, the machinery inside will rust away.

Babji urged District Minister Kondapalli and local MLAs to take immediate steps on Bhimasingi workers' dues. The meeting was attended by factory workers Shirreddi Ernayudu, Siriki Venkata Rao, Raman, Bhishsetti Adhibabu, and others. This crisis underscores the ongoing plight of industrial workers in Vizianagaram, where political promises have yet to translate into relief.

As Sankranti celebrations unfold statewide, these families remain sidelined, prompting calls for urgent governmental intervention to revive the factories and settle dues.

No Road, No Future – Families Flee Remote Hamlet in Andhra Pradesh



TPN Bureau | January 17, 2026

Tanakallu (Anantapur): In Kothapalli, a remote village under Koritikota panchayat in Tanakallu mandal, residents endure a daily struggle without even a dirt road. Basic amenities are absent, forcing families to abandon their homes and migrate to cities. Of the original 32 families (256 residents, including 122 voters), 18 have already left for Madanapalli and Bengaluru, leaving just 14 households behind.

Villagers rely on agriculture and livestock for survival, but isolation cripples them. Reaching nearby Kokkanti or Tummlavaripalli requires navigating bullock cart paths, which turn into mudslides during monsoons, especially across Timmannayunicheruvu, where paddy fields flank both

sides. "We carry produce on our heads through slush to reach any road," lamented a local farmer. Children face the worst: three trek to Tummlavaripalli's primary school, two to Kokkanti's high school, and one commutes to Tanakallu's government junior college for intermediate studies.

Health emergencies spell disaster. Pregnant women, elderly, and children lack access to ambulances. 108 emergency vehicles can't enter. No MGNREGA workers have visited, no pakka houses approved under schemes, not even bathing facilities or toilets. Streets remain unpaved or mere bullock tracks.

Migrants return only for elections, skipping festivals due to the ordeal. "Roads would revive our village," pleaded residents. They've submit-

ted pleas for generations, ignored by officials. Without at least a dirt track for 108 ambulances, the remaining families fear total abandonment. "Other villages develop while ours empties," they said. "Generations Beg for a Road – Ignored" A villager summed it up: "We've petitioned repeatedly. No road means all 14 families will leave. Lay a dirt path at minimum."

Farmers highlighted marketing woes: hauling crops through circus-like feats in mud, with bunds flooded by paddy cultivation. Officials and elected representatives have yet to respond. As Andhra Pradesh pushes rural development, Kothapalli's plight underscores neglected hamlets. Urgent intervention could halt the exodus before the village vanishes entirely.

NOTICE
FORM NO. URC-2
Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI [Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the companies (Authorized to Register) Rules, 2014]
1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application is proposed to be made after fifteen days hereof but before the expiry of thirty days hereinafter to the Registrar that "PAN INDIA PROJECTS" a "Partnership Firm" may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares.
2. The principal objects of the company are as follows: To carry on the business of Electrical Operation & Maintenance, Mechanical Operation & Maintenance, Construction of Projects, Road & Buildings, Industrial Operation & Maintenance, Dredging of Minerals, Material Handling, Transport, Loading and Unloading Maintenance, Outsourcing of Technical & Non-Technical Manpower Services, Maintenance of Outsourcing Work Contracts, Paramedical & Hospital Multiple Maintenance, Experienced & Ex-Servicemen Security Services, Facility Management Services including Mechanized Housekeeping & Sanitation, Landscaping & Horticulture, Laundry & Pest Control Services, Supply of Equipments, Materials & Uniforms etc., Oil & Refinery Maintenance, Science Research Laboratory Maintenance and Human Resources Training etc.,
3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company [AMARAVATHI MULTI PROJECTS AND SERVICES PRIVATE LIMITED] may be inspected at the office at Flat No.503, 5th Floor, SS Towers, Main Road, Danavaspeta, Rajahmundry - 533103, Andhra Pradesh, India.
4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Centre (CRC), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No. 6/7, 8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, District Gurgaon (Haryana), PIN: 122050, within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.
Dated this 09th Day of January, 2026 at Rajahmundry.
Name(s) of Applicant
1. DODDA SAI KRISHNA, Partner,
2. BATTULA GOPALAKRISHNA, Partner,



BMC Elections 2025: The Fall of the Thackeray Fortress and Mumbai’s Political Realignment

The results of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections have delivered a decisive and symbolic blow to the Thackeray legacy, reshaping Mumbai’s political landscape in ways once considered unthinkable. The Mahayuti alliance has breached what was long regarded as an impregnable Shiv Sena stronghold, ending decades of Thackeray dominance over India’s richest municipal body. For the first time in the civic body’s history, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is poised to secure the mayor’s post—an outcome that marks a profound shift in both power and political narrative in the country’s financial capital.

The BJP-Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) alliance secured 118 seats, crossing the majority mark of 114, while the alliance of Shiv Sena (UBT), Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), and Sharad Pawar’s NCP faction managed only 72 seats. The Congress, contesting independently, won 24 seats. These numbers do more than reflect an electoral defeat; they underscore the collapse of a political strategy rooted in nostalgia, identity politics, and outdated assumptions about Mumbai’s electorate.

The Crumbling of a Political Citadel

For decades, control of the BMC was the cornerstone of Shiv Sena’s power. The civic body, with an annual budget running into thousands of crores—larger than that of several Indian states—was not just an administrative institution but a symbol of Marathi pride and political authority. From Bal Thackeray to Uddhav Thackeray, the BMC served as the Sena’s financial and organisational backbone.



The Mahayuti’s victory represents the end of that era. The BJP’s emergence as the dominant force within the alliance, and its imminent claim to the mayor’s chair, signals a changing hierarchy in Maharashtra politics. Mumbai, once governed through emotional appeals to identity and legacy, has decisively voted for governance, development, and stability.

The Failed Thackeray Reunion

In a dramatic political gamble, estranged cousins Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray reunited after nearly two decades, hoping to consolidate the Marathi vote and halt the Mahayuti’s advance. Joined by Sharad Pawar’s NCP faction, the alliance was projected as a formidable counterforce, banking heavily on linguistic pride and shared regional identity.

Instead, the results exposed the limits of such a strategy. Despite the emotional symbolism of the Thackeray reunion, voters were unconvinced. The alliance failed to generate momentum beyond its traditional base and struggled to adapt its message to the realities of a modern, aspirational metropolis.

The Marathi Vote Is No Longer Monolithic

One of the most striking revelations of the election was the fragmentation of the Marathi vote. The assumption that a UBT-MNS alliance would automatically consolidate the “Marathi mannos” proved incorrect. The Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) alone secured 29 seats, many in Marathi-dominant or Marathi-influenced wards, often defeating UBT candidates in direct contests.

This outcome demonstrates that the Marathi voter is no longer driven solely by cultural identity. Educated, middle-class Marathi professionals—particularly the youth—are increasingly focused on infrastructure, employment, housing, and quality of life. They no longer respond uniformly to emotional appeals rooted in linguistic pride or perceived threats from “outsiders.”

Memories of the MNS’s violent agitations against North and South Indians, the disruption of businesses, and the culture of intimidation lingered. What once resonated with a section of voters has now alienated many who see themselves as part of a cosmopolitan Mumbai rather than a besieged regional community.

The Muslim Vote Miscalculation

Equally damaging was the alliance’s failure to attract Muslim voters. The Thackeray camp appeared to assume that Muslims would vote tactically for whichever formation seemed most capable of defeating the BJP. This assumption ignored deep historical mistrust stemming from the Shiv Sena’s role during the Babri Masjid demolition and the Mumbai riots of 1992-93.

Raj Thackeray’s past rhetoric and the Sena’s historical baggage made reconciliation difficult. As a result, Muslim voters largely stayed with the Congress and parties such as AIMIM, SP, and sections of the NCP, even at the cost of splitting opposition votes. The strategy of combining a supposed 40% Marathi vote with a 20% Muslim bloc collapsed completely.

Counter-Consolidation of Non-Marathi Voters

Perhaps the most consequential outcome of the Thackeray strategy was the counter-consolidation it triggered. Non-Marathi voters—estimated to form around 40% of Mumbai’s population—overwhelmingly rallied behind the Mahayuti alliance. Mumbai’s demographic transformation over the past two decades has been profound. Migrants from across India now form the backbone of the city’s economy, contributing to industries ranging from finance and entertainment to construction and small businesses. Many among these communities felt directly threatened by the rhetoric and historical record of the MNS and sections of the Shiv Sena.

The irony was unmistakable: a campaign meant to assert Marathi identity ended up uniting everyone else against it.

Development Over Identity

The Mahayuti alliance, under the leadership of Devendra Fadnavis, recognised a fundamental truth that the Thackerays missed—Mumbai’s voters are increasingly issue-driven. Infrastructure development, road quality, drainage, housing, public transport, and civic amenities dominated voter concerns. While the Mahayuti spoke the language of growth and governance, the opposition remained trapped in grievance politics and cultural anxiety. For voters dealing daily with traffic congestion, flooding, and rising costs of living, promises of cultural preservation without a development roadmap felt hollow and regressive.

Targeted welfare schemes, particularly the Ladki Bahin Yojana, played a significant role in consolidating female voters behind the Mahayuti. Tangible benefits mattered more than ideological positioning. In several closely fought wards, women voters proved decisive, reinforcing the alliance’s advantage.

Women and Welfare as Decisive Factors

The Congress’s ambiguous strategy further weakened the opposition. While it secured a notable 10-12% vote share, its refusal to align with the MNS in Mumbai—despite partnering with it in other municipal corporations—confused voters and split the anti-BJP vote. In many wards, opposition votes were divided three or four ways, allowing Mahayuti candidates to win comfortably with pluralities. Organisational rivalries and historical animosities prevented the emergence of a coherent alternative.

A Narrative That Failed to Evolve

Ultimately, the Thackerays lost because they failed to offer a forward-looking narrative. Their campaign relied on fear, nostalgia, and identity at a time when Mumbai’s electorate is navigating the complexities of a global, 21st-century city.

The BMC election results are not just a verdict on political alliances but a reflection of Mumbai’s evolving identity. The city has chosen development over division, governance over grievance, and the future over the past. The Thackeray fortress has fallen—not because voters rejected Marathi pride, but because they demanded more than symbolism in a city that never stops moving forward.

The Mandal Moment That Never Was: How the Congress Lost a Transformational Opportunity

Rahul Gandhi would find more than historical irony—and perhaps deep political regret—in revisiting the years between 1980 and 1982, when Indira Gandhi was repeatedly blocked by her own cabinet colleagues from implementing the Mandal Commission report. What later proved to be one of the most transformative interventions in Indian politics was once within the Congress’s grasp, only to be vetoed four times by its most powerful leaders. The cost of that hesitation would eventually be borne not only by the party, but by the very social coalition it once claimed to represent.

These revelations emerge from the forthcoming autobiography of P. Shiv Shankar, a distinguished jurist and former Union Law Minister, to be published by Simon & Schuster India. Shiv Shankar offers a detailed and candid account of how the Mandal Commission—meticulously prepared under the chairmanship of Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal—was repeatedly stonewalled by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA). Among those who opposed or delayed its implementation were political heavyweights such as P.V. Narasimha Rao, R. Venkataraman, Pranab Mukherjee, and Giani Zail Singh, then holding the crucial portfolios of external affairs, defence, finance, and home.

A Lost First-Mover Advantage

The irony of history is unmistakable. When Prime Minister V.P. Singh implemented the Mandal Commission recommendations in 1990, it altered the grammar and arithmetic of Indian politics forever. “Mandal politics” brought caste firmly to the centre of power, reshaping electoral alignments and creating a new political vocabulary around representation, social justice, and affirmative action. Leaders such as Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Nitish Kumar, and other backward-class politicians rose to prominence, while regional parties flourished.

Although V.P. Singh’s government lasted barely 343 days, the political transformation he unleashed was permanent. In the long run, even the Bharatiya Janata Party benefited from this churn, as it adapted and consolidated new social coalitions. The Congress, however, lost out. When P.V. Narasimha Rao eventually implemented Mandal during his prime ministership, the party reaped no political dividends—having squandered the first-mover advantage and acted under a leader who was personally uncomfortable with caste-based reservations.

The Congress’s Uneasy Relationship With Caste

Decades later, the Congress appears to have come full circle. In 2023-24,



Sonia Gandhi told the Congress Working Committee that she was “100% with the caste census” and that it should be the party’s highest priority. The CWC passed a resolution supporting a caste-based census and advocating quotas within quotas based on numerical strength.

Yet this shift raises an uncomfortable question: has the Congress truly undergone a change of heart, especially among its upper-caste leadership, or is it responding tactically to Rahul Gandhi’s political direction and the compulsions of contemporary electoral politics? From the Indira Gandhi years through the UPA era—par-

ticularly during the 2010-11 debates—caste census and expanded reservations remained taboo topics within the party, often seen as politically explosive and socially divisive.

Indira Gandhi’s Quiet Conviction

Shiv Shankar’s account complicates the conventional wisdom about Indira Gandhi. As Law Minister in her cabinet, he recalls that she was personally inclined toward implementing the Mandal Commission’s recommendations. The Second Backward Classes Commission had conducted an extensive study of communities identified in the Constitution as socially and educa-

tionally backward, laying out a strong empirical case for affirmative action.

However, senior colleagues repeatedly warned Indira Gandhi that implementing Mandal would create “irreversible fissures” in society and spark law-and-order problems across the country. Letters from Rao, Mukherjee, and Venkataraman cautioned her that riots could erupt “down to the village level.”

Shiv Shankar describes his shock when Indira Gandhi showed him this correspondence. He recalls telling her bluntly that rejecting the report would amount to betraying millions who had faced

discrimination for generations. Implementation, he argued, would give backward classes access to education and employment, enabling economic and social mobility. “They are a dejected lot,” he told the Prime Minister, “because they feel they have remained underdeveloped for far too long.”

Indira Gandhi agreed. According to Shiv Shankar, she told him she shared his views entirely—and that this was precisely why she had sent the report back to the CCPA every time it was rejected.

A Political Warning Ignored

Shiv Shankar repeatedly warned that backward classes were losing faith in the Congress. Despite winning elections, the party’s vote share hovered around 40 percent. “The remaining 60 percent,” he told Indira Gandhi, “are likely from the backward classes.” If the Congress won their trust, he argued, it could become electorally invincible.

This was a remarkably prescient assessment. Yet the party’s entrenched leadership failed to act on it.

B.P. Mandal’s Skepticism

Even Mandal himself was sceptical of Congress intentions. Shiv Shankar recounts how Mandal hesitated to continue his work after the fall of the Janata government, fearing that the new Congress regime would not be supportive. His doubts were rooted in historical experience: successive Congress governments had shown little enthusiasm for backward-class empowerment.

Indira Gandhi, to her credit, granted two extensions to the Commission—even though it had been set up by the Morarji Desai government. Yet her political will repeatedly ran into institutional resistance.

The Committee That Never Functioned

A compromise was eventually devised. While acknowledging that Mandal’s recommendations would have far-reaching consequences, the government decided to constitute

additional committees—both official and cabinet-level—to study the implications before implementation. Indira Gandhi wanted Shiv Shankar to chair the committee, but the CCPA blocked this too, insisting that P.V. Narasimha Rao take charge instead.

The committee existed on paper until 1989. In practice, it never met.

Shiv Shankar writes with visible frustration about Rao’s refusal to convene even a single meeting. Repeated reminders were met with indifference. “His indecisiveness,” Shiv Shankar observes, “was actually a decision.”

The Cost of Delay

By the time Mandal was implemented in 1990, the Congress had lost moral ownership of the idea. What could have been a defining moment of social reform under Indira Gandhi instead became a symbol of Congress hesitation and elite discomfort. The party ceded political space to regional forces and allowed others to claim the mantle of social justice.

The Mandal moment that never was remains one of the Congress’s greatest missed opportunities—one that continues to haunt it as it struggles to rebuild relevance among backward-class voters. History, as Shiv Shankar’s memoir makes clear, offered the Congress a transformative chance. It was not the opposition, but its own leadership, that ensured it slipped away.

BJP Sweeps Maharashtra Municipal Elections, Other Parties Find Silver Linings

The elections for 29 municipal corporations in Maharashtra, including the crucial Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), have delivered a resounding victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), while most other major parties also found areas of encouragement despite setbacks. The only clear losers appear to be Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar’s Nationalist Congress Parties (NCPs), which failed to reclaim even their traditional strongholds in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, despite contesting in an alliance.

BJP

The BJP has firmly established its dominance in Maharashtra through these elections. Winning 1,425 of 2,869 wards—over 1,000 more than its nearest rival, the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena—the party is poised to secure its first-ever mayor in Mumbai. Strategic victories in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad have further strengthened its political base, providing a platform for future expansion. The overwhelming success also enhances the stature of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, under whose leadership the elections were contested.

Shiv Sena (UBT) and MNS

For Uddhav Thackeray’s Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray, UBT), the results in Mumbai demonstrate that the party retains its legacy in the city despite internal splits and defections. The UBT won 65 wards in the BMC, more



than double the tally of the Eknath Shinde faction, which secured 29. Symbolically, the UBT also won ward 13A in Thane, where Shinde resides. Meanwhile, Raj Thackeray’s Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), previously on the verge of political irrelevance, gained six wards in the BMC through its alliance with Uddhav Thackeray, just one short of its 2017 tally.

Congress

Despite being without allies like the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP, the Congress managed a respectable performance, winning 324 wards statewide and emerging as the third-largest party. It also won 25 BMC wards, demonstrating

resilience against the combined strength of the BJP and Shiv Sena factions.

Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde)

The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena failed to unseat the UBT in Mumbai but secured around 30 BMC seats, asserting itself as a key player in negotiations with the BJP, which lacks a majority in the corporation. Shinde’s faction also achieved a significant victory in Thane, strengthening its political leverage.

AIMIM

The Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM made its presence felt, winning 95 seats across 29 municipal corporations. The party’s strong performance, in-

cluding 24 seats in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and 20 in Malegaon, indicates growing support among Muslim voters in Maharashtra.

NCPs

For Sharad and Ajit Pawar’s NCP factions, their last-minute reunification did little to turn the tide. Their failure to secure Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad is a major setback, particularly for Ajit Pawar, whose political influence in the state ruling alliance may now be in question.

Overall, while the BJP emerged as the clear winner, the election results have provided both opportunities and challenges for Maharashtra’s other political players.

Resort Politics Returns as Shinde Sena Moves to Strengthen Position in BMC



Resort politics has made a comeback in Mumbai, with Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde’s Shiv Sena relocating its newly elected representatives to a five-star hotel, a day after the party emerged as the kingmaker in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections. Sources indicate that the move is motivated by two main considerations: preventing poaching and strengthening Shinde’s bargaining position with the BJP, as the Mahayuti alliance prepares to take control of the country’s richest civic body.

The BJP-Shinde Sena alliance swept the recent BMC elections, comfortably surpassing the majority mark and ending 25 years of rule by the Thackeray-led Shiv Sena. However, no single party won a majority on its own, leaving room for political maneuvering. The Shinde faction’s hotel move comes amid concerns that opposition parties may join forces to challenge the expected BJP-led administration. In such a scenario,

they would require just eight additional corporators to cross the halfway mark of 114 seats and potentially block the alliance from assuming control.

The Numbers Game

The BMC consists of 227 wards, with the majority mark set at 114. The BJP won 89 seats, while Shinde’s Shiv Sena secured 29, bringing the alliance total to 118—slightly above the majority threshold. The NCP, led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, contested independently despite being part of the Mahayuti and won three wards.

On the opposition side, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), led by the Thackeray cousins, along with the Sharad Pawar faction of the NCP, collectively won 72 seats—Sena (UBT) with 65, MNS with six, and NCP (SP) with one. Congress claimed 24 wards, AIMIM eight, and the Samajwadi Party two. If all opposition parties unite,

their combined strength would rise to 106, just eight seats short of the majority, raising the specter of horse-trading and potential defections.

A Strategy to Bargain

Sources suggest that the Shinde camp’s move is also designed to enhance its bargaining power with the BJP over key positions, particularly the prestigious BMC mayoral post. Traditionally held by the Shiv Sena, the post is a symbol of the party’s influence in Mumbai. Many corporators within Shinde’s faction are pressing the deputy chief minister not to compromise, ensuring that a Shiv Sena member occupies the mayoral seat despite the party being the junior partner in the alliance.

With the Shinde faction now in a kingmaker position, these strategic moves underscore the high-stakes politics following the BJP’s record victory, highlighting both the fragility and complexity of municipal governance in Mumbai.

Thackeray Cousins Vow to Continue Marathi Identity Politics After BMC Setback



Despite losing control of Mumbai’s Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) after 25 years, the Thackeray cousins, Uddhav and Raj Thackeray, have vowed to continue their fight for Marathi identity and the welfare of Maharashtra’s native population. In a post on social media, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) shared a photo of the late Balasaheb Thackeray, the party founder and champion of the Marathi cause, with the caption: “This fight isn’t over yet.”

The recent BMC elections saw the BJP and Eknath Shinde’s Shiv Sena emerge victorious, snatching control of the civic body from the Thackerays, who had united last year to challenge the ruling Mahayuti alliance. While the results were a setback to what was expected to be a new chapter in Thackeray politics, both Uddhav and Raj emphasized that their struggle for Marathi pride and identity would continue unabated.

Uddhav Thackeray’s party won 65 of the 227 BMC wards. The party assured

supporters that it would persist in advocating for the rights and respect of Marathis. “The fight will continue just like this until the Marathis receive the respect they deserve,” the party said, reaffirming its commitment to the Marathi cause.

Raj Thackeray, leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), which won six wards in the BMC, echoed similar sentiments. “This defeat does not mean we will lose heart or give up,” he said. “If anything is done against the Marathi people, our corporators will ensure that those in power are held accountable.” He stressed that his fight was for the Marathi people, language, identity, and a prosperous Maharashtra, calling it a long-term struggle essential to the party’s very existence.

Raj also accused the Mahayuti alliance of harassing and exploiting Marathis, stating that the ruling powers and their allies often seek to undermine the community. “We must stand firmly behind our Marathi people. Elections will come

and go, but our breath itself is Marathi,” he declared. He further promised that the MNS would analyse its shortcomings, take corrective action, and rebuild the party from scratch to continue advocating for its cause.

BMC Elections 2026

The BJP-led alliance had a decisive victory in the BMC elections, winning 118 of the 227 wards, comfortably crossing the majority mark of 114. The BJP alone secured 89 seats, while Eknath Shinde’s Shiv Sena won 29. The Mahayuti alliance also emerged dominant across 25 of Maharashtra’s 29 civic bodies. The BMC elections, held after a nine-year interval and a four-year delay, saw 1,700 candidates contesting 227 seats in India’s richest civic body, with an annual budget exceeding Rs 74,400 crore. In the previous 2017 elections, the united Shiv Sena, which included Shinde at the time, had retained control of the BMC, maintaining decades of influence in Mumbai’s civic politics.

PM Modi Campaigns in West Bengal, Highlights BJP’s Development Agenda and Promises Change

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a public rally in Malda, West Bengal, on Wednesday, emphasizing the support of India’s Gen Z for the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) development-focused agenda. Citing the party’s unprecedented success in the recent Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections, he expressed confidence that West Bengal voters would also embrace the BJP in the upcoming state elections, scheduled to be held in a few months.

“At the BMC polls, the people gave a historic mandate to the BJP,” Modi said, highlighting the party’s first-ever landslide victory in Mumbai’s local body elections. “The youth of India, especially Gen Z, believes in the BJP’s development mode, and I am confident that the people of Bengal too will choose progress and good governance.”

In his speech, Modi sharply criticized the incumbent Trinamool Congress (TMC) government led by Mamata Banerjee. Speaking in Bengali, he declared, “Ei sarkar palano dorkaar,” which translates to



“this Trinamool government needs to be changed.” He accused the state government of being “heartless and cruel,” alleging that it was looting public funds and obstructing the flow of central government aid meant for the people of Bengal. “Development will reach every corner of Bengal only when the Trinamool is defeated and the BJP forms the government,” he asserted.

The prime minister also ad-

ressed concerns related to illegal immigration in the state. He claimed that the Trinamool government had been shielding infiltrators and promised that “big action will be taken against infiltration once the BJP comes to power in Bengal.” Modi emphasized that the party’s policies would safeguard the interests of legitimate residents, particularly persecuted communities such as the Matuas and other refugees from neighboring

countries. He highlighted that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protects these communities and assured them that they have nothing to fear under a BJP government.

Modi’s campaign focused on combining promises of strong governance, development, and security. He argued that the BJP’s approach prioritizes infrastructure, employment, and public welfare over politics and corruption, presenting a stark contrast to the current state administration. By highlighting the party’s track record in other states and local elections, Modi sought to reinforce voter confidence in the BJP’s ability to bring transformative change to West Bengal.

As the state heads towards elections, the prime minister’s rally in Malda underscored the BJP’s strategy of leveraging development, youth engagement, and promises of law and order to challenge the Trinamool Congress, presenting a vision of governance that seeks both economic growth and social security.

Rahul Gandhi Visits Indore, Consoles Families Affected by Waterborne Illness Outbreak

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visited Indore, Madhya Pradesh, on Saturday to meet patients and families affected by a recent vomiting and diarrhoea outbreak linked to water contamination in the city. During his visit, Gandhi spent time at Bombay Hospital, a private medical facility, where he met four patients undergoing treatment and inquired about their health, offering words of comfort to both the patients and their family members.

Accompanying him were Madhya Pradesh Congress president Jitu Patwari and senior party leader Umang Singh. The visit also took Gandhi to Bhagirathpura, the locality where the outbreak was first reported last month. There, he interacted with families who had lost loved ones, expressing condolences and consoling them during this difficult time. The gesture was aimed at highlighting the human impact of the crisis and the need for urgent action to prevent such tragedies in the



future.

Authorities in Bhagirathpura made extensive security arrangements ahead of Gandhi’s visit, including the installation of barricades at several key points to ensure smooth and safe passage for the Congress leader. Residents of the area claim that the outbreak has so far claimed 24 lives. However, the Madhya Pradesh state government, in its status report submitted to the Madhya Pradesh High Court, has reported seven

deaths, including that of a five-month-old infant.

In addition, a ‘death audit’ conducted by a committee from the government-run Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College suggested that the deaths of 15 people in Bhagirathpura could be linked to the outbreak in some capacity. The administration has provided compensation of Rs 2 lakh each to the families of 21 individuals who passed away following the outbreak. Officials clarified that while some

deaths were caused by other illnesses or underlying conditions, financial assistance was provided to all bereaved families on humanitarian grounds.

Gandhi’s visit comes amid growing public concern over the management of public health and the adequacy of preventive measures in Madhya Pradesh. By personally visiting the affected families and highlighting the toll of the outbreak, Gandhi sought to draw attention to the human cost of inadequate water safety and healthcare oversight, while urging authorities to ensure timely and effective interventions.

The outbreak in Indore has underscored longstanding challenges related to water quality, sanitation, and public health infrastructure. Gandhi’s engagement with the affected communities reflects a broader call for accountability, improved medical care, and stronger preventive measures to safeguard residents from similar crises in the future.

US FAA Warns Airlines to ‘Exercise Caution’ Over Mexico, Central and South America Amid Military Activity Concerns”



U.S. aviation authorities have issued a series of warnings urging airlines and pilots to exercise caution when flying over certain parts of Mexico, Central America and South America due to “military activities” that could pose risks to civil aviation, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said Friday. The alerts, issued as Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs), are designed to alert operators to potentially hazardous conditions, including possible interference with global navigation satellite systems (GNSS).

The FAA’s flight advisories, which take effect on January 16 and will remain in force for 60 days, cover a wide area of airspace. These include regions above Mexico and other Central American countries, as well as Panama, parts of Ecuador and Colombia, and portions of the eastern Pacific Ocean, including the Bogota, Guayaquil and Mazatlán Oceanic Flight Information Regions. The warnings caution that risks could affect aircraft at all altitudes, not only during overflights but also during takeoff, arrival and departure phases of flight.

An FAA spokesperson described the situation as a “potentially hazardous situation” and advised operators to remain alert, particularly given evolving military activities in the region. While the notices do not prohibit flights over these areas, they serve as a safety precaution so airlines can adjust routes or protocols as necessary.

The warnings come amid heightened regional tensions and recent U.S. military operations in Latin

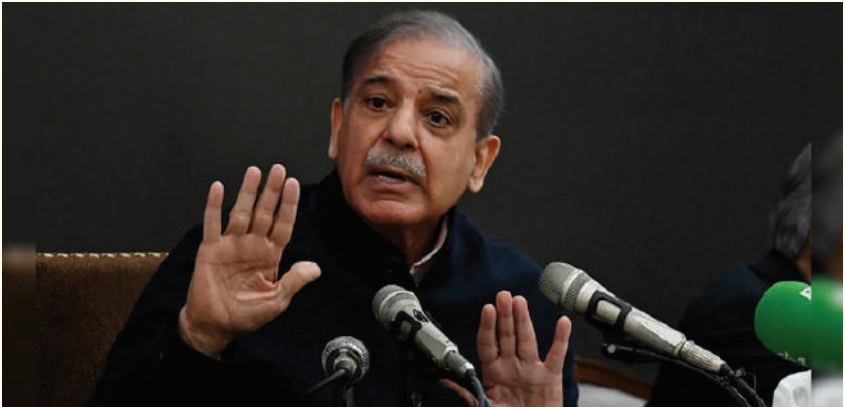
America. In early January, U.S. special forces conducted a raid and airstrikes that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, who were later transported to the United States to face trial on drug-trafficking and other charges.

In addition, U.S. President Donald Trump has publicly suggested the possibility of expanding military actions against drug cartels in Mexico, stating in media interviews that land operations could target cartel infrastructure, a stance that has drawn significant attention due to its implications for Mexico as a U.S. neighbour and trading partner. “We are going to start now hitting land, with regard to the cartels. The cartels are running Mexico,” Trump said in a recent interview.

Despite the FAA advisories, the Mexican government has sought to reassure the public and the aviation sector: Officials from Mexico’s Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport have said that their national airspace remains fully operational and that no changes have been made to civil aviation operations within the country. They emphasized that the FAA notice is precautionary and does not impose restrictions or affect Mexican airlines or flight paths.

The FAA’s move reflects broader efforts to maintain aviation safety in a region experiencing increased military and geopolitical activity. Airlines and aviation authorities will closely monitor developments over the coming weeks as the advisory remains active.

PM Shehbaz Sharif Vows to Eradicate Terrorism, Highlights Pakistan’s Strength and Resources



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan’s unwavering commitment to combating terrorism, emphasizing that the menace of militancy would be “thrown into the Indian Ocean.” He made the remarks during a meeting with senior religious scholars representing the National Paigham-i-Aman Committee, an organization established last year to counter extremism, hate speech, terrorism, and sectarianism in the country.

Addressing the gathering, Shehbaz Sharif underscored that terrorism in Pakistan has been fueled by external actors, describing militants as being supported by the “enemies of Pakistan.” Highlighting the human cost of militancy, he noted that over 100,000 Pakistanis have lost their lives to terrorism, a sacrifice he said should be acknowledged by the international community. “We are determined to defeat terrorism, and with the support of the people, we will throw it into the Indian Ocean,” the prime minister asserted, reflecting the government’s resolve to eliminate extremist violence from the country.

Shehbaz also referenced Pakistan’s resilience in the face of regional challenges, recalling the country’s strong response during a four-day conflict with India in May 2025. He described this demonstration of strength as a testament to Pakistan’s preparedness to defend its sovereignty and maintain peace in the region.

In addition to security concerns, the prime minister highlighted Pakistan’s

vast untapped natural resources, estimated to be worth trillions of dollars. He emphasized that effective exploration and utilization of these resources could address pressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, and economic instability. “If we use the hidden treasures, all our problems will end,” he said, urging policymakers and citizens alike to prioritize the development of the country’s abundant resources for national progress.

The National Paigham-i-Aman Committee, comprising senior clerics from across Pakistan, has played a key role in promoting peace and countering extremist narratives. The committee has consistently condemned militant groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Afghan Taliban, reiterating that terrorism has no justification under any circumstances. During the meeting with the prime minister, committee members affirmed their support for the government’s anti-terrorism initiatives and pledged to continue efforts to spread messages of tolerance and harmony throughout the country.

By combining strong governance, public support, and effective utilization of its resources, Pakistan aims to overcome the twin challenges of militancy and underdevelopment. Shehbaz Sharif’s remarks signal a determined strategy to secure the nation, foster economic growth, and reinforce Pakistan’s commitment to peace and stability both domestically and internationally.

“India Engages U.S. for Sanctions Waiver to Continue Operations at Strategic Chabahar Port”

India is actively engaging with the United States to implement a short-term sanctions waiver that would allow it to continue operations at Iran’s strategically located Chabahar port, the Ministry of External Affairs said. The clarification comes amid reports suggesting India might exit the project under U.S. pressure following the Trump administration’s threat of a 25% tariff on countries doing business with Tehran.

Chabahar has long been India’s only viable western corridor to Afghanistan and Central Asia, as Pakistan blocks overland routes. India is also a key partner in the development of the port, located in Iran’s southern Sistan-Balochistan province.

“As you are aware, on October 28, 2025, the U.S. Department of Treasury issued guidance on a conditional sanctions waiver valid until April 26, 2026. We remain engaged with the U.S. side to work out this arrangement,” MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

The U.S. had imposed broad sanctions on Iran in September 2025 but granted India a six-month exemption for the Chabahar project. Earlier sources noted that while a short-term waiver was provided to wind up operations, New Delhi does not consider exiting the port an



option. “India continues to engage with the U.S. to work out modalities. The port is of strategic importance, and India aims to comply with the conditions while ensuring continuity,” the sources said.

Strategic Importance of Chabahar

Chabahar, meaning “four springs,” is about 550 nautical miles from Kandla port in Gujarat and offers India direct access to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Europe. Positioned beyond the Strait of Hormuz, it is insulated from many regional con-

flicts. The port is part of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a 7,200-km multimodal route linking the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and northern Europe via Saint Petersburg. The corridor is expected to reduce shipment times by 15 days compared with the Suez Canal.

In 2024, India signed a 10-year agreement with Iran under which India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) committed \$370 million to Chabahar, signaling New Delhi’s long-term commitment. Chabahar is also

central to India’s humanitarian assistance efforts in Afghanistan.

India’s Next Steps

Reports indicate India is preparing to transfer approximately \$120 million—the amount it had committed—to limit direct exposure to the project while exploring the creation of a new entity to continue its development. This approach would ensure continued Indian support without direct government involvement.

During the Trump administration in 2018, In-

dia had received a rare exemption to continue Chabahar operations despite U.S. sanctions on Iran. The 2025 waiver extension aims to maintain continuity as Washington threatens new punitive measures.

Trade between India and Iran stood at \$1.6 billion last year, with exports of \$1.2 billion and imports of \$0.4 billion. New Delhi is navigating these sanctions amid a complex global landscape, including monitoring implications of U.S. measures on Russian oil companies.

“World Bank President Ajay Banga Named to Trump’s ‘Board of Peace’ to Oversee Gaza Governance”

The White House has announced the formation of a “Board of Peace” under U.S. President Donald Trump to oversee the temporary governance of Gaza, which continues to experience deadly violence despite a fragile ceasefire that came into effect in October. President Trump will chair the board, which notably includes Indian-origin World Bank Group President Ajay Banga.

Who Is Ajay Banga?

Ajay Banga is the 14th President of the World Bank Group. Nominated by former U.S. President Joe Biden in February 2023, his appointment to a five-year term was confirmed in May 2023, and he officially assumed office on June 2, 2023. Under his leadership, the World Bank has undertaken extensive reforms aimed at transforming the institution into a faster, more efficient, and impactful development partner. His focus has been on increasing the bank’s lending ca-



capacity, streamlining operations, and implementing practical, scalable development solutions.

Early Life and Education

Born on November 10, 1959, in Khadki, Maharashtra, into a Sikh family, Ajay Banga is the son of an Indian Army officer. He earned a Bachelor of Arts

(Honours) in Economics from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi, in 1981 and later completed a postgraduate management program at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

From Global Business to Public Service

Before his role at the World Bank, Banga was

Vice Chairman at General Atlantic and previously served as President and CEO of Mastercard, where he led a global workforce of nearly 24,000 employees. During his tenure, he founded the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, promoting equitable and sustainable economic opportunity

worldwide.

Banga has also held several prominent global roles. He served as Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce from 2020 to 2022 and has been on the boards of the American Red Cross, Kraft Foods, and Dow Inc. Additionally, he co-founded the Cyber Readiness Institute, focusing on improving global cyber security standards.

Recognition and Awards
Ajay Banga’s contributions have been recognised internationally. Among his honours are the Padma Shri awarded by the President of India in 2016, the Singapore Public Service Star in 2022, the Foreign Policy Association Medal in 2012, and the Ellis Island Medal of Honour.

With his extensive experience in global business and public service, Banga brings significant expertise to the Board of Peace, which aims to stabilise Gaza and provide oversight during a challenging period for the region.

“Trump Accepts María Corina Machado’s Nobel Peace Prize Medal, Norwegian Committee Clarifies Prize Remains Hers”



Former U.S. President Donald Trump defended his decision to accept Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado’s Nobel Peace Prize medal by saying simply, “she offered it to me,” and credited his role in ending eight wars. The unusual diplomatic moment unfolded on Thursday when Machado presented Trump with her Nobel Peace Prize medal during a White House

meeting, describing the act as a gesture of respect and gratitude. Trump accepted the physical medal and praised Machado as a “wonderful woman,” calling her gesture “a wonderful show of mutual respect.”

When asked why he would want someone else’s Nobel Prize and what he planned to do with it, Trump replied: “Well, she offered it to me. I thought

it was very nice. She said, you know, you have ended eight wars, and nobody deserves this prize more than – in history – than you do. And I thought it was a very nice gesture.” He concluded his remarks with a compliment, referring to Machado as a “very fine woman.”

Machado, who won the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to promote democracy and a peaceful

transition in Venezuela, explained after the presentation that she gifted the medal “as recognition for his unique commitment with our freedom.” Her visit to the White House also included a closed-door meeting with Trump about leadership and political issues in Venezuela. Speaking to supporters outside the White House, Machado said, “We can count on President Trump,” though she did not provide further details.

Despite the headline grabbing moment, the Nobel Peace Prize itself cannot be transferred, shared, or reassigned, the Norwegian Nobel Committee clarified the following day. The award body said that while laureates are free to give away or sell the physical medal, diploma, or prize money, the title of Nobel Peace Prize laureate permanently remains with the original recipient and

cannot be altered by personal gestures. “Regardless of what may happen to the medal, the diploma, or the prize money, it is and remains the original laureate who is recorded in history as the recipient of the prize,” the committee stated.

The Nobel Committee also emphasised that it would not engage with the ongoing discussions surrounding the presentation of the medal to a politician. There are no restrictions on what a laureate may do with their prize components once awarded.

Machado’s symbolic act sparked international debate, with some critics arguing that it undermined the prestige and intent of the Nobel Peace Prize. However, the event also highlighted the complex interplay between symbolic diplomatic gestures and official recognition by independent award bodies.

“Markets to Open on Sunday, February 1 for Budget 2026 as Investors Pin Hopes on Tax Reforms”



India’s leading stock exchanges, the BSE and NSE, have announced that equity markets will remain open for trading on Sunday, February 1, 2026, to coincide with the presentation of the Union Budget. February 1 falls on a Sunday this year, prompting the exchanges to make a special arrangement for live trading.

In a circular issued on January 16, the National Stock Exchange informed market participants that trading on Budget day would follow normal market hours. “On account of the presentation of the Union Budget, members are requested to note that the Exchange shall be conducting a live trading session on February 01, 2026, as per standard market timings (9:15 am to 3:30 pm),” the NSE said. The BSE

issued a similar notification.

The Lok Sabha Speaker confirmed earlier, on January 12, that the Union Budget for 2026 would be presented at 11 am on February 1. In recent years, February 1 has become the fixed date for the annual Budget exercise. The Union Budget for 2025 was also presented on the same date.

Budget 2026 will be a significant milestone for Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as it will mark her ninth consecutive Union Budget presentation—placing her among the longest-serving finance ministers to deliver uninterrupted Budget speeches in India’s history.

Ahead of the Budget, the Ministry of Finance will release the Economic Survey, which provides a detailed assessment of

the state of the economy. This will be followed by a press briefing led by Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran and senior government officials. The Department of Economic Affairs plays a key role in preparing the Budget documents, which outline the government’s estimated revenues, expenditures, fiscal position, and proposed policy initiatives for the upcoming financial year.

Opening markets on weekends for Budget announcements is not unprecedented. Stock exchanges were similarly kept open on Saturday, February 1, 2025, February 1, 2020, and February 28, 2015, to allow investors to react immediately to Budget proposals.

As Budget 2026 approaches,

market participants are voicing strong expectations around tax reforms, particularly in capital gains taxation. Investors, brokers, and tax experts are calling for a reduction in long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax rates, lower securities transaction tax (STT), higher exemption limits, uniform holding periods across asset classes, and the restoration of indexation benefits.

Market participants argue that high taxes discourage long-term investment and erode returns, especially in a year marked by volatility. With investor sentiment under pressure, stakeholders believe that meaningful tax rationalisation could play a crucial role in boosting confidence and encouraging sustained participation in capital markets.

“SEBI Clears Seven Companies, Including Gaudium IVF and Runwal Developers, to Launch IPOs”

Seven companies, including Gaudium IVF, Runwal Developers, and Augmont Enterprises, have received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to move forward with their initial public offering (IPO) plans. The regulator also cleared the IPO proposals of Sillverton Industries, Supreet Chemicals, CJ Darcl Logistics, and Lalbaba Engineering, marking a notable development in India’s primary capital markets.

SEBI issued its observations on the draft documents of these companies over the course of the week. Sillverton Industries and Augmont Enterprises received approval on January 12, followed by Runwal Developers and Lalbaba Engineering on January 13. CJ Darcl Logistics was cleared on January 14, while Gaudium IVF and Women Health received the go-ahead on January 15. Supreet Chemicals obtained approval on January 16.

The issuance of SEBI observations signifies that the companies’ Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) documents have been reviewed and that the companies are now permitted to proceed with their IPO launches within the next 12 months. This is a critical step in the regulatory process, enabling companies to raise capital from public investors while complying with



SEBI’s guidelines.

Among the approved companies, Gaudium IVF and Women Health, a provider of fertility services, has re-filed its DRHP with SEBI to raise funds through its IPO. The company plans to use the proceeds to fund an aggressive expansion of its network, aiming to strengthen its presence across India and enhance its service offerings in the reproductive healthcare segment.

Runwal Developers, a well-known real estate player, and Augmont Enterprises, a com-

modities and financial services company, are also gearing up to tap capital markets. These IPOs are expected to attract attention from institutional and retail investors seeking diversified investment opportunities.

Other companies cleared by SEBI include Sillverton Industries, which operates in [industry—specifics if available], Supreet Chemicals, specializing in [industry], CJ Darcl Logistics, a logistics service provider, and Lalbaba Engineering, which focuses on [industry—specifics if available]. These IPO approvals

reflect ongoing investor interest in sectors ranging from healthcare and real estate to logistics and chemicals.

With India’s primary market witnessing renewed momentum, SEBI’s approvals indicate that the capital markets regulator continues to facilitate growth and capital-raising for businesses. Investors now have a window to participate in the upcoming public offerings, potentially benefiting from the growth plans and expansion strategies of these seven companies over the next year.

“RIL Q3 Net Profit Rises 1.6% to ₹22,290 Crore on Strong Jio and O2C Performance”

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) reported a marginal 1.6% rise in net profit for the third quarter (Q3) ended December 2025, driven by gains in its digital services and oil-to-chemicals (O2C) businesses. The company posted a net profit of ₹22,290 crore, up from ₹21,930 crore a year ago. However, net profit attributable to shareholders rose only 0.57% to ₹18,645 crore from ₹18,540 crore in the same period last year.

RIL’s gross revenue increased 10% year-on-year to ₹293,829 crore, compared with ₹267,186 crore in Q3 FY25. The company’s O2C segment delivered a 14.6% rise in EBITDA, supported by higher transportation fuel cracks, increased volumes, and improved sulphur realisations. These gains were partially offset by a decline in downstream chemical margins and elevated feedstock freight costs.

Regarding recent Labour Code changes, RIL said it will evaluate the impact on employee benefits accounting once cen-



tral and state rules are notified. Employee benefit expenses for the quarter stood at ₹7,912 crore, up from ₹7,155 crore a year ago.

The company’s digital and telecom arm, Jio Platforms, posted an 11.2% increase in net profit to ₹7,629 crore and revenue growth of 12.7% to ₹43,683 crore. The performance was driven by robust subscriber additions, higher average revenue per

user (ARPU), and expansion of digital services. EBITDA for Jio grew 16.4% on the back of improved margins and revenue growth, reflecting deeper penetration of the company’s connectivity and media ecosystem in Indian households.

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd, the company’s retail arm, registered a 2.7% increase in net profit to ₹3,551 crore from ₹3,458

crore a year ago, while revenue rose 8.1% to ₹97,605 crore. During the quarter, the retail business expanded its store network with 431 new outlets, taking the total to 19,979 stores covering 78.1 million sq. ft. The registered customer base reached 378 million. The business also completed the demerger of its consumer products division and strengthened its portfolio by onboarding new brands and product lines.

Commenting on the results, RIL Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani highlighted strong performance in the O2C business due to higher fuel margins and operational flexibility, while upstream EBITDA was impacted by lower volumes and prices. He also noted that agile crude sourcing and refinery utilisation helped sustain margins, especially amid US and EU sanctions on Russian refiners.

RIL shares closed almost flat at ₹1,457.60, up 0.06% on the BSE on Friday.

“SEBI Bars 12 Entities for Five Years, Imposes ₹90 Lakh Penalty in Front-Running Case”



Capital markets regulator SEBI has barred 12 entities from accessing the securities markets for five years and imposed penalties totalling ₹90 lakh for their involvement in a front-running case. The regulator has also ordered the disgorgement of unlawful gains amounting to ₹1.07 crore, along with interest at 12 per cent per annum, to be paid jointly and severally to the Investor Protection and Education Fund within 45 days.

In a detailed 102-page final order, SEBI found that a “big client,” identified as Paresh N. Bhagat, Chairman and Managing Director of Mangal Keshav Financial Services, placed trades through dealers Ashish S. Parekh and Rajesh Joshi. These dealers were found to be in possession of non-public information (NPI) relating to large, impending client orders.

According to SEBI, Parekh and Joshi shared this confidential information with Nagendra S. Dubey and Chirag Atul Pithadia. The information was then used to place advance trades in the accounts of connected entities—commonly referred to as front-runners—before the big client’s orders were executed. These pre-emptive trades allowed the front-runners to profit from the subsequent market impact of the large transactions.

“Therefore, in my view, these trades carried out by the front runners, i.e., Notices Nos. 1 to 9, in collusion with Notices Nos. 10 to 13, the information carriers, should be termed as trades carried out by front running the im-

pending orders of the big client,” SEBI Whole-Time Member Kamlesh C. Varshney said in the order.

The front-runners named in the order include Dipa Ashish Parekh, Kashmira Joshi, Nikhil Hirachand Jain, Nikhil Hirachand Jain HUF, Alpesh Hirachand Jain HUF, Nagendra S. Dubey HUF, and Late Sushma Nagendra Dubey through her legal heirs—Jagruati Atul Pithadia and Sahil Atul Pithadia.

SEBI held that the use of non-public information to execute front-running trades amounted to fraudulent, manipulative, and unfair trade practices, in violation of the Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices (PFUTP) regulations. The regulator concluded that the allegations against Noticees Nos. 1 to 13 stood established.

Accordingly, SEBI restrained the entities from dealing in securities for five years, effective from the interim order issued on December 26, 2022. Kashmira Joshi and Rajesh Joshi were also barred for five years. Additionally, Ashish Parekh, Nagendra Dubey, and Chirag Pithadia were prohibited from associating with any SEBI-registered intermediary or listed company for four years, while Rajesh Joshi faced a similar four-year ban.

SEBI also vacated earlier directions against the late Sushma Nagendra Dubey, except for disgorgement through her legal heirs. The order follows an NSE report flagging suspected front running during April–December 2021, leading to SEBI’s investigation and subsequent enforcement actions.

“Maruti Suzuki to Invest ₹35,000 Crore in Gujarat Plant, Adds 1 Million Vehicle Capacity”



Indian automaker Maruti Suzuki is set to make a major investment of 35,000 crore (\$3.9 billion) to establish a new manufacturing plant in the western state of Gujarat, according to a statement from the state government on Saturday. The move comes as India’s largest carmaker seeks to expand production capacity to meet rising domestic demand and growing export opportunities.

The new plant is expected to add production capacity of up to 1 million vehicles annually, further strengthening Maruti Suzuki’s position in the Indian automotive market, which is the world’s third-largest by sales. With the additional output, the company’s total annual production capacity will increase from 2.4 million vehicles to 3.4 million vehicles, enhancing its ability to meet both domestic and international demand.

Production at the Gujarat facility is scheduled to begin in the financial year 2029. The plant will complement Maruti Suzuki’s existing manufacturing operations across India, supporting the company’s long-term strategy to diversify production locations and cater to evolving consumer preferences, including demand for entry-level and mid-sized vehicles.

Maruti Suzuki is majority-owned by Japan’s Suzuki Motor Corporation and has consistently led the Indian car market in terms of sales. The company has seen a surge in demand for its models,

particularly in the entry-level segment. Partho Banerjee, Maruti Suzuki’s Head of Marketing and Sales, recently noted that the company has a backlog of approximately one and a half months for its most popular entry-level vehicles, highlighting the strong consumer appetite for its products.

Domestic sales for December also set a record, rising 37% month-on-month to 178,646 units, underscoring the company’s robust market performance. These figures come amid growing optimism about the Indian automotive sector, which is benefiting from favorable economic conditions, rising disposable incomes, and supportive government policies for manufacturing and exports.

Maruti Suzuki’s board of directors approved an initial investment of ₹4,960 crore to acquire land for the new plant, marking the first step in what is expected to be a multi-year expansion project. The company has emphasized that the Gujarat facility will not only increase production capacity but also create employment opportunities and strengthen local supplier networks in the region.

The announcement reinforces Maruti Suzuki’s commitment to sustaining its market leadership in India while simultaneously expanding its footprint in global markets. With the new plant, the automaker aims to address rising demand, reduce delivery backlogs, and position itself for long-term growth in one of the fastest-growing automotive markets in the world.

“A Simple Cake, a Big Smile: 70-Year-Old Family Cook’s Birthday Celebration Wins Hearts Online”

Sometimes, it is the simplest gestures that leave the deepest impact. A heartwarming video of a birthday celebration has gone viral on social media, reminding viewers that genuine happiness often lies in small but thoughtful moments. The clip features 70-year-old Ramji Baba, a longtime family cook, celebrating his birthday in what appears to be an intimate and emotional gathering.

In the video, Ramji Baba can be seen cutting a birthday cake and gently blowing out the candles, a shy yet radiant smile lighting up his face. Surrounded by the family he has served for decades, he listens as they sing a birthday song for him in the background. The atmosphere is filled with warmth, gratitude, and affection, making the moment deeply touching for viewers online.

A voiceover accompanying the video notes that this was the happiest the family had ever seen Ramji Baba. His joy, unfiltered and genuine, struck a chord with audiences who were moved by how meaningful the celebration was for him. For someone accustomed to working quietly behind the scenes, the attention and appreciation appeared to be especially special.

The Instagram post introducing the video describes Ramji Baba as a humble, simple man and an exceptional cook who has been associated with the family for many years. Having recently turned 70, he stands as an example that age does not diminish enthusi-



asm, warmth, or dedication. The caption further revealed that the family is encouraging him to record a series of his recipes so that his culinary skills and life story can be shared with a wider audience.

“Meet Ramji Baba—a very humble, simple man who is an amazing chef,” the post read. “Recently he turned 70 but proves that age is just a number. I’m trying to convince him to record his recipes so you can know more about him. Maybe you’ll see him around soon.”

The video quickly gained traction on Instagram, with users flooding the comments section with emotional reactions. Many praised Ramji Baba’s years of

dedication and the family’s thoughtful gesture in celebrating him. Viewers described the clip as touching, wholesome, and a reminder of the importance of kindness and gratitude.

One user commented, “We would learn to love from him,” while another wrote, “Working 40 years at the same place is sheer dedication.” Others expressed hope that Ramji Baba’s recipes and story would soon be shared more widely.

The viral moment serves as a gentle reminder that respect, appreciation, and simple acts of kindness can bring immense joy—especially to those who quietly dedicate their lives to serving others.

“From IIT Delhi to Tokyo: Indian Engineer Shares Candid Insights on Work, Life, and Costs in Japan”



Living and working abroad often comes with a mix of excitement and challenges, and an Indian engineer based in Japan has recently offered a candid glimpse into this experience. Shreshth Somya, an IIT Delhi graduate originally from Bihar, shared insights into his professional journey, daily life, and work culture in Tokyo through a video posted by Sunakshi Sharma, an Indian content creator living in the Japanese capital. The video has drawn attention online for its honest and relatable portrayal of life as an Indian professional in Japan.

At the start of the video, Sharma invites Shreshth to introduce himself. “I’m Shreshth Somya, from Bihar, and I’m currently living in Japan,” he says. He goes on to explain that his move to Tokyo came through campus placements at IIT Delhi. “Honda visited our campus for recruitment. I received an offer and moved here last year,” he explains, highlighting how global opportunities

can emerge directly from India’s top educational institutions.

When asked about his daily life in Tokyo, Shreshth describes it as both enjoyable and enriching. He says living in Japan allows him to experience a new culture and environment every day. “It’s pretty fun. There’s always something new to see, learn, or understand,” he notes, adding that the city’s efficiency and cultural uniqueness make everyday life interesting.

However, Shreshth also speaks candidly about the challenges, particularly the high cost of living in Tokyo. He explains that his monthly expenses increased significantly after moving to the city. “My expenses went from around 100,000 yen to nearly 150,000 yen,” he says. Despite being careful with spending—eating out only for lunch and cooking dinner at home—he admits that costs remain high and difficult to cut down further.

One major relief, he

adds, is employer support. Shreshth reveals that his company covers his housing expenses. “Yes, my rent is paid by the company,” he says, explaining that this benefit helps offset Tokyo’s otherwise expensive lifestyle and makes living in the city more manageable.

Sharma also asks about Japanese work culture, which is often perceived as strict and demanding. Shreshth counters this stereotype with his own experience. “I have never experienced a toxic atmosphere in my team,” he says, describing a professional, respectful, and supportive workplace where collaboration is valued.

Through his honest reflections, Shreshth offers a balanced view of life in Japan—one that includes cultural adjustments and financial challenges, but also professional stability, personal growth, and a positive work environment. His experience resonates with many aspiring professionals considering careers abroad.

“Security Over Savings: International Student’s Reality Check on the True Cost of Living in Germany”

An international student working in Germany has sparked an online debate after sharing a candid breakdown of monthly living expenses, offering what he described as a realistic picture of life in the country. In an Instagram post titled “Reality of Life in Germany”, Meezum Abbas advised prospective migrants to choose Germany over the United States only if they prioritise long-term stability and social security over the traditional promise of the “American Dream.”

Abbas explained that despite earning what is considered a decent salary, many workers in Germany are left with very limited savings at the end of the month. “You work full-time, earn a decent salary, pay your taxes like a responsible citizen—and somehow you’re left with €150–200,” he wrote.

To illustrate his point, Abbas cited the example of someone earning around €3,000 gross per month, which roughly aligns with average earnings in many sectors. After taxes and mandatory deductions, the take-home pay drops to approximately €2,100.



A large portion of this income, he said, goes straight to rent, typically ranging between €800 and €1,200 depending on the city. Additional expenses include groceries (€250–350), transportation (€150–250), utilities (€150–200), and phone bills (€20–40).

Once these costs are accounted for, little remains for savings or discretionary spending.

Abbas cautioned newcomers against unrealistic expectations. “If you’re coming here expecting to save half your salary, rethink your

budget,” he said. However, he emphasised that Germany offers significant non-monetary benefits, including universal healthcare, unemployment insurance, pension contributions, and strong labour protections. According to him, while Germany

may not make people wealthy quickly, it also shields them from financial ruin caused by medical emergencies or job loss.

“This isn’t a complaint—it’s reality,” Abbas noted. “Germany offers security over opportunity. You trade the ‘American Dream’ for ‘German stability.’ Neither is wrong; they’re just different.”

As the post gained traction, many social media users pushed back, arguing that careful budgeting can make life in Germany more affordable. Several commenters suggested lowering housing costs, sharing apartments, and relying on public transport instead of owning a car. Others questioned why someone would choose expensive housing on a modest salary, while some defended Germany’s lifestyle, noting that even higher earners often choose frugal options for comfort and efficiency.

The discussion ultimately highlighted a broader debate about migration choices—balancing income potential against quality of life, financial security, and social safety nets.

“At 82, China’s ‘Hardcore Grandma’ Flies Drones and Live-Streams Farm Life, Proving It’s Never Too Late to Learn”

Age is often viewed as an obstacle to learning new skills, but an 82-year-old woman from eastern China is challenging that perception with remarkable confidence and curiosity. Dai Shuying, affectionately known online as the “hardcore grandma,” has captured public attention for her ability to operate agricultural drones and host live-streaming sessions to sell farm produce. Her story, reported by the South China Morning Post, highlights how lifelong learning, family support, and openness to technology can transform lives at any age.

Born in 1943, Dai comes from Laomei Village in Xindu Town, Tongcheng District of Anhui Province. In her younger years, she worked as a bookkeeper and was among the few villagers who could read, write, and manage accounts—an uncommon skill set at the time. Even while raising five children, she remained rooted in the village, continuing



to contribute to farm life and household responsibilities.

As time passed, three of Dai’s children moved to cities. She later began living with her eldest son and her 40-year-old grandson, Wang Tian-tian. Together, the family manages more than 600 mu of farmland—roughly 40 hectares—producing crops that support their livelihood. Though

Dai no longer performs physically demanding farm work, she remains healthy, energetic, and eager to stay involved.

Her journey into drone technology began unexpectedly when Wang brought home a large agricultural drone to assist with fertilising fields. Curious about the unfamiliar machine, Dai asked her grandson to teach her how to use it. Under his

guidance, she quickly learned the basics, from installing the heavy 15-kilogram batteries to preparing the drone for takeoff. Over time, she became skilled at unfolding the drone’s wings, loading fertiliser, and precisely spraying crops—sometimes even handling the takeoff herself.

The use of drone technology has dramatically

improved efficiency on the farm. Dai explained that earlier, a single person could fertilise just over 10 mu of land in a day. With drones, the same task across all 600 mu can now be completed in a single day, saving significant time and labour.

Wang later launched a short-video account titled “Old Farmer, Gratefully Loved,” featuring moments from their daily farm life. Viewers were particularly drawn to clips of Dai confidently flying drones and sharing light-hearted moments with her grandson. The duo also began live streaming to sell rice, cooking oil, and other farm products, with Dai eventually learning to operate the equipment herself.

Today, Dai describes her life as happier than ever. Surrounded by family, engaged in meaningful work, and constantly learning, she believes age should never limit one’s desire to explore the world or embrace new possibilities.

“He Waited Outside the Door for Weeks: Shanghai Dog’s Loyalty After Owner’s Death Moves the Internet”

For weeks, a quiet and loyal dog could be seen sitting outside a closed apartment door in Shanghai, patiently waiting for an owner who would never return. The moving story of Ah Wang has touched the hearts of residents in the neighbourhood and thousands of people online, highlighting the depth of animals’ emotional bonds with their human companions, according to a report by the South China Morning Post.

Ah Wang lived in a residential complex in Shanghai’s Baoshan district with his owner, a man surnamed Gao, who had cared for him for nearly a decade. Gao lived alone and reportedly passed away suddenly due to illness on December 11. Unaware of his owner’s death, Ah Wang continued to wait outside the apartment every day, lying quietly in the corridor as if expecting Gao to walk through the door at any moment.

The dog was well



known among residents for his gentle nature. Neighbours said Ah Wang never barked at children or elderly people and was calm and well-behaved. As winter temperatures dropped, residents grew increasingly concerned. They placed blankets outside the apartment to protect him from the cold and tried to offer him food and water. However, Ah Wang refused to eat or drink, and whenever

someone attempted to pet him or take him indoors, he would shy away and run off.

Concern deepened on January 6, when Ah Wang suddenly disappeared. Fearing the worst, residents alerted a local Shanghai television station and organised searches around the complex. One neighbour recalled that the night of his disappearance had been particularly harsh, with heavy rain, thun-

derstorms, and temperatures falling to around two degrees Celsius. Despite repeated efforts, there was no sign of the dog.

Some residents expressed fear that Ah Wang may have followed a local belief associated with dogs—when a dog stops eating and drinking and then disappears, it is thought to be seeking a quiet place to die. Many hoped he could still be found and rescued

in time.

As the story spread on social media, more people joined the search. On January 8, a female resident finally located Ah Wang while feeding stray animals within the complex. He was found hiding in a grassy area, trembling from the cold and distress. The woman said the dog appeared deeply sorrowful, with tears visibly streaming from his eyes.

She brought Ah Wang to the residential committee office, where staff members cared for him and offered food. Though hesitant at first, he eventually ate several ham sausages, signalling a small step toward recovery.

Chen Zhi, manager of Shanghai Jiege Pet Animal Garden, later told local media that Ah Wang may be suffering from severe psychological trauma following the loss of his owner, underscoring the profound emotional impact such loss can have on animals.

India's 14-Year-Old Vaibhav Suryavanshi Sets Record in U-19 World Cup 2026 Against Bangladesh

India's 14-year-old cricket prodigy, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, added another remarkable milestone to his rapidly growing list of achievements during the U-19 World Cup 2026 match against Bangladesh on Saturday. The young left-hander produced a scintillating knock of 72 runs off just 67 balls, featuring six fours and three sixes, to power India in a key encounter. Displaying his trademark aggressive style, Suryavanshi raced to his half-century in only 30 deliveries, leaving spectators in awe of his composure and skill at such a tender age.

At 14 years and 296 days, Vaibhav became the youngest cricketer ever to score a 50-plus in a Men's U-19 World Cup match, surpassing Afghanistan's Shahidullah Kamal, who had scored a fifty at the age of 15 years and 19 days against the West Indies in 2014. Pakistan's Babar Azam, who registered a half-century against the West Indies in 2010 at 15 years and 92 days, now ranks third on the list. Other notable entries include Perwez Malikzai (15y 125d) and Sharad Vesawkar (15y 132d), show-



casing the rarity of such achievements at the U-19 level.

Top Five Youngest to Register a 50+ in Men's U-19 World Cup

- 14y 296d – Vaibhav Suryavanshi (IND) vs BAN, Bulawayo, 2026
- 15y 19d – Shahidullah Kamal (AFG) vs WI, Dubai, 2014
- 15y 92d – Babar Azam (PAK) vs WI, Palmerston North, 2010

- 15y 125d – Perwez Malikzai (AFG) vs Fiji, Cox's Bazar, 2016
- 15y 132d – Sharad Vesawkar (NEP) vs ENG, Chattogram, 2004

Suryavanshi also etched his name in Indian cricket history by surpassing Virat Kohli in Youth ODIs for the most runs. In 20 Youth ODIs, he has accumulated 1,047 runs, overtaking Kohli's 978 runs from 28 matches. While India's Vijay Zol remains the high-

est run-scorer for the country in Youth ODIs with 1,404 runs from 36 matches, Bangladesh's Najmul Hossain Shanto holds the overall top spot with 1,820 runs.

Off the field, tensions between the two teams were evident as India captain Ayush Mhatre and Bangladesh's Azizul Hakim Tamim avoided the traditional pre-match handshake. In a surprising move, vice-captain Zawad Abrar appeared for the toss instead of Hakim,

despite the latter being part of the playing XI. Following a rain-affected delay, Abrar won the toss and opted to bowl first, citing the damp conditions of the Bulawayo track as a strategic decision.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi's record-breaking performance and his fearless approach with the bat continue to signal the arrival of a potential future star in Indian cricket, capturing the attention of fans and experts alike as the U-19 World Cup unfolds.

Steve Smith Reveals Tactical Clash with Babar Azam During Record-Breaking BBL Chase

Australia's batting maestro Steve Smith has opened up about a tense on-field moment with Sydney Sixers teammate Babar Azam during their record-breaking chase against the Sydney Thunder at the SCG on Friday in the Big Bash League (BBL). The pair had earlier stitched together a commanding 141-run opening partnership, but a tactical disagreement in the 11th over briefly sparked friction between the star batters.

After facing three consecutive dot balls from spinner Chris Green, Babar nudged the fourth delivery toward long-on for what appeared to be a routine single. However, Smith, standing at the non-striker's end, sent him back, denying the run so he could retain the strike for the next over. The decision, Smith explained, was entirely strategic: he wanted to be on strike for the 'Power Surge'—a two-over period in the BBL where only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle—



so he could target the shorter boundary and maximize scoring opportunities.

The gamble paid off spectacularly. In the following over, Smith launched a record-breaking assault on Ryan Hadley, smashing four consecutive sixes and a four in a 32-run over—the most ex-

pensive in BBL history. While the strategy proved highly effective, it momentarily left Babar frustrated, feeling his batting opportunity had been curtailed.

Speaking to Channel 7 after the match, Smith explained his thinking behind the high-stakes decision. "We spoke at the

ten-over mark, and they [the captain and coach] said take the surge straightaway. I was like, 'Nah, give it one over. I want to hit to the short boundary. I don't want to screw up the first over. I'll try to get 30 off that over.' I think we got 32, so it was a good result," he said.

Smith admitted that Ba-

bar wasn't immediately happy with the plan. "Not sure Babar was too happy with me knocking back that single," he added, smiling.

Babar's frustration boiled over in the 13th over. After regaining the strike, he was dismissed first ball by Nathan McAndrew, chopping a delivery onto his stumps for 47 runs. On his way back to the pavilion, the Pakistan star vented his emotions by striking a boundary cushion with his bat.

Despite the brief on-field drama, Smith's brilliance ensured a comfortable five-wicket victory for the Sixers. He finished with a blistering century off just 41 balls, underscoring his dominance in the shortest format and proving why he remains one of the most dangerous T20 batters in world cricket. The victory also highlights the importance of strategic decision-making under pressure, even if it occasionally tests team dynamics on the field.

Sanjay Bangar Praises Abhishek Sharma, Updates on Indian T20I Squad Ahead of New Zealand Series

Former Indian batting coach Sanjay Bangar has lavished praise on India's current World No. 1 T20I batter, Abhishek Sharma, highlighting the young left-hander's fearless and aggressive approach as a defining feature of India's brand of cricket in the shortest format. Speaking on Jio-Hotstar, Bangar said, "Abhishek Sharma defines the way this Indian team wants to play in the T20 format. A fearless and aggressive brand of cricket is only possible with a player like Abhishek Sharma."

The 25-year-old Abhishek made his T20I debut against Zimbabwe in July 2024 and has since emerged as one of India's most formidable batters in the format. In just 33 matches, he has amassed 1,115 runs at an extraordinary strike rate of 188.02, including two centuries and six half-centuries. His consistency and fearless strokeplay have made him a vital component of India's T20 line-



up, setting the tone for aggressive intent at the top of the order.

Meanwhile, the Indian team has been forced to make a few changes ahead of the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand, scheduled to begin on January 21. All-rounder Washington Sundar has been ruled out of the se-

ries due to a side strain. Sundar reported acute discomfort in his lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at BCA Stadium, Vadodara, on January 11. After undergoing scans and consulting an expert, he has been advised rest for a few days, followed by further monitoring and

management at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (COE).

To fill Sundar's spot, the BCCI Men's Selection Committee has named star leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi as his replacement. Additionally, Shreyas Iyer has been added to the T20I squad for the first three matches as a replacement for

the injured Tilak Varma, providing India with an experienced batting option in the middle order.

India's updated T20I squad for the series against New Zealand now includes: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wicketkeeper), Shreyas Iyer (first three T20Is), Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel (vice-captain), Rinku Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakaravorthy, Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), and Ravi Bishnoi.

With a mix of experience and youthful aggression, the squad is well-equipped to tackle New Zealand in the upcoming T20I series. Abhishek Sharma, in particular, will be expected to continue his fearless batting approach and lead India's charge at the top of the order, while the replacements aim to maintain balance and strengthen the team in the absence of key all-rounders.

ICC-BCB Negotiations Hit Logistical Snag Ahead of T20 World Cup 2026



The high-stakes negotiations between the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) over Bangladesh's participation in the upcoming T20 World Cup 2026 began with a significant logistical hurdle, underscoring the urgency and sensitivity of the discussions. The ICC had planned to send a two-member delegation to Dhaka, but visa complications reduced the team to just one, intensifying the pressure on the sole representative.

Andrew Ephgrave, the ICC's Head of Anti-Corruption and Security, arrived in Dhaka on 17 January to lead the discussions. His colleague, Sanjog Gupta, the ICC's CEO, was reportedly unable to travel due to a visa delay, leaving Ephgrave to manage the complex negotiations alone. Sources confirmed that the visa denial has added an unexpected layer of difficulty to what is already being seen as a "last-ditch" effort to resolve a dispute that could have major implications for the tournament, which is scheduled to begin on 7 February.

The impasse stems from a security-related concern raised by the Bangladesh government and the BCB. Bangladesh has formally requested that its group-stage matches, currently scheduled in India, be shifted to Sri Lanka. The request cites the prevailing political climate and safety considerations for Bangladeshi players and support staff, reflecting heightened anxie-

ties in the lead-up to the tournament.

With the absence of Gupta, all responsibility now falls on Ephgrave. A former British police officer with extensive international experience in sports security, he is expected to present a comprehensive security plan aimed at assuring Bangladeshi authorities that their team will receive adequate protection while in India. Ephgrave's role is pivotal; the outcome of these talks may determine not only Bangladesh's participation but also the smooth progression of the tournament itself.

Observers note that the visa issue affecting Gupta, an ICC official of Indian nationality, reflects the sensitive political environment between the two countries. The ICC has not issued an official statement regarding the travel complications, though internal disappointment is reportedly high.

With less than three weeks remaining before the T20 World Cup, the clock is rapidly running out for both parties to reach an agreement. The negotiations in Dhaka are being closely monitored by the cricketing world, as a failure to resolve the deadlock could jeopardize the tournament even before the first match is played. Ephgrave faces the difficult task of balancing diplomatic sensitivities with security assurances, making him the linchpin in a delicate situation that could shape the opening stages of cricket's global showcase.

Mohammed Siraj Confident Ravindra Jadeja Will Bounce Back Ahead of Decider vs New Zealand



India pacer Mohammed Siraj on Saturday expressed full confidence in senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, insisting it would take just one breakthrough wicket for the left-arm spinner to regain his rhythm ahead of the series-deciding third ODI against New Zealand on Sunday. Jadeja has struggled in recent matches, going wicketless in the first two ODIs against New Zealand (0/44 and 0/56) and managing only one wicket in the preceding three-match series against South Africa at home.

"I don't think there is any concern about Jadeja's form. It's just a matter of one wicket. Once he gets that breakthrough, you'll see a completely different bowler," Siraj said at the pre-match press conference. Despite the lean returns, Jadeja's overall ODI record remains highly valuable, with nearly 2,900 runs at just over 32 and 232 wickets in 209 matches.

Siraj also emphasized that India's bowling unit remains confident despite being tested in the second ODI, where a few missed chances allowed New Zealand to level the three-match series. "We played well in both matches. In the first ODI, both batting and bowling clicked. In the second, even after losing early wickets, KL Rahul batted superbly, and Nitish Reddy contributed significantly," he said.

Reflecting on Daryl Mitchell's

match-winning knock, Siraj noted that India had their moments. "There was an opportunity—if the catch had been taken, the result could have been different. World-class batters capitalize on chances, and Mitchell did exactly that," he added. He explained that while plans were in place to dismiss Mitchell, execution at crucial moments fell short.

Siraj also highlighted the positive atmosphere within the team despite the series being tied 1-1. "The environment is very healthy. Senior players provide strong input, and we're preparing well for bigger tournaments. Wins and losses happen, but the dressing room remains upbeat," he said.

On the bowling strategy for Holkar Stadium, a small ground known for high scores, Siraj said he would focus on a stump-to-stump line to maximize chances for LBWs or bowled dismissals. He expressed confidence in fellow left-armers Arshdeep Singh if given the new ball, adding that his role is to build pressure and support wickets at the other end.

Siraj also praised Harshit Rana, who has impressed in the early overs, and reflected on missing the T20 World Cup, attributing it to workload management.

Sunday's decider promises to be closely contested as India and New Zealand aim to claim the series in the final ODI.

Grand 'Ram Bhajarang' Glims Launch Creates Buzz in Hyderabad



The much-anticipated Telugu action-drama Ram Bhajarang created a buzz in Hyderabad as its official glims release event was held in a grand ceremony. Produced by Swati Sudheer and Dr. Ravi Bal under the banners of Sunrise Entertainment and Ravi Arts, the film is directed by C.H. Sudheer Raju and features Raj Tarun and Sandeep Madhav in lead roles. The film's music is composed by Manisharma, with Ajay Vincent handling cinematography.

Set against the backdrop of the 1980s, Ram Bhajarang promises an exciting mix of high-octane action and family-oriented moments. The film also stars Simrat Kaur, known for her role in Gadar 2, Satna Titus of Bichchagadu fame, Chhaya Devi, and Manasa Radhakrishnan as the leading ladies. The supporting cast includes Raja Ravindra, Ravi Shankar, Kamal, Shafi, Shivaramaraju Venkat,

Dhanraj, Racha Ravi, Rakesh, and Aishwarya.

Speaking at the event, cinematographer Ajay Vincent expressed his confidence in the project, stating, "Ram Bhajarang is shaping up to be an exciting film. From the sets to the shoot, I was confident about its success, and audiences will soon see it in theatres."

Venkat, who portrays a negative-shaded character, added, "I play a very different role in this movie. Director Sudheer Raju gave me a wide-ranging role, and my look is completely new. I'm confident audiences will appreciate it."

Lead actress Manasa Radhakrishnan shared, "Working on this film was a joyous experience. I am thrilled to be part of such a project and thankful to the director for trusting me with this role. Acting alongside Raj Tarun and Sandeep Madhav was unforgettable."

Sandeep Madhav commented, "The glims have received a great response.

Director Sudheer Raju has ensured the film maintains its essence throughout. With the producers' strong backing, I am confident audiences will enjoy it."

Raj Tarun added, "I appear in a completely new look, which is already receiving positive reactions. The script is excellent, and I believe Ram Bhajarang will connect with fans."

Director Sudheer Raju highlighted the film's mass appeal, saying, "The combination of Manisharma's music, Ajay Vincent's visuals, and our cast's performances makes this film a complete entertainer. The teaser and trailer will be released soon."

Producers Swati Sudheer and Ravi Bal expressed their excitement, emphasizing the hard work of the cast and crew and their hope that the film will be widely supported by audiences. The film is slated for a 2026 release in five languages: Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi.

Dhanush-Kriti Sanon Romance Tere Ishk Mein Set for OTT Premiere on January 23, 2026

Mumbai — Fans of romantic cinema have reason to celebrate as the critically discussed and commercially successful film Tere Ishk Mein, starring Dhanush and Kriti Sanon, has locked its OTT streaming date. The Anand L. Rai-directed love drama, which released in theatres in late November 2025 and also carried the Telugu title Amara Kaavyam, will make its digital debut on Netflix on January 23, 2026.

The film, co produced by Colour Yellow Productions and T Series Films, captivated audiences with its emotionally charged storyline, soulful music, and the fresh on screen pairing of Dhanush and Sanon. Tere Ishk Mein emerged as a notable box office success following its theatrical run, prompting nationwide interest ahead of its streaming release.

Directed by Anand L. Rai, the film is described as a romantic drama that explores the intense and complicated journey of love, separation, and reconciliation. Dhanush plays Shankar, a young man whose life takes unexpected turns after a deep emotional connection with Mukti, portrayed by Kriti Sanon. Their relationship begins amid academic settings and evolves into a layered bond shaped by loss, growth, and second chances.

After confirming the Netflix premiere date, audiences across India and internationally now have the opportunity to watch the film from



home with an active subscription. The streaming rollout is expected to include not only the original Hindi version but also dubbed editions in major South Indian languages, expanding its reach among diverse viewers.

The Telugu version of the film, titled Amara Kaavyam, has generated significant buzz among Telugu audiences eager to experience the story in their language. Although it carries a distinct title for regional appeal, the underlying narrative and emotional core remain consistent across versions.

Industry experts believe the Netflix release will introduce Tere Ishk Mein to a broader audience who may have missed its theatrical

showings or are keen to revisit the narrative's poignant moments. The digital premiere ahead of other upcoming romantic dramas underscores the continued trend of major theatrical titles transitioning quickly to streaming platforms, bridging the gap between cinema halls and mobile devices.

As the countdown to January 23 begins, social media chatter is building around the film's soundtrack, performances, and the chemistry between the lead pair, which many viewers anticipate revisiting on OTT.

With its heartfelt storytelling and highly anticipated streaming arrival, Tere Ishk Mein is poised to become a favorite on Netflix for lovers of romantic cinema early in 2026.

Free Mega Diabetes Treatment Camp to Honor Legendary Actor Krishnam Raju

In a heartfelt tribute to the late Sri Uppalapati Venkata Krishnam Raju, legendary film actor, former Union Minister, and renowned humanitarian, a Free Mega Diabetes Treatment Camp will be held on January 20, 2026, marking his 86th birth anniversary. The initiative is being organized by his wife, Smt. Syamala Devi Uppalapati, who continues to uphold her husband's legacy of service and compassion by promoting public health initiatives.

Speaking about the camp, Smt. Syamala Devi Uppalapati said, "This camp reflects Krishnam Raju garu's lifelong belief that service to people is the highest form of responsibility. Through these annual initiatives, we hope to bring timely care, dignity, and hope to every diabetic patient who needs it."

The event is being co-ordinated by the UK-India Diabetic Foot Foundation under the guidance of eminent diabetic foot surgeon, Sri Dr. Venu Kavarthapu (MBBS, FRCS Tr & Orth, King's College Hospital, London). A team of 32 prominent doctors from across India and abroad will participate to provide specialized treatment to patients. The

camp will take place from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM at Sri Rasthu Function Hall, Dendukuru, Madhira, Khammam District.

Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, Sri Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, will attend the event to show his support for this significant healthcare initiative, which aims to strengthen access to diabetic foot care in the region.

Following the success of the previous two annual mega camps held in Mogalthur and Bhimavaram, which provided essential care to hundreds of patients, this year's camp seeks to extend similar services to the Khammam community. Patients with diabetes-related foot problems, including cracks, sores, wounds, or loss of sensation, are encouraged to attend.

The camp will offer a comprehensive range of services free of cost, including diabetes diagnostic tests and essential medications. Patients are requested to bring their previous blood test reports and X-rays during registration. Interested individuals can register by contacting Ramakrishna at 9440838385 or Mahesh at 9642844362.

UK-INDIA DIABETIC FOOT FOUNDATION

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IF YOU HAVE DIABETES AND EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS SUCH AS CRACKED FEET, SORES, WOUNDS, OR LOSS OF SENSATION, PLEASE CONSULT THE SENIOR DOCTORS AT THIS CAMP

DR. NICOLE ABDUL, ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON, MANCHESTER, UK

DR. SRINIVAS SESHASHATTAURI, SR. POSITIVE SURGEON, APOLLO HOSPITAL, HYDERABAD

DR. SUNDHARA VENKATESHWARULU, CRITICAL CARE PHYSICIAN, SRI RASTHU HOSPITAL, KHAMMAM

DR. ANANDHATHI SUBATHI, SR. ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON, GUNTUR

DR. SAMBASIVA RAO GUNDAABILLI, SR. PLASTIC SURGEON, UK

DR. NARESH KATAPAM, SR. ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON, BHIMAVARAM

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DR. RAHUL CHOWDHARY, DENTIST, APOLLO HOSPITAL, HYDERABAD

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DR. FAYAZ, VASCULAR SURGEON, HYDERABAD

DR. PRASANNA GADAGATI, POSITIVE SURGEON, APOLLO HOSPITAL, HYDERABAD

DR. ANURAG REDDY, GENERAL SURGEON, HYDERABAD

DR. BS RAO ORTHO, SURGEON, KHAMMAM

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DR. YEDAKONDALLI, GENERAL PHYSICIAN, KHAMMAM

DR. POOJA CHENBOLURI, PHYSICIAN, TELANGANA

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• PLEASE BRING YOUR BLOOD TEST RESULTS AND X-RAY WITH YOU AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

For Registration Contact

Ramakrishna - 9440838385 | Mahesh - 9642844362

REGISTRATION FROM: JANUARY 18

Camp date: 20-01-2026

Time: 9:30 AM - 4 PM

LOCATION: SRI RASTHU FUNCTION HALL, DENDUKURU, MADHIRA, KHAMMAM DISTRICT

Javed Akhtar and Shobhaa De React to A.R. Rahman's Controversial Comments on Bollywood



Bollywood has been abuzz following remarks made by legendary composer A.R. Rahman, who suggested that changing dynamics and possible indirect influences may have affected his opportunities in the Hindi film industry over the past several years. Rahman

clarified that he had not faced direct discrimination, but his comments sparked strong reactions from prominent figures in the industry.

Veteran lyricist and screenwriter Javed Akhtar responded firmly, dismissing any notion that Rahman's slowdown

in Bollywood is related to communal bias. Akhtar emphasized that the industry continues to respect talent above all else and that professional gaps can often be attributed to personal choices, global commitments, or creative directions rather than religion. He not-

ed that Rahman remains highly regarded across the industry, with producers and artists consistently recognizing his stature and contribution to music.

Author and columnist Shobhaa De described Rahman's statement as "very dangerous." Speaking publicly, she argued that Bollywood has largely remained a space where merit and talent dictate opportunities, not religion. De highlighted that artists who demonstrate exceptional skill are celebrated regardless of background and cautioned that framing the discussion around communal identity could inadvertently create misunderstandings.

Playback singer Shaan also weighed in, noting that fluctuations in work are common for any artist and do not necessarily indicate bias. He stressed that consistent performance and dedication to craft remain the most important factors in an art-

ist's career, and that suggesting communal interference is neither accurate nor helpful.

The controversy has prompted a broader conversation about meritocracy, power shifts, and the complexities of opportunity within the Indian film industry. While Rahman's comments have drawn attention, industry veterans emphasize that talent and professionalism continue to be the primary drivers of success in Bollywood.

As the discussion unfolds, the focus remains on celebrating the immense contributions of artists like Rahman while recognizing the importance of a fair and inclusive environment where creativity is valued above all else. The reactions from Akhtar, De, and Shaan underline the belief that Bollywood remains committed to rewarding artistic excellence rather than any other factor.

Ram Charan Confirms Peddi Release Date Amid Rumours of Delay

Mumbai, January 17, 2026 | TPN Entertainment Desk

Mega Power Star Ram Charan has officially confirmed that his highly anticipated film Peddi will release on March 27, 2026, dismissing recent rumours of a postponement. The actor shared the update on social media alongside striking gym photos, showcasing his rigorous preparation for the physically demanding role. His post reassured fans that the project is progressing smoothly and remains on schedule, generating renewed excitement for the film.

Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, known for his previous hit Uppena, Peddi is shaping up to be one of the most talked-about films of 2026. The film stars Janhvi Kapoor as the leading lady, pairing her with Charan in a fresh on-screen combination that promises compelling chemistry. The ensemble cast also features acclaimed actors

from various industries, positioning the film as a pan-India entertainer.

Produced jointly by Mythri Movie Makers and Vridhhi Cinemas, the movie blends high-octane sports drama with emotional storytelling and lavish production values. The musical score is composed by the legendary A.R. Rahman, whose compositions are expected to add depth and energy to both dramatic and sporting sequences. The film's soundtrack has already sparked anticipation among audiences even before its theatrical release.

The decision to maintain the March release date reflects the production team's confidence in the film. Fans have responded enthusiastically to Charan's gym photos, praising his dedication and commitment to delivering a physically intense and polished performance. Many viewers are eagerly awaiting promotional material, includ-

ing teasers and song releases, which are expected to amplify the excitement surrounding the film.

Peddi is also set to reach audiences beyond theatres, with digital rights secured for a major OTT platform, ensuring that fans who miss the cinema release will be able to watch it from home shortly after. The film's combination of action, emotion, and music positions it to be a major box office draw, appealing to both regional and pan-India audiences.

As the countdown to March 27 continues, excitement for Peddi is building rapidly. With Charan's dedication, the team's meticulous planning, and A.R. Rahman's musical backing, the film is poised to become one of the biggest cinematic events of early 2026, delivering a blend of thrilling action, heartfelt drama, and musical excellence for fans across the country.

