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## Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan Tours East Godavari, Inaugurates Bridge and Engages with Doctors

TPN Bureau | January 10

Kakinada, : Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan conducted an extensive tour of East Godavari district today, focusing on healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. His visit underscored the NDA government's commitment to rural welfare and modernizing public services in Andhra Pradesh. Kalyan first attended the alumni meet of Rangaraya Medical College in Kakinada, where he praised the former students for their significant contributions to the institution's growth. Addressing the gathering, he urged educated youth to transcend caste and religious barriers in their thinking. "True service lies in humanity," he emphasized, calling on doctors to extend their expertise to rural and tribal areas. Even amid busy

schedules, he advised them to visit remote regions at least once a month to provide essential medical aid. The alumni echoed his sentiments, stressing that doctors must serve with a humanitarian approach, prioritizing public health over personal gains.

Later, Kalyan inaugurated modernization works at the college's R&C block (likely referring to the anatomy or research facility), interacting directly with medical professionals. He highlighted the need for better healthcare access in villages, aligning with the state's push for equitable service delivery under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's leadership.

Bridge Inspection Addresses Flood-Prone Housing Colony

In a key infrastructure highlight, Kalyan inspected a newly constructed bridge over the Suddagadda canal near Gollaprolu Housing Col-

ony in Pitapuram constituency, Kakinada district. Built at an estimated cost of Rs 3.05 crore by the Roads and Buildings Department, the bridge resolves chronic flooding issues that plagued residents during monsoons. Recalling his September 2024 visit to the area when the colony was inundated by floods—Kalyan noted how he had traveled by boat to assess the ground situation.

Residents had complained of repeated waterlogging from canal overflows, which disrupted daily commutes and access. True to his promise made then, the bridge now ensures seamless connectivity, preventing future inundation and easing movement for hundreds of families. During the inspection, Kalyan reviewed the construction quality firsthand and sought details from officials. "Promises made to the people must be

fulfilled promptly," he stated, directing authorities to maintain such projects rigorously.

The initiative demonstrates the government's responsiveness to local grievances, particularly in flood-vulnerable coastal districts like East Godavari. Kalyan's tour reflects his hands-on approach as Jana Sena Party leader and Deputy CM, balancing political outreach with administrative oversight. His focus on healthcare equity, alumni-driven institutional growth, and flood-resilient infrastructure resonates with voters in TDP-Jana Sena strongholds. Officials confirmed that similar projects are underway across the district, with more inaugurations planned. The visit drew enthusiastic crowds, reinforcing Kalyan's popularity in the region ahead of ongoing development pushes.



## Chandrababu Naidu Warns: Water Disputes Hurt Telugu People, Urges Cooperation Between Two States

TPN Bureau | January 10:

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu issued a stern warning on Saturday, emphasizing that conflicts over water resources would ultimately harm the Telugu people of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Speaking informally to the media at the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) central office, NTR Bhavan, Naidu stressed the need for both Telugu states to collaborate for mutual prosperity.

"Why wouldn't it be wrong if both Telugu states thrive?" Naidu questioned, advocating for the optimal use of surplus water to ensure agricultural abundance. He highlighted the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project as a prime example of successful water delivery to the drought-prone Rayalaseema region, crediting it with spurring horticulture growth. "Pattiseema is living proof," he said, noting how the project boosted the horticulture sector before it was halted in 2020 due to what he called "selfish

politics."

Naidu lambasted the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government for abandoning the project midway, accusing them of merely completing soil work and raising fraudulent bills worth 900 crore. "State interests are paramount for us, and we won't compromise on water issues," he asserted, reaffirming TDP's firm stance. Turning his ire toward YSRCP leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Naidu advised him to learn civility before spreading misinformation about rivers. "If Jagan knows about Indus civilization, he'd understand," Naidu remarked, pointing out that major global cities like Delhi, London, and others flourished along riverbanks. He clarified the distinction between a riverbed and its catchment area, accusing YSRCP leaders of ignorance. "Even after people advise them, they keep spewing venom against the capital," he fumed, referring to ongoing disputes over Amaravati as the state capital. Naidu outlined ambitious plans to eliminate water scarcity in Andhra Pradesh within the next two years

through efficient resource management. He touted the state's leadership in India's horticulture sector, thanks to prudent water use in Rayalaseema, and predicted Andhra Pradesh would claim the world's number one spot in the next decade. The Chief Minister's remarks came amid heightened tensions over Krishna River water sharing between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, exacerbated by recent dry spells and irrigation demands. TDP's focus on completing stalled projects like Rayalaseema Lift aligns with its governance agenda, prioritizing farmer welfare and economic growth. Naidu's media interaction underscores TDP's narrative of unity and development, contrasting it with what he termed YSRCP's divisive tactics. As Andhra Pradesh pushes for central intervention in interstate water disputes, Naidu's call for cooperation may influence upcoming negotiations. Stakeholders in both states await clarity on water allocations, with farmers hoping for swift resolutions to sustain the green revolution in horticulture.

## Versities to take up Quantum Courses for 2026-2027 academic year

TPN Bureau | January 10

Visakhapatnam: The Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) is rolling out transformative changes in higher education starting from the 2026-27 academic year, aiming to boost research specialization, industry linkages, and future-ready skills among students. These initiatives focus on cluster-based research centers in universities, specialized courses in emerging technologies like quantum computing and semiconductors, flexible credit systems, and enhanced awareness campaigns. A key highlight is the development of cluster-based research centers in universities, where each institution will specialize in a specific sector to achieve excellence. For instance, one university might focus on automobile research, while another dives into electronics. "This strategy will elevate research quality and position universities as problem-solvers for industry challenges," said APSCHE officials. Universities can select their preferred domains and partner with companies for collaborative projects, fostering innovation and practical solutions. In a push towards cutting-edge tech, universities are introducing B.Tech programs in quantum computing. Andhra University has already



launched its B.Tech in Quantum Computing this year, and Sri Venkateswara University (SVU) plans to follow suit next year. Andhra University will also offer an M.Tech in Semiconductors, aligning with global demands in these high-growth fields. Several other state universities are eyeing similar courses to prepare a skilled workforce for the future. To build expertise, students completing a

four-week internship in quantum computing from Viser (likely a reference to a quantum tech firm or initiative) will earn one credit.

Additionally, IIT Madras is offering a four-week NPTEL course on quantum basics, starting January 19, which grants another credit upon completion. These opportunities integrate practical training into curricula.

**Flexible Learning Pathways**

APSCHE is promoting minor-to-major degree flexibility through online courses. Subjects currently available as minors in degree or B.Tech programs can be upgraded to majors by earning extra credits via NPTEL or other platforms. "This allows students to pursue admissions in M.Tech or PG programs in those subjects," explained APSCHE Chairman Madhumurthy. Inter-university credit trans-

fers will soon be enabled, letting students cherry-pick courses from any institution for a seamless, personalized education.

**Outreach and Ranking Awareness**

State universities will revamp websites and leverage social media to promote courses and their relevance to youth. This comes amid concerns over NIRF rankings, where public perception impacts state institutions' scores. Awareness drives aim to bridge this gap, making higher education more accessible and appealing. These reforms signal Andhra Pradesh's commitment to a modern, industry-aligned education system. By specializing research, embracing tech frontiers, and easing mobility, APSCHE seeks to empower youth for global opportunities. Officials urge students to explore these options actively.



## Home Minister Anitha Fires Back at Jagan on Bhogapuram Airport, Credits Chandrababu for 'Air Bus' Milestone



TPN Bureau | Jan 10

Tadepalli, Guntur District: Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha delivered a sharp rebuttal to YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's recent criticisms of the Bhogapuram International Airport project, asserting that the credit for bringing an "air bus" to a once-remote "red bus-only" region squarely belongs to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of an anti-drug awareness program at KL University in Tadepalli, Guntur district, Anitha dismissed Jagan's remarks as politically motivated. Jagan had earlier questioned the TDP-led government's progress on the long-delayed greenfield airport near Visakhapuram, accusing it of stalling a key infrastructure promise.

"The area that once

knew only red buses now welcomes air buses that's the glory of Chandrababu Naidu," Anitha declared, highlighting the transformative impact of the project under the current administration. The Bhogapuram Airport, envisioned as Andhra Pradesh's second international gateway after Vijayawada, has gained momentum since the TDP-Jana Sena-BJP alliance assumed power in June 2024.

Located in the North Andhra backyard of Vizianagaram district, the 21,000 crore project a public-private partnership with GMR Group as the lead developer broke ground in 2021 but faced delays under the previous YSRCP regime. Recent milestones include land acquisition completion for 2,200 acres, environmental clearances, and the arrival of advanced aviation infrastructure, positioning it for operations by 2027. Anitha emphasized how Naidu's vision has elevated the

region, connecting it to global routes and boosting tourism, fisheries, and horticulture economies. Anitha's counter came amid heightened political rhetoric ahead of the 2029 elections. She accused Jagan of neglecting North Andhra during his tenure, pointing to stalled projects and unfulfilled promises. "While Jagan talked big, Naidu delivers. Bhogapuram isn't just an airport; it's a lifeline for backward regions," she said. The minister was at KL University for a state-wide anti-narcotics campaign, urging youth to shun substance abuse. "Drugs destroy futures; our government is building them through education and jobs," she added, aligning the event with TDP's welfare agenda. This exchange underscores deepening TDP-YSRCP rivalries, with infrastructure like Bhogapuram emerging as a flashpoint. As development accelerates, North Andhra's voters watch closely.



# AP Transport Department Cracks Down on Private Bus Fare Gouging Ahead of Sankranti Rush

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Amaravati: Festivities for the Sankranti harvest festival have kicked off across Telugu states, triggering a massive influx of travelers from cities like Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai to various districts in Andhra Pradesh. Private bus operators, capitalizing on the surge, have hiked fares by up to three times often matching airline prices—leaving ordinary passengers outraged and struggling to afford trips home. In response, the Andhra Pradesh Transport Department has

swung into action. Officials from the Road Transport Authority (RTA) are imposing strict measures against exploitative private travel agencies. Special squads have been deployed statewide at major junctions, toll plazas, bus stands, and key stopping points along highways to inspect buses and curb violations. **Stringent Enforcement Measures**  
The department warns that buses caught charging exorbitant extra fares, operating without valid permits, or flouting regulations will face immediate seizure. Repeat offenders

risk license cancellations. “We will not hesitate to take decisive action against agencies that repeatedly violate norms,” a senior Transport Department official stated. These squads are conducting round-the-clock checks to ensure compliance during the peak festival period. Passengers facing overcharging are urged to report incidents directly. A dedicated helpline, 9281607001, accepts complaints via phone or WhatsApp, enabling swift intervention. Authorities emphasize providing evidence like tickets or digital re-

ceipts to facilitate enforcement. **APSRTC Steps Up with Affordable Special Services**  
To ease the burden, the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) has ramped up operations, running thousands of special buses with regulated fares. “Opt for APSRTC services for reliable, affordable travel,” officials recommend, highlighting their controlled pricing amid the private sector’s profiteering. **Key Advice for Travelers**  
The Transport Department has issued es-



sential guidelines for passengers: Always secure a ticket or digital receipt before boarding private buses. If extra

charges are demanded, note details and report immediately with the receipt as proof. Book tickets in advance to avoid

last-minute hikes check fares beforehand. **Prefer APSRTC for fair pricing and safety.**  
This crackdown un-

derscores the state’s commitment to protecting consumers during high-demand seasons. Private operators have been put on notice: heavy fines, vehicle seizures, and permit revocations await violators. As Sankranti celebrations peak, travelers are advised to stay vigilant and utilize official channels for redress. With millions heading to native villages for Pongal and Bhogi rituals, these measures aim to prevent exploitation and ensure smooth journeys. The Transport Department assures continued vigilance through the festival week.

# AP Revenue Staff Association Urges Government Support for Successful Land Re-Survey

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Vijayawada: The Andhra Pradesh Revenue Services Association (APRSA), Amaravati, held its state executive committee meeting today at the Revenue Building in Lenin Centre, Vijayawada. Chaired by state president Bopprajju Venkateswarlu, the session focused on the ongoing land re-survey process, revenue department services, and staff challenges. The meeting, attended by key leaders including general secretary Rami Shetti Venkata Rajesh, discussed implementation issues in revenue services across the state. Participants



highlighted administrative, technical, and welfare problems faced by revenue employees. A major focus was the land re-survey initiative, aimed at updating land boundaries, extents, and ownership details to benefit farmers and landowners. Association leaders praised the state government’s intent behind the re-sur-

vey, describing it as a people-centric effort for transparency and accuracy. “The government has launched this process with the welfare of landowners and farmers in mind,” stated Bopprajju Venkateswarlu. “Revenue staff are fully committed to executing the directives and suggestions from

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Revenue Minister to make it a success.” However, the executive committee raised concerns over practical hurdles impeding smooth implementation. They pointed to technical glitches causing errors in boundary mapping, land measurements, and khatha details.

These inaccuracies, they said, burden landowners with disputes while placing excessive pressure on field staff to rectify them. “Without adequate resources, the process risks errors that undermine public trust,” noted Rami Shetti Venkata Rajesh. In a unanimous resolution, the committee outlined five critical needs for

the re-survey’s success: Sufficient time: Current timelines are too tight, leading to rushed work and mistakes. Adequate staffing: Shortages force overburdened teams to cover vast areas. Technical infrastructure: Reliable tools like drones, GPS devices, and software updates are essential. Clear guidelines: Ambiguous instructions create confusion at the grassroots level. Minimal training: Basic skill-building programs would boost efficiency and reduce errors. The APRSA affirmed its full cooperation with the government but urged immediate action. “We request the government to holistically

address these issues without delay,” the resolution stated, addressed to the Chief Minister and Revenue Minister. Leaders emphasized that with proper support, revenue staff could deliver a flawless, transparent re-survey, safeguarding farmer interests and modernizing land records. This comes amid Andhra Pradesh’s push for digital land governance under the TDP-led coalition government. The re-survey, part of broader reforms, seeks

to resolve long-standing disputes from previous YSRCP-era records. Similar calls for resources have echoed from other stakeholders, including farmer unions in districts like Krishna and Guntur. The association’s stance reflects growing demands for employee welfare amid ambitious projects. As the process rolls out statewide, officials have yet to respond publicly. Bopprajju Venkateswarlu & Rami Shetti Venkata Rajesh, APRSA State Leaders



# ISRO Team Pays Homage to Tirumala’s Lord Venkateswara Ahead of Crucial PSLV-C62 Launch

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Tirumala: In a blend of devotion and national pride, a high-profile delegation from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) visited the sacred Tirumala temple on Saturday, seeking blessings from Lord Venkateswara for their upcoming satellite mission. The visit underscored the deep-rooted tradition of invoking divine grace before major space endeavors, a practice that has become synonymous with India’s space program. During the VIP Suprabhatam darshan slot, ISRO Chairman Dr. V. Narayanan led his team in offering prayers to the deity. In a poignant ritual, they placed a model of the PSLV-C62 rocket at the feet of the Lord and conducted special poojas. This symbolic gesture highlighted the rocket’s pivotal role in India’s space ambitions. The

PSLV-C62, set to lift off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota (SHAR) on Monday, January 12, at 10:17 AM IST, will deploy the Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-N1) into orbit. EOS-N1 promises advanced capabilities for monitoring environmental changes, disaster management, and agricultural assessments, bolstering India’s remote sensing prowess. The visit comes at a critical juncture for ISRO, following a series of successful missions that have elevated India’s stature in global space exploration. Dr. Narayanan, known for his visionary leadership, expressed gratitude for the opportunity, stating that such spiritual sojourns infuse the team with renewed vigor. Temple authorities facilitated seamless arrangements, ensuring the VIP protocol was observed amid the steady

influx of devotees. Adding to the day’s celebrity sightings, prominent Telugu actor Tanikella Bharani and former Telangana Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav also had darshan of the Lord. Bharani, a veteran in Tollywood with a flair for character roles, offered prayers for his upcoming projects, while Yadav, a key political figure, sought blessings amid ongoing regional developments. This event resonates deeply in Andhra Pradesh, where the Satish Dhawan Centre drives economic growth and technological innovation. As the launch countdown begins, all eyes are on SHAR, with weather conditions reported favorable. ISRO’s fusion of science and spirituality continues to inspire millions, symbolizing India’s harmonious march toward self-reliance in space.



# Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Director Pushes for Automated Soil Testing to Boost Farmer Services



TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Guntur: In a proactive move to modernize soil testing and enhance transparency for farmers, Dr. Manazir Jeelani Samoon, IAS, Director of Agriculture, Government of Andhra Pradesh, visited the Soil Testing Laboratory in Guntur city on Friday, January 9. During the inspection, he scrutinized every stage of the soil sample analysis process from sample receipt and testing for 12 major and micro-nutrients to equipment operation and upload-

ing results to the Soil Health Card portal. Dr. Samoon delved into the generation of crop-specific fertilizer recommendations derived from soil data, reviewing sample Soil Health Cards provided to farmers. Emphasizing the need for efficiency, he directed laboratory staff to fully automate the testing process. “Outdated equipment must be replaced with new automated systems immediately to make soil testing faster, more transparent, and reliable,” he stated, underscoring how automation would streamline services critical for Andhra Pradesh’s agrarian economy. The directive aligns with the state’s push under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) to improve soil health management. Dr. Samoon instructed the immediate utilization of 3.18 crore sanctioned under the Soil Health & Fertil-

ity component. These funds will support: Construction of new laboratory buildings in Guntur and NTR districts. Repair and renovation of facilities in nine newly formed districts. This initiative aims to upgrade infrastructure across the state, ensuring timely and accurate soil health assessments. Andhra Pradesh, with its vast farmlands reliant on crops like paddy, cotton, and chilies, stands to benefit immensely. Enhanced soil testing will enable precise fertilizer application, reducing costs for farmers and promoting sustainable practices amid climate challenges. Officials confirmed that the upgrades will integrate advanced automation for nutrient analysis, minimizing human error and expediting result delivery via the digital Soil Health Card portal. The portal already empowers millions of farmers

with personalized recommendations, but delays in manual processes have been a bottleneck. Dr. Samoon’s visit highlights the TDP-led government’s commitment to agricultural modernization, building on schemes like RKVY. Similar efforts in districts like Krishna and Prakasam have shown promise, with automated labs reporting 30-40% faster turnaround times. Photos from the inspection, released by the Media Section of the Director of Agriculture’s office, capture Dr. Samoon engaging with technicians. Farmers’ groups welcomed the announcement, urging swift implementation. “Automated testing means better yields and less waste,” said a Guntur ryot. The Agriculture Department reaffirmed that works will commence without delay, targeting completion by the upcoming kharif season.

# Cabinet Sub-Committee on increasing retirement age

TPN Bureau | January 05  
Amaravathi: A Cabinet Sub-Committee of the Andhra Pradesh government held a detailed review meeting on Monday regarding the proposed increase in the retirement age of employees working in public sector undertakings (PSUs), corporations, and Schedule-9 and Schedule-10 institutions. The sub-committee, which includes Finance Minister P. Keshav and Municipal Administration & Urban Development Minister Dr. P. Narayana, met online to examine the implications of raising the retirement age for employees of state-run corporations. Minister Narayana joined the meeting through

Zoom from his camp office in Amaravati. During the discussion, the ministers and officials deliberated on the potential financial implications that the state government would face if the retirement age is extended. The committee was informed that a total of 2,831 employees are already continuing in service at the age of 62, following directions issued by the courts. Officials from various departments gave presentations on the number of employees working in different corporations and the financial burden that the extension of retirement age would impose on each corporation and the government exchequer. The ministers sought department-wise and corpora-

tion-wise data to undertake a realistic assessment of the fiscal impact before taking a final decision. The sub-committee emphasized the importance of a balanced approach one that considers both employee welfare and the state’s financial sustainability. It decided to convene another round of meetings soon after the detailed data on employee numbers and financial liabilities from each corporation becomes available. Minister Narayana noted that while the interests of employees must be safeguarded, fiscal prudence is equally crucial in policy decisions involving large-scale financial implications for the government. He said the committee aims to arrive at a practical solution that



addresses both administrative needs and financial feasibility. The upcoming meeting is expected to analyze corporation-wise information more comprehensively before presenting final recommendations to the state cabinet. Sources indicate that the committee’s report will play a key role in shaping the government’s final stance on increasing the retirement age for PSU and corporation employees.



# YS Jagan Birthday Flexes Spark Outrage: Gandhi Statue Covered in Krishna District Bapulapadu Village

TPN Bureau | Jan-uary 10, 2026  
Bapulapadu (Krishna District): Flex banners erected for YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's birthday celebrations have ignited a major political controversy in Remelli village, Bapulapadu mandal, Krishna district. Local YSRCP leaders face sharp criticism for allegedly covering the statue of Mahatma Gandhi with party flexes, turning a national icon's memorial into a political spectacle.

At the village's main junction, the statue of the Father of the Nation was draped with large flex banners wishing Jagan a happy birthday. This occurred right next to the statue of late former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy, Jagan's father, yet leaders chose Gandhi's statue specifically, fueling accusations of deliberate disrespect. Residents expressed fury, questioning why even the leader who spearheaded In-

dia's independence was not spared in the party's overzealous promotions. Villagers and social activists condemned the act as a blatant violation of norms prohibiting political banners or flexes near statues of national figures. "Gandhi ji fought for freedom and non-violence; using his statue for political propaganda is an insult to his legacy and our democratic values," said a local elder, speaking on condition of anonymity. The incident has drawn widespread backlash, with critics arguing it politicizes sacred public spaces meant for reverence, not partisanship.

Gram panchayat leaders, opposition party members from TDP and Janasena, and even some ruling alliance supporters voiced strong protests. They labeled the move "anti-democratic" and demanded immediate action against those responsible. "Such incidents erode public faith in political maturity. Strict guidelines must



be enforced to prevent repeats," urged a senior villager during a impromptu gathering at the site.

Photos and videos of the flex-covered Gandhi statue went viral on social media platforms like WhatsApp and X (formerly Twitter), amplifying the outrage across Andhra Pradesh. Hashtags like #Respect Gandhi and #Remove Flexes trended locally, with netizens sharing comparisons to similar past controversies involving political misuse of public statues. The controversy reached dis-

trict authorities swiftly.

Krishna district police visited Remelli to assess the situation and prevent potential clashes between rival party workers. "We are taking precautionary measures to maintain peace. Legal action will follow against those violating regulations on statue premises," a senior police official told reporters.

Local administration sources indicated that the banners have been removed, and an inquiry is underway to identify the perpetrators. YSRCP leaders re-

mained silent on the issue, with no official statement issued yet. This episode underscores ongoing tensions in Andhra Pradesh politics, where birthday celebrations often lead to extravagant displays amid rivalries between YSRCP, TDP, and Janasena. As elections loom, such incidents risk escalating into broader debates on political decorum and respect for national heroes. Residents hope for swift accountability to restore sanctity to Gandhi's memory and deter future violations.

# Pawan Kalyan Urges Alliance Unity, Warns Rivals Against Stirring Caste Conflicts in Pithapuram

TPN Bureau | Jan 10 Pithapuram, Andhra Pradesh: Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party leader Pawan Kalyan on Friday appealed to alliance partners to avoid weakening the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh, emphasizing that building coalitions is harder than breaking them. Speaking at the government-organized Pithapuram Sankranti Mahotsavam in Kakinada district, he urged restraint amid rising political tensions.

Kalyan inaugurated the cultural festivities, highlighting the coalition's commitment to stable governance. "The responsibility to provide sustainable administration to the people lies with us," he said, stressing his strong rapport with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. He clarified no misunderstandings exist between them, attributing ongoing development and welfare initiatives to collective

efforts.

Taking a sharp dig at the previous YSRCP regime, Kalyan accused them of harassing opponents through arrests, cases, and disturbances. "They only knew how to abuse, file cases, and deny people peace. Now, they're reviving old tactics in Pithapuram, disrupting law and order to create insecurity," he warned, instructing police to act firmly. He drew a line between legitimate political criticism which he welcomes and actions that incite caste or religious divides. "If anyone comes to Pithapuram to stir fights, I'll make sure they can't sit comfortably," he cautioned rivals. Kalyan highlighted perceived double standards, contrasting minor incidents in Pithapuram—like children fighting with major crimes elsewhere. "In Pulivendula, killing one's own grandfather doesn't make news, but here, even a bird's



feather falling becomes a caste atrocity," he remarked sarcastically. He urged supporters to back working leaders, recalling past challenges where opponents dared him not to enter certain areas. "They think I look soft, but they don't know my toughness. If they want a fight, I'm ready," he asserted, vowing to prevent anarchy. On a positive note, Kalyan underscored the festival's role in preserving cultural roots, calling for its expansion across all constituencies. He praised the government for supporting farmers during Sankranti, their festival. Looking ahead, he announced Jana Sena's party launch event on

March 14 in Pithapuram, declaring it the party's central hub with Mangalagiri as the administrative base. Blessed by Sri Pada Vallabha, the area's warrior heritage inspired him, he said. Through his trust, he pledged a integrated academy in Pithapuram blending martial arts, rural arts, and fine arts. Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh lauded Kalyan's sacrifices for forging the alliance, crediting him with revolutionary changes in panchayat raj and securing central funds for Jal Jeevan Mission to provide tap water to every household.

"His 16-year journey protected AP from YS-

RCP's destruction; now, under CM Naidu, the state marches toward progress," Durgesh said, aiming for 15 years of stable rule. The event saw participation from Government Whip Pidugu Hariprasad, MLC Karri Padmasri, MLA Pantham Nana Ji, Kakinada DCCB Chairman Thummala Ramaswami, former MLA Varma, actor Hyper Aadi, Jana Sena's Kareemnagar in-charge R.K. Naidu, and Collector Apurva Bharat.

The coalition government, Kalyan emphasized, has freed people from past jail threats, enabling safe business and jobs while safeguarding democracy.

# YSRCP Leader Sajjala Clarifies Jagan's Support for Amaravati Amid Political Storm



TPN Bureau | Jan 10, 2026

Amaravati/ Vijayawada: In a bid to quell controversy sparked by recent remarks from YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, party State Coordinator Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Saturday emphatically stated that Jagan has never opposed Amaravati as the state's capital.

"We wholeheartedly welcome Amaravati," Sajjala declared, seeking to provide clarity amid the "smoke" raised by Jagan's latest comments on the long-debated capital city. The statement comes against the backdrop of heightened political tensions in Andhra Pradesh, where the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led NDA government under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has aggressively revived Amaravati as the singular green-field capital.

Jagan's recent critique, during a public address, questioned the feasibility of investing heavily in one location while ignor-

ing decentralized development, reigniting accusations from TDP that YSRCP aims to derail the project. Sajjala dismissed these claims, highlighting YSRCP's deep ties to Amaravati. "Jagan himself has houses and a party office in the capital. In contrast, CBN (Chandrababu Naidu) is still living in an illegal residence there," he quipped, referring to Naidu's ongoing stay in the controversial Undavalli residence amid legal disputes.

He further defended the YSRCP's governance record from 2019-2024, insisting that their policy of three capitals Amaravati for legislative functions, Visakhapatnam for executive, and Kurnool for judicial did not diminish Amaravati's importance. "We never downgraded Amaravati in decentralization efforts," Sajjala asserted.

This clarification underscores YSRCP's nuanced position as the party positions itself for upcoming local body elections and beyond. During their tenure, Jagan's ad-

ministration had shelved Naidu's ambitious Amaravati masterplan, citing financial burdens and farmer unrest, opting instead for a balanced development model. However, land remains acquired, and recent NDA moves, including farmer rehabilitation packages and tenders for infrastructure, have put pressure on opposition narratives.

Political analysts view Sajjala's remarks as damage control. "YSRCP is threading the needle supporting Amaravati symbolically while critiquing TDP's single-capital obsession to appeal to rural voters," said Prof. K. Nageswara Rao, a Vijayawada-based political commentator. TDP leaders, however, remain skeptical.

"Empty words won't erase their sabotage," tweeted Naidu's advisor Kolu S Parthasarathy. As Amaravati's revival gathers pace with central funding prospects, Sajjala's outreach signals YSRCP's intent to reclaim narrative control in the state's polarized politics.

# Chandrababu Naidu Vows Land Security for Farmers, Slams Predecessor in Rayavaram Event

TPN Bureau | Jan 10

Rajamahendravaram: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu emphasized the emotional bond farmers share with their land, stating they would never abandon it even at the cost of their lives. Speaking at the 'Mee Bhoomi.. Mee Hakku' (Your Land.. Your Right) program in Rayavaram, Mandapeta constituency, East Godavari district, on Friday, he reaffirmed his government's commitment to providing comprehensive land rights and security. Naidu highlighted the distribution of modern, tech-enabled passbooks with revenue stamps. "We've prepared 22.33 lakh passbooks, identifying flaws in 1.18 lakh of them.

We'll correct and distribute them soon," he said. He contrasted this with the previous YSRCP regime, accusing former CM Jagan Mohan Reddy of arrogance by printing his photos on survey stones and passbooks. "They spent Rs 660 crore on photos on 77 lakh survey stones and Rs 22 crore on passbooks. That money could have built two medical colleges. When farmers questioned why his image was on their land, we had to spend more

crores to remove them," Naidu remarked. He warned that without the TDP-Janasena-BJP alliance's return to power, people's assets would have been lost. "Wouldn't your properties have gone astray? Yes or no?" he asked the crowd, who raised hands in affirmation. Naidu also praised the "triple engine" momentum with himself, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, and PM Narendra Modi driving development like bullet trains.

During the event, Naidu grew upset when only some farmers raised hands after he asked passbook recipients to do so. Questioning East Godavari In-charge Collector and JC Meghaswarupa, he demanded accountability. The JC explained that 2,033 passbooks were allocated to the panchayat, with 1,873 verified correctly and 900 e-KYC'd for distribution. Naidu expressed frustration over absent beneficiaries, stressing the responsibility to bring them to the meeting. "Fix revenue department lapses, or face action," he warned MLAs, MPs, and officials, urging better coordination. Blockchain for Secure Records

Naidu announced

digitizing records from British times to the present on the cloud using world-class blockchain technology, ensuring no future errors. He noted 80% of his petitions involve revenue issues and pledged to resolve them within a year. Criticizing past land grabs—where properties were seized or marked as prohibited if resisted—he promised to remove such encumbrances.

Naidu urged resolving minor disputes at the family level to avoid police stations tarnishing family honor. Drawing from his village roots, he advised prioritizing relations over even a cent of land. Cultural Celebrations and Warnings

Declaring Jagan-nath Tirtha in Jagannathot near Kona-seema a state festival celebrating its 400-year heritage with rare Ekadasha Rudras he promoted cultural preservation. Ahead of Sankranti, he encouraged enjoying cockfights as entertainment but warned against gambling. Revenue Minister Anagani Satyaprasad lauded Naidu's reforms for future generations. Ministers Nimmala Ramanaidu, MP Harish Mathur, and MLA Jogeswara Rao attended.

# Hyderabad High Court Hears Plea Against CBI Cases in Jagan's Assets Probe; Hearing Adjourned to Jan 20

TPN Bureau | Jan 10, 2026

Hyderabad: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) informed the Telangana High Court on Friday that cases have been registered against disproportionate assets linked to former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, strictly in compliance

with court orders issued in a public interest litigation (PIL). This includes multiple FIRs based on the PIL directives, with the court taking cognizance of the CBI's chargesheet in the Dalmia Cement matter after reviewing evidence. The hearing centered on a petition filed by Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd challeng-

ing a CBI case accusing the company of investing Rs 95 crore in Jagan's firms as quid pro quo for illegally obtaining mining leases. Justice Jukanti Anil Kumar heard arguments from both sides. CBI counsel Srinivas Kapatiya argued that the cases followed High Court instructions to identify genuine investors and

exclude them, leading to FIRs against several entities that invested in Jagan's companies.

Senior counsel T. Niranjana Reddy, representing the petitioner, clarified that they are not challenging the court's cognizance. He asserted Dalmia Cement violated no regulations and accused the CBI of defying the court's directive to verify true investors. Reddy noted that the same High Court had quashed some prior petitions while allowing others, urging dismissal of this one. However, the judge intervened, stating all aspects would be considered and emphasizing the unique issues at hand. In a related segment, Kapatiya detailed how the previous government approved a lease application by Jaya Minerals for barytes de-

posits over 407.05 hectares in Talamanchipetnam and Nawabpet villages, Mylavaram mandal, Kadapa district but transferred it to Ishwar Cements within three months under specific conditions.

The CBI submitted a detailed additional counter-affidavit. Justice Anil Kumar questioned the propriety of filing a counter in a criminal petition, asking for the relevant rule. Kapatiya explained it was per prior bench orders, responding to undocumented materials submitted by the petitioner and addressing points already settled in other High Court cases. The court had previously upheld cognizance of the CBI chargesheet. The full hearing was postponed to January 20 for detailed arguments.





Vijayawada Durga Temple in Fresh Controversy Over Worm-Infested Milk in Sri Chakra Archana

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026:

Vijayawada: The iconic Kanaka Durga Temple in Vijayawada has once again grabbed headlines, this time over a shocking discovery of worms in milk meant for the sacred Sri Chakra archana ritual. Devotees and temple authorities were left stunned as priests halted the proceedings midway, sparking outrage and demands for accountability. The incident unfolded earlier today during the routine preparation of offerings for the Sri Chakra archana, a high-

ly revered ritual at the temple atop Indrakeeladri hill. Priests noticed unusual movement in the milk packets sourced specifically for the puja. Upon closer inspection, they found live worms crawling in what was supposed to be pure cow milk packaged in tetra packs. "We could not proceed with the archana using contaminated milk; it would desecrate the sanctity of the ritual," said one of the archakas, speaking anonymously to avoid escalating tensions. Eyewitnesses described a scene of chaos as the contaminated milk was immediately



discarded, and alternative arrangements were made hastily to resume worship without further delay. The discovery has raised serious

questions about the temple's procurement processes, supplier quality control, and storage practices, especially given the temple's massive daily footfall of thousands of pilgrims. Temple Executive Officer (EO) Sheena Naik swung into action promptly, ordering an immediate inquiry into the tetra pack milk incident. "A thorough investigation will determine the source of contamination. We will not tolerate any lapses that compromise the purity of our rituals," EO Naik stated in an official release. She has directed the Vedic Committee to

conduct a detailed probe, verify the facts, and submit a comprehensive report by this evening. This is not the first controversy to engulf the Durga Temple in recent months. Just last year, it faced backlash over land encroachment allegations and administrative disputes involving the endowment department. Devotees have long voiced concerns about transparency in vendor contracts and the need for stricter hygiene standards in a facility handling sacred offerings. Local leaders from TDP and YSRCP have al-

ready weighed in, with TDP MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao calling for a government audit of temple supplies. "Such incidents erode public faith; the administration must ensure foolproof systems," he posted on social media. YSRCP supporters, meanwhile, pointed fingers at the current TDP-led government's oversight. As the sun sets on Vijayawada, all eyes are on the Vedic Committee's report. The EO has assured devotees that stringent measures, including blacklisting errant suppliers, will follow if negligence is proven.

South Central Railway Runs 10 Special Trains Between Hyderabad and Vijayawada for Sankranti Rush



TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Vijayawada: In anticipation of the massive passenger rush during the Sankranti festival, South Central Railway (SCR) has announced 10 special trains operating between Hyderabad and Vijayawada. These trains, equipped with chair car and general bogies, will run before and after the festival to ease congestion on this busy route. The initiative addresses the surge in travel demand as millions head home for the harvest festival, celebrated vibrantly across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. SCR officials confirmed the trains will feature advance reservations in chair car coaches, with over half the composition dedicated to unreserved general bogies for last-minute travelers. Outbound from Hyderabad to Vijayawada: Special trains will depart from Hyderabad at 6:10 PM on

January 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 20. These timings align with peak evening departures, allowing families to travel comfortably overnight and arrive in Vijayawada early morning. Return from Vijayawada to Hyderabad: Return services are scheduled from Vijayawada at 2:40 PM on January 10, 11, 12, 17, and 19. This provides ample options for festival-goers returning to work or urban centers post-celebrations. Advance booking for chair car seats is available through SCR's official website (irctc.co.in), mobile apps, or railway counters. Unreserved tickets can be purchased at stations, ensuring accessibility for all passengers. Each train will have a mix of AC chair cars for reserved comfort and spacious general compartments to accommodate the expected crowds. SCR emphasizes safety and punctuality, urging passengers to arrive

early, follow COVID protocols if applicable, and check live updates via the NTES app or helpline 139. "These specials will significantly boost capacity on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada corridor, a lifeline during festivals," said a railway spokesperson. This move builds on SCR's tradition of festival specials, last year running over 50 such trains amid similar demand. With Sankranti falling mid-January, authorities anticipate over 2 lakh passengers on this route alone. Travelers are advised to avoid unofficial agents and opt for digital bookings to prevent scams. Railway unions have welcomed the decision but called for more permanent infrastructure like track doubling to handle year-round traffic. As Andhra Pradesh gears up for Pongal festivities with kite flying, feasts, and family reunions, these trains promise smoother journeys.

Vijayawada Police Shift Key Accused in Massive Liquor Ponzi Scam to Government Hospital Amid Health Concerns

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Vijayawada: In a significant development in the high-profile Madhyam Kumbhakonam (Liquor Ponzi) case, Vijayawada police on Saturday transferred prime accused Raj Kesireddy from Vijayawada district jail to a government hospital for urgent medical treatment. Raj, currently lodged as a remand prisoner, has been complaining of severe orthopedic issues, prompting authorities to act swiftly to address his deteriorating health. The transfer comes amid ongoing investigations into one of Andhra Pradesh's largest alleged scams, where hundreds of crores in investments were reportedly duped through fake liquor trading schemes. Raj Kesireddy, identified as the mastermind, was arrested last month following raids across Vijayawada and surrounding districts. Police sources indicate his orthopedic problems, including chronic joint pain and mobility issues, worsened during custody, necessitating immediate intervention at the government general hospital. Simultaneously, another accused, Chevireddi Bhaskar Reddy, was shifted to AIIMS Mangalagiri for specialized medical evaluations. Bhaskar, implicated in



the financial fraud ring, suffers from varicose veins, a condition that has aggravated due to prolonged standing and stress in jail. "Both transfers were done under heavy security, ensuring no lapses in custody," a senior police official told reporters outside the jail. The moves follow standard protocols under the Andhra Pradesh Prisons Rules, which mandate medical care for inmates regardless of their legal status. The liquor ponzi scam, which surfaced in late 2025, allegedly involved promising investors

high returns on fictitious liquor bond schemes, siphoning off over 500 crore from unsuspecting victims across Krishna, Guntur, and West Godavari districts. Investors, many from middle-class families, were lured with guarantees of 20-30% monthly yields, only to discover the operation was a classic pyramid fraud. Over 2,000 complaints have been registered, with the Crime Investigation Department (CID) taking over the probe. Raj Kesireddy, a Vijayawada-based businessman with prior run-

ins with the law, allegedly headed the syndicate, using shell companies to launder funds. Co-accused Bhaskar Reddy managed operations in Guntur, police filings reveal. Both face charges under the Andhra Pradesh Protection of Depositors of Financial Establishments Act, 1999, and IPC sections for cheating and criminal conspiracy. Legal experts note that while health transfers are routine, they could delay interrogations. "The court will monitor progress, but justice must not be

stalled," said advocate K. Srinivasa Rao. Vijayawada Police Commissioner A. Ravi Sankhar has assured full cooperation with medical teams while intensifying efforts to recover duped funds. Victims' families gathered outside the hospital, demanding faster resolution. As the case unfolds, it underscores vulnerabilities in unregulated investment schemes in Andhra Pradesh, where post-2024 TDP-led government reforms aim to curb such frauds through stricter financial oversight.

Amaravati Minister Slams Jagan's 'Riverbed' Jibe on Capital City Vision

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Amaravati: Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Narayana criticized former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for his "ignorant" remarks on Amaravati's location, asserting that many of the world's developed cities thrive along riverbanks, not buried in riverbeds. Speaking at a press conference here today, Narayana took strong exception to Jagan's portrayal of Amaravati as a "riverbed capital," urging him to understand the difference between "riverbed" and "river-based" development models. "Jagan is speaking without awareness. Globally renowned cities like London on the Thames, Paris on the Seine, and New York on the Hudson owe their prosperity to rivers. Amaravati, envisioned on the Krishna River's

banks, follows this proven path," the minister remarked. Narayana also rebuked Information Minister Satyakumar Yadav's comparisons between Hyderabad's secretariat and Amaravati's upcoming one, calling it "outrageous." He clarified that Hyderabad's facility is limited to ministers and secretaries, while Amaravati's design integrates department heads (శాఖాధ్యక్షులు) and their staff under one roof for seamless governance. "This integrated approach enhances efficiency, unlike the fragmented Hyderabad model," he added. Praising Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's foresight, Narayana highlighted how Amaravati's masterplan incorporates world-class infrastructure, green spaces, and riverfront rejuvenation. Under the TDP-led NDA government, construction has



accelerated since 2024, with land pooling revived and funding secured from Singapore and other partners. "Naidu's vision turns challenges into opportunities, unlike the previous regime's three-capitals flip-flop that stalled progress," he said. The minister's outburst comes amid renewed political sparring

over Andhra Pradesh's capital. Jagan's YSRCP has repeatedly questioned Amaravati's viability, citing floods and financial burdens, while TDP insists it's a symbol of state pride. Recent tenders for the legislative assembly and high court buildings signal momentum, with completion targeted by 2027. Narayana urged the op-

position to support development rather than indulge in "negative politics." "Amaravati will be India's finest greenfield capital, rivaling global benchmarks," he concluded. This exchange underscores ongoing tensions in AP politics, with urban development at the forefront ahead of potential 2029 polls.

YSRCP Internal Backlash Grows Over Jagan's Amaravati Remarks

TPN Bureau | Jan 10  
Vijayawada: In the wake of Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy's latest comments on Amaravati, voices of dissent are rising within the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP). The former Chief Minister's criticism of ongoing construction in the Krishna River basin and his questioning of a second round of land pooling have sparked frustration among party ranks. "Tell him to at least show it to someone," some cadres lament, while others argue that his unchanged stance could hand victories back to the TDP. This internal resonance highlights lingering regrets over the 2024 election loss, which many attribute directly to Jagan's handling of the capital issue. Jagan recently questioned why the current TDP-led government is pursuing additional land pooling when Amaravati projects remain in-



complete. He argued that diverting the Krishna River for construction is incorrect and emphasized that a strong majority in 2019 should have sufficed to complete the work. These remarks, made amid renewed development pushes by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, have reopened old wounds. YSRCP insiders point out that Jagan's "three capitals" proposal and perceived neglect of Amaravati alienated not just the region's residents but voters statewide. "That attitude hurt people's egos and fueled anger at the

polls," one party source noted anonymously. Despite implementing popular welfare schemes like pensions and financial aid, YSRCP's defeat came as a shock. Jagan had banked on these measures for automatic votes, but voters rejected them. Critics within the party blame distractions like sidelining Polavaram irrigation—leaving even canal silt uncanceled and prioritizing welfare over infrastructure. "Beneficiaries of those schemes didn't vote for us," the source added. Only months after the loss did Jagan show re-





# Andhra Pradesh Simplifies Section 22-E Land Removal Process to Benefit Farmers

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Puttaparthi, Sri Sathya Sai District: In a farmer-friendly move, the Andhra Pradesh government has issued new guidelines to streamline the removal of lands from the prohibited list under Section 22-E. The circular, aimed at providing swift relief to cultivators, empowers Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs) to act decisively using minimal documentation, reducing bureaucratic hurdles.  
Under the updated norms, officials can remove land from the Section 22-E prohibited list based on any single authentic document from the following:  
Master Assignment Register10(1) records

Details of assignees in Adangals  
Assignment files  
D.E. (Darkhast Assignment) files  
Register of Holdings details  
Registered documents  
8-E Register (Survey & Sub-Division Record)  
DKT (DKT Pattas)  
Other old government records  
Authorities must not insist on multiple documents or harass applicants. Even if other records are unavailable or additional papers are absent, rejection solely on those grounds is prohibited. If an officer doubts a document's validity, they must scrutinize only that document independently before deciding.  
Significantly, powers



previously held by Joint Collectors (JCs) have been delegated to RDOs for specific categories, expediting processes:  
Removal of assigned lands to ex-servicemen  
Assigned lands to freedom fighters  
Assignments before June 18, 1954  
Patta lands erroneously included in the prohibited list  
For survey number errors, if an entire survey number is mistakenly added, it must be fully removed. Sub-division extents should be added only if necessary. Applicants can appeal RDO orders to the Joint Collector within 30 days. The Collector retains authority to add lands to the Section 22-E list, with separate orders forthcoming.

Sri Sathya Sai District Collector, in a recent directive, emphasized quick implementation to aid farmers facing land transaction delays. "These guidelines cut red tape, ensuring genuine owners access their rights promptly," the Collector stated. This reform aligns with the government's push for agricultural empowerment, potentially unlocking thousands of acres for cultivation and sales. Farmers in districts like Sri Sathya Sai have welcomed the changes, urging swift district-wide rollout. Revenue officials are directed to prioritize applications, with monitoring to prevent delays. More details will follow via official portals.

## Preparations Underway for Cockfights Amid Police Warnings in Konaseema

TPN Bureau | Jan 10  
Amalapuram: Despite strict directives from police authorities, organizers in Konaseema district are gearing up for large-scale cockfights, bullfights, and cock betting events over three days during the Sankranti festival season. Cockfight promoters, or "pandem rayulu," are signaling "yes" to proceed, while police officials firmly respond with "no." Preparations continue openly for these traditional gambling sports, with over 50 arenas being set up across various parts of the district.  
In Polavaram mandal's Muramallala village, near the Veereshwaraswami Temple, a major cockfight arena is being arranged with VIP hospitality this year. Organizers are busy constructing special galleries and large sheds for VIPs, promising a grand spectacle complete with all amenities. Similarly, in Katreenu Konaman-



dal's Cheyyeru, preparations are underway on a massive scale for cockfights. In Mummidivaram mandal's Rajupalem, events will match last year's grandeur, including bullfights held under cockfight auspices. For these bullfights, organizers have struck deals allocating Rs 5.50 lakhs for village development. Cockfight setups are also progressing in Allavaram, Malikipuram, Sakhinettipalli, Ravulapalem, P. Gannavararam, Rajole, Kothapeta, I. Polavaram, Ayinavilli, and Ambajeepeta

mandals, among other areas district-wide. These events draw huge crowds and involve significant gambling. Police Crackdown Efforts Ignore by Organizers  
On the other hand, District SP Rahul Meena has issued clear orders: strict action against anyone holding cockfights. Police in relevant mandals have put up flex banners at event sites, posing for photos to emphasize their stance. They warn of an iron fist to crush such activities, issuing routine threats as usual.  
Yet, organizers re-

main undeterred, flouting police orders. Alongside cockfights, massive bullfight sessions are planned, with lakhs wagered at arenas. Sources indicate thousands of bets are already being placed. Unofficially, alcohol vendors have reportedly inked deals with organizers to run makeshift liquor shops at venues, adding to the unregulated festivities. Higher authorities have instructed committees to regulate cockfights, ensuring no animal cruelty occurs.  
However, these guide-

lines appear set to be ignored once again in Konaseema. Overall, Sankranti celebrations are proceeding with full preparations for cockfights and bullfights, highlighting a persistent clash between tradition and law enforcement. This annual showdown underscores the cultural tug-of-war in rural Andhra Pradesh, where festival fervor often overrides legal restrictions. Police vigilance may intensify, but historical patterns suggest events will go ahead amid heavy betting and crowds.

## Heavy Traffic Jams Mar Sankranti Festivities on Vijayawada-Hyderabad Highway Near Nandigama

TPN Bureau | Jan 10  
Nandigama, Andhra Pradesh, January 10, 2026: The joyous spirit of Sankranti has been overshadowed by severe traffic congestion on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad National Highway (NH-65), as city dwellers flock to their native villages for the harvest festival. With thousands of vehicles pouring in from urban centers like Vijayawada and Hyderabad, long queues have formed, particularly at critical junctions, turning the highway into a parking lot.  
The epicenter of the chaos is the Nandigama Y-Junction, where ongoing construction of the approach road to the underpass has left the service road in disrepair. Potholes riddling the stretch have made it nearly impassable, forcing vehicles to crawl at a snail's pace. Commuters report kilometers-long jams stretching back from the junction, with some stuck for over two hours.  
"We left Vijayawada early morning hoping to reach our village by noon, but these potholes have trapped us here," lamented Ravi Kumar, a software engineer from Guntur district heading to his ancestral home in



Kanchikacherla mandal. The situation worsens at the Keesara Toll Plaza in Kanchikacherla mandal, just a few kilometers away, where toll collections have exacerbated delays.  
Vehicles from all directions private cars, buses, trucks, and two-wheelers pile up, creating a ripple effect that snarls traffic across the 50-km stretch between Nandigama and Ibrahimpatnam. Local traffic police have deployed additional personnel to divert heavy vehicles onto alternate routes, but the narrow service roads and ongoing highway expansion works limit options. This annual Sankranti exodus highlights persistent infrastructure woes on one of Andhra

Pradesh's busiest corridors.  
The underpass project, initiated under the previous YSRCP government and continued by the TDP-led alliance, was meant to ease bottlenecks but remains incomplete despite multiple deadlines. Residents blame poor coordination between the Na-

tional Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and state PWD for the delays. "Sankranti is about family and pongal, not enduring this ordeal," said Lakshmi Devi, a homemaker from Nandigama, urging authorities for immediate patchwork repairs. NHAI officials promised to expedite

repairs post-festival, while Vijayawada Rural Police advised travelers to use the Hyderabad-Vijayawada Expressway bypass or check live traffic updates via apps. As the peak migration continues through January 14, commuters are bracing for more gridlock unless swift action is taken.



## PM-DDKY Nodal Officer Emphasizes Value-Added Agri Products in Annamayya District Visit

TPN Bureau | January 10, 2026  
Peeleru: Prime Minister Dhan Dhan Krishi Yojana (PM-DDKY) District Nodal Officer and Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Balamurugan, stressed the need for special focus on developing value-added products in agriculture to boost rural growth. On his first visit after assuming the role, Balamurugan toured Goodarevulapalle Panchayat's Puttavan-dlapalle village on Friday. Interacting with officials and farmers, he outlined the scheme's goals: increasing agricultural production, creating value-added products, enhancing crop value, and ensuring sustainable income sources for farmers. He announced plans to implement godowns, cold storage facilities, better marketing infrastructure, farm mechanization, modern technology adoption, and farmer producer organizations (FPOs).  
"We'll reduce input costs, promote integrated farming practices through awareness programs, and secure better support prices for crops," Balamurugan said. Under PM-DDKY, the central government is

implementing comprehensive development in 100 backward districts nationwide, including Annamayya, which he hailed as a welcome step. During the visit, Balamurugan reviewed district agriculture extensively. He quizzed Collector Nishanth Kumar and Joint Director of Agriculture JD Shivanarayana on cultivated area, crops grown, seed procurement, per-acre investment costs, yields, pest issues, preventive measures by farmers, ongoing schemes, and marketing strategies. With the animal husbandry officer, Gunasekar Pillai, he discussed livestock wealth, milk yields, dairy prices from various units, and any government-run dairies.  
District Horticulture Officer Subhashini briefed him on horticultural crops, marketing, and connectivity to metros like Bengaluru and Chennai. AP Micro Irrigation Project PD Lakshmi Prasanna explained drip irrigation schemes. Noting the widespread cultivation of tomatoes and mangoes, Balamurugan inquired about marketing facilities, operational FPOs, and ancillary

industries. Drawing from his eight years of experience, he advised officials to formulate future plans for mango and tomato processing units and improved marketing.  
Earlier, he inspected farmer Ishwar Mahendra's mango orchard and Golla Krishnayya Naidu's dragon fruit farm in Puttavan-dlapalle. He examined management practices, investment details, and protective covers used for mango fruit preservation. Farmers honored the nodal officer and collector in Peeleru.  
The program saw participation from ADS Raman Kumar and Majid Ahmed; EVOs Karunakar Reddy and Ramadevi; AMC Chairman Puram Ramamoorthy; Director Golla Kishor Naidu; HO Sukumar Reddy; Tahsildar Shivakumar; FPO presidents Jayabba Naidu, Deviraddi Ramana Reddy, and Mallikarjuna Reddy; AEOS Nazir, Altaf, and Jahir; TDP leaders Annareddy, Anji, and Venkataratnam; and others.  
This visit signals a strong push for sustainable agri-development in Annamayya, aligning with national goals to empower backward regions.

## Cheepurupalli Residents' Long Wait Ends with Railway Overbridge Inauguration

TPN Bureau | Jan 10  
Vijayanagaram: MP Kalisetty Appalanayudu and MLA Kalavenkataravu Launch Key Infrastructure Project Vijayanagaram MP Kalisetty Appalanayudu and Cheepurupalli MLA Kimidi Kalavenkataravu inaugurated the much-awaited Railway Overbridge (ROB) at Cheepurupalli railway station today, dedicating it to the nation and ending decades of hardship for local residents. The new overbridge connects Cheepurupalli directly to Rajam and Palakonda areas, eliminating lengthy detours. Previously, commuters had to travel 40 to 80 kilometers via alternative routes for the past five years due to rail disruptions. With the bridge now operational, travel has become seamless, bringing immense relief to thousands in the region. In a display of people-

centric leadership, the leaders traveled from the TDP office in Cheepurupalli town alongside ordinary passengers in an RTC bus to the site.  
They flagged off the bridge with a ceremonial wave and unveiled the foundation plaque amid cheers from the crowd. Speaking at the event, MLA Kalavenkataravu hailed the NDA alliance government's commitment to fulfilling promises. "True to our word, we've expedited all pending projects.  
This overbridge, fast-tracked under the alliance regime, was completed in just 16 months, resolving the woes of Cheepurupalli's people," he said. He criticized the previous government for stalling works despite repeated halts in rail traffic, leaving commuters stranded. MP Appalanayudu echoed the sentiment, recounting his efforts

post-election. "As soon as I won as MP, I coordinated with relevant ministers to accelerate construction. We've now completed the bridge, easing passenger hardships," he stated, emphasizing his role in pushing progress.  
The event drew youth leader Kimidi Ram Mallik Nayudu, TDP, Janasena, and BJP leaders, activists, and thousands of residents. Slogans rent the air: "Development means the NDA government! Welfare means Chandrababu Pawan Kalyan alliance!" Attendees celebrated how the overbridge transforms local transportation in the constituency.  
This inauguration underscores the alliance's focus on infrastructure, signaling more projects ahead to boost connectivity and prosperity in Vizianagaram district.



# Maharashtra’s Municipal Elections: Realignments, Reunions and a Battle for Legacy

Maharashtra’s political theatre is undergoing dramatic churn as the state prepares for long-delayed municipal corporation elections across 29 civic bodies, polls that are nearly four years overdue. What might have been routine local elections have instead become a referendum on political survival, legacy, and future alignments—marked most strikingly by the reunion of the estranged Thackeray cousins and tentative reconciliation between rival Pawar factions.

**The Thackeray Reunion: Strategy Over Sentiment**

In one of the most unexpected developments in recent Maharashtra politics, Uddhav Thackeray’s Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) has walked out of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and forged an alliance with cousin Raj Thackeray’s Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) for the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections.

This alliance is far more than an electoral adjustment. It represents a calculated attempt by the Thackeray cousins to reclaim the political and emotional legacy of Balasaheb Thackeray, whose dominance once defined Maharashtra’s politics.

The arithmetic behind the partnership is clear: Together, the two parties are seeking to consolidate the Marathi Manos vote—around 40% of Mumbai’s population—while also counting on support from the Muslim community, which constitutes roughly 20%. The underlying assumption is that a united Thackeray front is better placed to challenge the BJP than the Congress, leaving minority voters with little alternative if the BJP is to be defeated.

Seat-sharing within



the alliance reflects the relative strength of the partners. Shiv Sena (UBT) will contest 165 seats, the MNS 52, and the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar faction) just 10. At the joint announcement, the Thackeray cousins invoked a familiar warning to Marathi voters—“batenge to katenge”—echoing a slogan popularised by the BJP during the 2024 state elections.

**An Existential Battle for Uddhav Thackeray**

For Uddhav Thackeray, these municipal elections—especially the BMC—are nothing short of an existential fight. The Shiv Sena ruled Mumbai’s civic body for nearly three decades, making it both a power centre and a symbol of the party’s supremacy. The 2022 split, which saw Eknath Shinde take con-

trol of the party organisation and most MLAs, has left Uddhav’s faction dangerously close to losing its most prized bastion.

So far, the battle between the two Sena factions has been evenly matched. In the Lok Sabha elections (Round One), Uddhav’s faction performed better. In the Vidhan Sabha polls (Round Two), Shinde’s faction gained the upper hand. The municipal elections, particularly in Mumbai, represent a decisive Round Three that could settle the question of who truly inherits Balasaheb Thackeray’s political mantle.

There are reasons for cautious optimism for Uddhav. Of the 20 Vidhan Sabha seats his party won in 2024, half came from the Mumbai region under the BMC. While the party’s statewide vote

share stood at a modest 10%, it surged to 24% in Mumbai—an important advantage in civic elections where local identity and organisational strength matter more than state-level narratives.

The MNS, though diminished, still retains relevance in Mumbai. While its statewide vote share in the 2024 elections was under 2%, it secured around 7% in the Mumbai zone, underscoring that Raj Thackeray’s appeal has not entirely faded in the city where his party was born.

In direct electoral contests between the two Sena factions, the margins have been razor-thin. Out of 11 such fights, Shiv Sena (UBT) won six, while Shinde’s faction won five. Adding to Uddhav’s confidence is an Ascendia Strategies survey showing that

45% of Mumbai’s Marathi Manos consider Shiv Sena (UBT) the “real Sena”—a crucial psychological edge in a contest centred on legitimacy as much as votes.

**The Obstacles Before the Thackerays**

Despite favourable indicators, the alliance faces formidable challenges. Raj Thackeray’s political credibility has steadily eroded across Maharashtra, with critics branding him an opportunist who has frequently shifted positions over the past decade. This perception could alienate voters seeking consistency.

Uddhav Thackeray faces his own image problem. He is often viewed as lacking the aggression and mass charisma that defined Balasaheb. More damaging is the perception that his

earlier alliance with the Congress diluted the Sena’s Hindutva identity—an accusation that resonates deeply with the party’s traditional base.

Meanwhile, the BJP-Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) combine has made significant inroads among Marathi voters. According to Ascendia Strategies, the Marathi Manos vote is now split almost evenly at 44-42%. The Muslim vote, which backed Uddhav during the MVA phase, may not automatically transfer now that he has broken away from Congress. Many Muslim voters remain uncertain—debating whether to support Congress, SP or AIMIM in pockets, or back the Thackerays as the strongest anti-BJP force. Concerns also linger over a potential future “gharwapsi” of the Thackerays to a BJP-led

alliance.

Adding to the challenge is the urban youth vote. Younger voters, dominant in city constituencies, are increasingly sceptical of dynasty politics and appear more receptive to leaders like Devendra Fadnis, who project a modern, development-focused image.

**The Pawar Reconciliation: Blood Ties and Political Calculus**

While the Thackerays explore reunion, the rival Pawar factions are cautiously moving toward rapprochement. The NCP factions led by Ajit Pawar and Sharad Pawar have decided to jointly contest the Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad municipal corporations. Ajit Pawar has publicly stated that party workers want unity and that family tensions have

been resolved, suggesting that grassroots pressure has driven the collaboration.

These moves have revived speculation about larger realignments. Rumours persist of the Sharad Pawar faction eventually joining the NDA, with Ajit Pawar managing Maharashtra affairs and Supriya Sule playing a national role. As Sharad Pawar approaches the twilight of his political career, securing Supriya Sule’s future may be a key consideration—particularly given perceptions that she lacks Ajit Pawar’s mass appeal.

Talks of contesting under a single symbol reportedly failed after resistance from the Sharad Pawar faction, indicating that full reconciliation remains distant. Still, cooperation serves immediate interests: reclaiming lost ground in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, once NCP bastions that fell to the BJP in 2017. The BJP’s continued dominance in these regions during the recent Vidhan Sabha polls underscores how steep the NCP’s decline has been.

Strategically, the Pawars may also be preparing for a future where the BJP contests the 2029 elections alone. Maintaining channels between the factions allows Ajit Pawar to hedge against political isolation if such a scenario unfolds.

**A Defining Moment for Maharashtra Politics**

These municipal elections will test not just organisational strength but long-term political strategy. For the Thackerays, the fight is about survival, legitimacy, and legacy. For the Pawars, it is about revival, relevance, and safeguarding future options. The outcomes will shape Maharashtra’s political trajectory well beyond the civic boundaries of its cities.

# Jana Nayagan, the Courts, and the Making of a Political Narrative in Tamil Nadu

The Madras High Court Chief Justice’s decision to stay a single judge’s directive to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to grant certification to Jana Nayagan until January 21 may appear, on the face of it, to be a procedural pause. Legally, it is a routine intervention. Politically, however, the delay has already taken on a far greater meaning in Tamil Nadu’s volatile political landscape, where perception often travels faster—and settles deeper—than fact.

In a state where cinema and politics are inseparable, the certification delay has rapidly morphed from a technical issue into a charged political episode. The dominant narrative crystallising on the ground is that actor-politician Vijay is being selectively targeted by the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is widely perceived to exercise considerable influence over the CBFC. Coming on the heels of the Karur stampede case, in which Vijay was targeted by the DMK-led state government, this episode is being read as a double squeeze—pressure from both the state and the Centre—culminating in Vijay being denied even the release of what he has declared to be his final film before fully entering politics.

At the centre of the controversy is the unexplained delay in the CB-

FC’s certification of Jana Nayagan. For Vijay’s supporters and a growing section of the politically attentive public, this is no longer just about a film stuck in bureaucratic limbo. It is increasingly being interpreted as an attempt to discipline a rising political force—to test his resolve, to pressure him into warming up to the BJP, and perhaps even to nudge him toward an understanding with the NDA. Whether or not this is the intent of the Centre, the optics are unmistakable. They feed directly into a familiar opposition charge: that the BJP-led government uses institutions to keep potential challengers in check. In politics, intent matters less than impact—and the impact here is unmistakable.

Among Vijay’s fan base, the emotional fallout has been swift and intense. Jana Nayagan was expected to be a celebratory moment, not merely another mass entertainer but a film imbued with symbolic weight because of Vijay’s political transition. Anticipation, built over months, has now curdled into frustration and anger. For many fans, the delay feels like a denial not just of entertainment, but of recognition—of their star’s stature and their own emotional investment. In Tamil cinema culture, where the relationship between star and



fan is deeply personal and political, such setbacks are rarely viewed as neutral accidents.

The timing of the delay has only sharpened this sense of grievance. A Pongal release is not just another date on the calendar; it is the most prestigious and culturally resonant window in Tamil cinema. Pongal films are family rituals, markers of status, and often statements of dominance. For a star of Vijay’s stature, a Pongal release is a reaffirmation of mass appeal and relevance. Missing that window is seen as a major loss—commercially, symbolically, and emo-

tionally. Fans who had planned celebrations for what Vijay has described as his “last film” before dedicating himself to politics now feel robbed of a moment they believed was rightfully theirs.

This emotional undercurrent is politically significant. Vijay’s fan base is no longer purely cinematic; it is increasingly political, organised, and mobilisable. Any sense of unfairness—real or perceived—has a way of translating into loyalty, anger, and action. Tamil Nadu’s political history offers ample precedent. MGR’s films were targeted during the 1970s, particu-

larly by the DMK, and those attempts only strengthened his political appeal. The idea of the artist or leader being wronged by the establishment has been repeatedly proven to be a powerful mobilising narrative in the state.

Complicating the situation further are the CBI summons issued to Vijay in the Karur stampede case, scheduled for January 12. The question hanging in the air is deceptively simple: will Vijay go to Delhi? His response—or silence—will be parsed relentlessly. So far, Vijay’s party, the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), has cho-

sen a strategy of studied silence, refusing to comment either on the certification delay or the summons. This appears to be a deliberate choice. By saying nothing, the party allows public suspicion and sympathy to grow organically, without risking a statement that could be politically boxed or legally scrutinised.

However, silence is a double-edged sword. It places enormous weight on Vijay’s next move. If he is perceived as softening his stance or warming up to the BJP under pressure, the backlash from his supporters could be swift and unforgiving. Such a move

would risk projecting him as someone who yielded when tested—an image that would be fatal for a leader trying to establish independence and strength. On the other hand, if Vijay chooses to confront the pressure head-on and emerges unscathed, it could cement a powerful narrative: Vijay as the outsider who stood up to both the Centre and the state and refused to bend.

That possibility unsettles more than one political party. A politically stronger Vijay disrupts the calculations of both the DMK and the AIADMK, each of which has been preparing for a large-scale bipolar contest. For the DMK, the optics are already uncomfortable. The smooth release of Parasakthi, widely seen as backed by the ruling party, while Jana Nayagan remains stuck in certification limbo invites comparisons that the DMK would prefer to avoid. Fair or not, it fuels whispers of a tacit understanding between the DMK and the BJP—an allegation the DMK has consistently denied, but one that becomes harder to dismiss amid such contrasts.

Interestingly, unease is also visible within the BJP’s Tamil Nadu unit. Some leaders are reportedly worried about the political fallout and the perception that the party is overreaching. In a state

where anti-Centre sentiment can snowball rapidly, such optics can be costly. Vijay’s rise threatens to destabilise the NDA’s already fragile arithmetic. A strong Vijay could severely weaken the AIADMK, the BJP’s most crucial ally in the state. If Vijay were to capture the opposition space, it could complicate the BJP’s strategy for 2026 and beyond.

Ultimately, Jana Nayagan will receive certification and will be released. The courts will eventually clear the way. But by then, the political damage—or momentum—may already be done. When the film finally hits theatres, the courtroom drama surrounding it is likely to amplify its box-office opening and deepen the emotional bond between Vijay and his supporters. In Tamil Nadu, few things strengthen a star-politician more than the perception that he was denied his moment—and endured.

How Vijay navigates the coming weeks will be critical, not just for his own political future but for the balance of power in the state. What began as a film certification issue has evolved into a test of narrative, authority, and perception. And in Tamil Nadu, where cinema and politics are inseparable, few narratives are as powerful as that of a star denied his Pongal moment—and emerging stronger because of it.



# US Ambassador Sergio Gor Returns to India, Pledges Stronger Strategic and Economic Ties

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor returned to New Delhi on Friday, expressing optimism about the future of the bilateral relationship between the United States and India. In a post on X, Gor wrote, "Great to be back in India! Incredible opportunities ahead for our two nations!" highlighting the potential for expanded cooperation across strategic, economic, and security domains.

Gor was officially sworn in as the US Ambassador to India at the White House in November 2025. Prior to his formal appointment, he had visited India in October, where he met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. His return marks the start of his full-time tenure in India, tasked with strengthening one of Washington's most important international relationships.

At the swearing-in ceremony, US President Donald Trump underscored the significance of Gor's role, stating that the ambassador would play a key part in enhancing the strategic, economic, and security partnership between the two nations. "India is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, with over 1.5 billion people. We have a fantastic relationship with Prime Minister Modi, and I am entrusting Sergio to strengthen this partnership even further," Trump said. The President noted that Gor had already established a rapport with Modi, which would help foster deeper



collaboration.

Following his oath-taking, Gor expressed gratitude to the US President and reaffirmed his commitment to advancing US-India relations. "I look forward to enhancing the relationship between our two nations. I look forward to doing a great job for you," he said.

Sergio Gor's nomination as Ambassador and Special Envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs was announced by President Trump in August 2025. During his testimony be-

fore the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September, Gor emphasized India's strategic importance to US foreign policy. He described the Indo-US partnership as "one of the most important relationships our nation has in the world," noting its significance in shaping regional security and economic cooperation.

Analysts have highlighted that Gor's tenure comes at a crucial time, as both countries seek to deepen trade ties, strengthen defense collabora-

tion, and expand joint initiatives in technology, energy, and climate action. His presence in India is expected to further consolidate diplomatic engagement and support initiatives that benefit both nations strategically and economically.

With his return to New Delhi, Gor is set to focus on building long-term collaboration, enhancing diplomatic dialogue, and leveraging opportunities that strengthen the already robust US-India partnership.

# NCP Factions Unite for Pune Civic Polls, Promise Traffic Relief, Healthcare Boost, and Free Public Transport

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) factions led by Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar have come together to release a joint manifesto for the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) elections, pledging comprehensive development initiatives for the city. The alliance, formed despite ongoing political differences at the state and national levels, aims to address key urban challenges such as traffic congestion, healthcare, water supply, and affordable public transport.

The manifesto outlines plans to fix 33 missing road links across Pune to ease traffic, widen major roads, and improve overall traffic flow. Strengthening public transport is also a priority, with proposals for free bus and metro travel, inspired by models in European cities. Highlighting Pune's heavy traffic, with nearly 30 lakh vehicles, the leaders noted that traffic jams result in an annual loss of Rs 750 crore in fuel and citizens' time, while also worsening pollution.

Healthcare improvements are a central focus. The NCP al-



liance promises to establish hospitals within a two-kilometre radius for accessible basic care, along with dedicated facilities such as a cancer hospital and a burns ward to strengthen the city's medical infrastructure.

The manifesto also emphasizes environmental sustainability. Housing societies adopting eco-friendly practices will receive a 20% property tax rebate and a 'Green Society' certification. Solar power initiatives are planned to help reduce electricity costs and

promote clean energy usage.

Acknowledging Pune's chronic water issues, including reliance on tanker water in central areas, the alliance pledged to improve water supply, sewage treatment, and last-mile connectivity to the metro. Municipal approvals, including the Gunthewari regularization process, will be digitized to reduce corruption and delays.

The manifesto also includes measures to promote women's entrepreneurship, offering interest-free loans of up to Rs 5

lakh to skill-trained women, fostering self-employment and small business development.

Speaking at the launch, Ajit Pawar said the alliance would "deliver results, not just promises" if given control of the PMC, noting that a full term of three and a half years would allow sufficient time to implement initiatives. Supriya Sule highlighted the NCP's track record of delivering schools and civic infrastructure, even while in opposition, and pledged to resolve Pune's traffic, water, and public transport challenges.

The event marked the first joint public appearance of Ajit Pawar and Supriya Sule since the NCP split in 2023. The State Election Commission of Maharashtra has announced elections for 29 municipal corporations, including BMC, PMC, and PCMC, with polling scheduled for January 15 and counting on January 16.

This joint manifesto signals a united NCP push to address Pune's urban issues comprehensively, combining infrastructure, sustainability, and social welfare initiatives.

# Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan Assures Protection for Linguistic Minorities Amid Controversy Over Malayalam Language Bill

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday dismissed concerns raised about the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, saying they do not reflect the facts or the inclusive intent of the legislation passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

Vijayan was responding to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who had criticised the Bill as "an attack on the freedom of language guaranteed by the Constitution." Siddaramaiah, along with the Karnataka Border Areas Development Authority (KBADA), has urged Kerala to reconsider the legislation, citing potential impacts on Kannada-speaking communities in the border district of Kasaragod.

The Bill, passed by the Kerala Assembly last October, designates Malayalam as the official state language and mandates its use in government services, the judiciary, and other administrative functions. It also proposes the establishment of a Malayalam Language Development Au-



thority and makes Malayalam compulsory as the first language in all Kerala syllabus schools. Additionally, the Bill requires products sold or manufactured in the state to carry labels in Malayalam.

Addressing these concerns on social media, Vijayan emphasized that the Bill is designed to safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities, particularly Kannada- and Tamil-speaking communities. He highlighted Clause 7, a non-obstante provision, which ensures that no language is im-

posed and the freedom to use one's mother tongue is fully protected.

"In notified areas, Tamil and Kannada speakers may continue to use their mother tongues for official correspondence with the Secretariat, heads of departments, and local offices, with responses issued in the same language," Vijayan said. He added that students whose mother tongue is not Malayalam are free to choose other languages available in schools under the National Education Curriculum,

and students from other states or foreign countries are not required to appear for Malayalam exams at the IX, X, or higher secondary levels.

Vijayan reaffirmed that Kerala's language policy aligns with the Official Languages Act, 1963, and Articles 346 and 347 of the Constitution, asserting that India's linguistic diversity must be celebrated rather than restricted to a single language.

"Kerala's progress has always been rooted in inclusive development anchored in equality and brotherhood," he stated. "Our government resists any erosion of federal rights while remaining committed to protecting the linguistic identity of every citizen."

The Kerala Language Bill remains pending with Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, who is yet to provide assent. Meanwhile, debates around the legislation continue to spark discussion on linguistic rights and federal principles along the Kerala-Karnataka border.

# Nine-Seater Flight Makes Emergency Landing Near Rourkela, All Passengers Safe



A nine-seater aircraft on the Bhubaneswar-Rourkela route experienced a mishap while attempting to land at Rourkela Airport on Saturday, officials confirmed. On board were four passengers and two crew members, all of whom survived the incident. The passengers sustained minor injuries and were admitted to local hospitals for treatment.

State Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Jena said the captain detected technical issues shortly after takeoff, prompting an emergency landing approximately 10 kilometers from Rourkela. "All passengers are stable. The mishap occurred while the captain tried to land safely after identifying technical issues," Jena stated. The state government is sending a team to the site to assess the situation further.

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed relief that everyone on board was safe and confirmed that he is personally monitoring the response. "I am deeply saddened by the plane crash in Rourkela. By the grace of Lord Jagannath, all passengers are safe. Immediate medical care is being provided to those injured, and I am praying for their swift recovery," Majhi tweeted.

The Directorate of Aviation reported that the India One Air aircraft, carrying two pilots and four passengers, departed Bhubaneswar at 12:27 hours. Eight nautical miles short of Rourkela, the plane was forced to land near Jalda. Thanks to the crew's actions, all lives were saved. District authorities quickly responded, transporting three passengers to J.P. Hospital and the two pilots along with one passenger to Rourkela Government Hospital for medical observation.

The Directorate confirmed that the accident has been reported to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation. "In accordance with regulations, the airline will submit a detailed report to the DGCA and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) for further investigation. The Directorate of Civil Aviation is actively supporting both the passengers and the airline. The situation is under close observation, and updates will be provided as they become available," the statement read.

No fatalities have been reported, and authorities are continuing to monitor the passengers' conditions while investigating the cause of the incident.

# Operation Sindoor Exposed Pakistan's Weaknesses, Says CDS Gen Anil Chauhan; India's Joint Theatre Commands Near Completion



Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Friday stated that Operation Sindoor compelled Pakistan to undertake hurried constitutional amendments, acknowledging that the neighbouring country faced significant shortcomings during the operation. Speaking at the Pune Public Policy Festival, Gen Chauhan said the changes in Pakistan's higher defence structure reflect attempts to consolidate power rather than achieve true jointness among the three services.

"The changes which have been brought about in Pakistan, including the constitutional amendment done hurriedly, are actually an acknowledgement of the fact that everything didn't go well for them in this operation. They found a lot of shortcomings and deficiencies," Gen Chauhan said. He clarified that the amendments primarily relate to the constitution of federal customs courts but have broader implications for Pakistan's defence hierarchy.

One key reform in Pakistan was the abolition of the post of Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, previously intended to promote coordination among the Army, Navy, and Air Force. It has been replaced with a Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), a position that can only be appointed by the Chief of Army Staff. "This goes against the basic principle of jointness," Gen Chauhan noted.

Pakistan also established a National Strategy Command and an Army Rocket Forces Command, centralising both conventional and strategic capabilities. "Today, the Army Chief will be responsible for land operations, joint operations with the Navy and Air Force through the CDF, as well as strategic and nuclear matters. The creation of the Rocket Forces Command adds another layer, reflecting a land-centric mindset," the CDS said.

On India's own defence reforms, Gen Chauhan highlighted that the government has extended the deadline for setting up joint theatre commands to May 30, 2026. However, he added

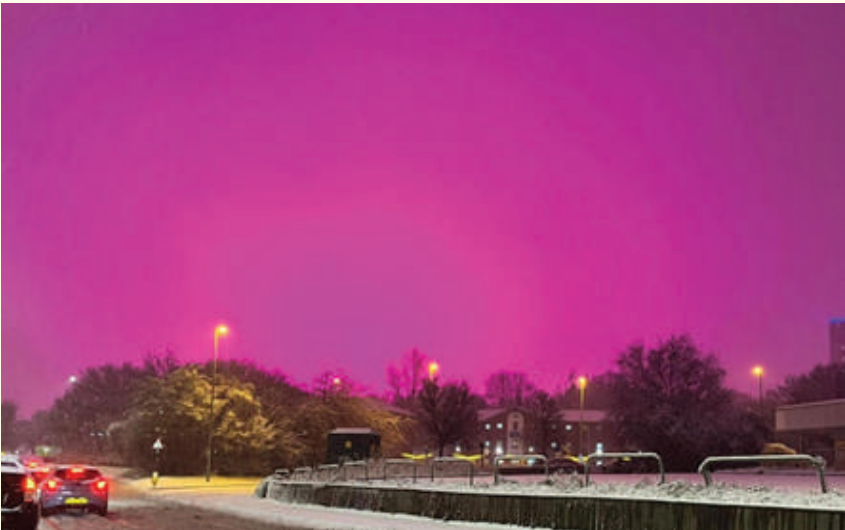
that the armed forces are pushing to implement the structure well before the deadline. "This is one of my key responsibilities, and the process is now in its final stages," he said.

Drawing lessons from recent military engagements—including the Uri surgical strikes, Doklam and Galwan standoffs, the Balakot air strike, and Operation Sindoor—Gen Chauhan emphasised the importance of developing standardised, situation-specific command structures. "Indian armed forces have often operated through innovative, flexible command arrangements. What we are now working towards is a standardised system that will be applicable across all contingencies," he said.

He also clarified that strategic forces, mentioned in his discussion of Pakistan's reforms, primarily refer to nuclear capabilities. These insights underscore India's continued focus on joint operational readiness and strategic preparedness in response to evolving regional challenges.



Pink Sky Stuns West Midlands Residents, Stadium Lights and Snow Reveal the Surprising Cause



Residents across the West Midlands were left both surprised and fascinated on Thursday evening when the night sky suddenly turned a striking shade of bright pink. The unusual sight quickly sparked curiosity and speculation, with many people taking to social media to share photographs and ask what could have caused such an extraordinary display. Some believed it was an especially vivid sunset, while others wondered if the phenomenon might be a rare glimpse of the Northern Lights appearing over central England.

As it turned out, the explanation behind the colourful sky was far more down to earth. Birmingham City Football Club later clarified that the pink glow was caused by powerful LED lighting at their St Andrew's stadium. The club even joined in on the online conversation by sharing a photograph of the illuminated sky on its official X account, cheekily captioned, "Pink sky at night, Blues delight."

Images of the pink-tinted sky were reported not only over Birmingham but also in surrounding areas across the region. Residents in towns such as Hednesford in Staffordshire also noticed the unusual colouring, adding to the widespread intrigue. The consistent appearance of the glow across different locations suggested that it was not a localised natural event, but rather something being reflected across the low cloud cover.

Weather experts soon stepped in to explain why the effect appeared so

dramatic. BBC meteorologist Simon King said that the combination of cloud cover and falling snow played a key role in amplifying the pink hue. According to him, clouds and snow are highly reflective surfaces that can bounce light back towards the ground. When strong artificial lights from roads, buildings, or stadiums shine upwards, they can illuminate the clouds above, creating unusual colours in the sky.

Graham Madge from the Met Office offered further scientific insight, explaining that snow scatters shorter wavelengths of light, particularly blue light. This scattering effect allows red and pink tones to stand out more prominently, making the sky appear dramatically coloured when illuminated by artificial lighting.

While the pink sky was not the result of a rare atmospheric phenomenon, it nevertheless captured the imagination of many people. For some, the sight brought a sense of wonder and beauty to an otherwise ordinary winter evening. Others simply enjoyed the moment as a reminder of how everyday elements—such as weather conditions and city lighting—can come together to create something unexpectedly magical.

In the end, the glowing pink sky over the West Midlands proved that even familiar surroundings can surprise, turning a football stadium's LED lights and snowy weather into a stunning visual spectacle that left residents talking long after the colour faded.

Tesla Model Y Crashes and Bursts Into Flames in Chicago After Driver Suffers Medical Emergency



A Tesla vehicle crashed and caught fire in the Chicago suburb of Naperville on Friday evening after the driver reportedly suffered a medical emergency. The dramatic incident occurred at around 5 pm on Route 59 near Cantore Road and prompted a swift response from emergency services.

According to a report by NBC5 Chicago, a 37-year-old man was driving a 2025 Tesla Model Y when he suddenly became ill behind the wheel. As a result, the vehicle first collided with another car before veering off the roadway. The Tesla then struck a tree and quickly burst into flames.

An off-duty Naperville police officer who happened to witness the crash immediately stepped in to help. Acting without hesitation, the officer managed to pull the driver out of the burning vehicle, potentially saving his life. Shortly afterward, police officers, firefighters, and other emergency responders rushed to the scene following reports of a serious crash and an active vehicle fire.

Visuals from the site showed extensive damage. The Tesla appeared heavily wrecked, with debris scattered across the road and shoulder. Helicopters were also seen hovering above the area as emergency crews worked to control the situation and secure the crash site. Photos taken after the fire was extinguished revealed that the vehicle had been almost completely destroyed, reduced to a charred shell.

Firefighters faced additional challenges due to the nature of electric vehicle fires. To extinguish the blaze and prevent reignition, crews used a large volume of water to both put out the flames and cool the lithium-ion batteries. The Naperville Fire Department deployed a specialised firefighting tool known as a "Poseidon Nozzle," which is specifically designed to address electric vehicle battery fires. Notably, the tool was invented by a Naperville firefighter and allows responders to directly cool battery packs more effectively during EV-related fires.

A bystander-recorded video circulating online showed the black Tesla engulfed in flames, with thick black smoke rising into the air as it burned on the roadway. The footage highlighted the intensity of the fire and the urgency of the rescue effort.

This incident comes amid ongoing discussions about electric vehicle fire safety. Separately, another video circulating on social media shows a red Tesla with its roof open suddenly catching fire from the rear while being driven. In that clip, the driver is seen quickly exiting the vehicle and moving to safety as flames spread.

As of now, authorities have not released an official statement regarding the extent of the driver's injuries or the condition of others involved in the crash. Investigations into the incident are ongoing.

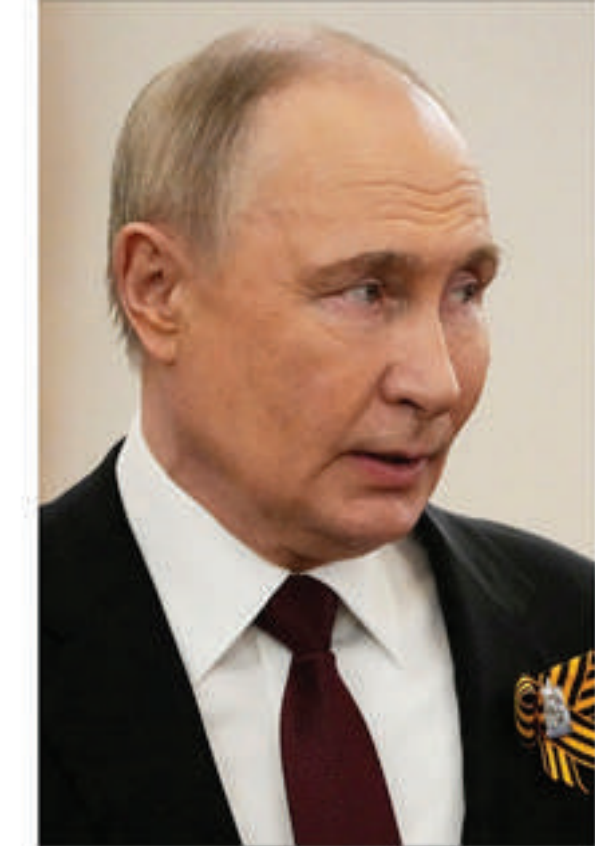
Maduro's Dramatic Arrest Sparks Global Debate as Trump Rules Out Similar Action Against Putin

Washington – A week after a dramatic US military operation in Venezuela, there is growing global focus on how Washington's bold action reshaped geopolitics and stirred fresh debate about international law and its implications for other global conflicts.

In the early hours of January 3, 2026, the United States launched a coordinated military operation in Caracas to capture Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. The mission—described by US officials as a "surgical strike" involving special operations forces—resulted in Maduro's detention and swift transfer to New York, where he appeared in a federal courtroom to face charges including drug trafficking and narco-terrorism.

The scale and audacity of the operation stunned many international observers. US President Donald Trump announced that Maduro and Flores had been apprehended and flown out of Venezuelan territory after precision strikes on key locations in Caracas. Maduro later pleaded not guilty in a Manhattan court, asserting his innocence and rejecting the legitimacy of his arrest.

The capture drew immediate international reaction. Venezuela's vice-president, Delcy Rodríguez, assumed leadership as acting president and condemned the US operation as a violation of



sovereignty and a blatant breach of international law. Critics pointed out that forcibly removing a sitting head of state without United Nations authorization undermines global norms against the use of force in foreign affairs.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky referenced the episode in comments about Russia's war in Ukraine, suggesting the United States now knows how to deal with dictatorial leaders. President Trump, however, was clear

in his response to such remarks, telling reporters he did not believe a similar action against Vladimir Putin would be "necessary," even as he reiterated US disappointment with Russia's conduct in Ukraine.

Trump also defended his broader foreign policy record to reporters, noting that he had previously negotiated the end of eight conflicts and saying he hoped the Russia-Ukraine war would conclude soon, despite sub-



stantial casualties.

The US operation appears to have significant strategic motivations. Caracas sits atop one of the world's largest reserves of oil, and US officials have signaled interest in stabilising Venezuela's energy sector under American oversight. Meanwhile, debates over the legality and long-term regional impact continue in capitals around the world.

Allies and adversaries alike have weighed in. Some governments called

for respect for international law and caution, while others condemned the strikes outright as aggression that flouts the UN Charter.

As Venezuela enters a new chapter under interim leadership and diplomatic efforts begin to recalibrate relations with Washington, the broader geopolitical repercussions—especially concerning Russia, Ukraine, and international norms—are likely to unfold in the weeks and months ahead.

'Greenland Is Not for Sale': MP Rejects Trump's Annexation Push, Calls for Sovereignty Through Diplomacy

Greenland MP Kuno Fencker has firmly stated that the vast, mineral-rich Arctic island is "not for sale," pushing back against renewed remarks by US President Donald Trump, who has once again expressed interest in acquiring the Danish autonomous territory. Fencker's comments come amid rising geopolitical tension and renewed debate over Greenland's future, sovereignty, and strategic importance.

Speaking to TPN, Fencker emphasised that Greenland aspires to become a sovereign state, though he acknowledged the practical limitations of full independence. With a small population spread across one of the world's largest islands, Greenland would continue to rely on strong alliances even as it seeks greater autonomy. According to Fencker, these partners would naturally include the United States, NATO, Denmark, and

neighbouring European nations.

"Greenland's sovereignty is not for sale," Fencker said, while also reflecting on the moral complexities of the island's current arrangement with Denmark. He noted that Greenland receives an annual subsidy from Copenhagen, which he described as resembling a form of rent or purchase. "In principle, no country should be on sale," he added, stressing that Greenlanders would never accept annexation by any foreign power.

Fencker urged calm and diplomacy in dealing with Washington, particularly as US rhetoric has fluctuated since Trump returned to office following his 2024 election victory. While protests have taken place in Greenland declaring the island "not for sale," Fencker believes open dialogue is the only viable path forward. He said Greenland must engage directly with the US

to understand American security concerns and strategic interests, especially given the island's growing importance in the Arctic.

He highlighted that the US has maintained a defence agreement with Denmark regarding Greenland since 1951, with amendments made in 2004 that limited American operational freedom. Fencker suggested these agreements could be revisited to address evolving security realities, including missile surveillance, Arctic shipping routes, and broader international security concerns—provided such discussions support Greenland's path toward independence.

Trump first proposed buying Greenland in 2019, a suggestion that was swiftly rejected by both Greenland and Denmark. After returning to office, he revived the idea and went further, hinting that the US could take the ter-



ritory "the easy or difficult way," regardless of Denmark's position. Denmark responded by stating it would be forced to defend itself if Greenland were attacked.

Fencker warned that any military confrontation would be catastrophic, potentially leading to conflict between NATO allies. While Denmark would be compelled to defend Greenland, he said such a scenario would be "devastating, unneces-

sary, and very stupid," given the overwhelming military dominance of the United States.

Criticising Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, Fencker accused Denmark of maintaining a colonial relationship with Greenland. He argued that Greenland should belong solely to Greenlanders—not Denmark and not the US—and called for true independence, identity, and citizenship for his people.

Iran Gripped by Nationwide Protests as Crackdown Intensifies and Death Toll Rises



France – Iran has witnessed a fresh wave of nationwide protests, now entering their thirteenth consecutive day, marking the largest challenge to the Islamic Republic in more than three years. Demonstrations continued on Friday despite a sweeping internet blackout imposed by authorities as part of a crackdown that has reportedly left dozens dead.

The protests, which erupted over rising living

costs, have rapidly evolved into broader calls for an end to Iran's clerical system established after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Demonstrators have taken to the streets in cities across the country, including Tehran, Mashhad, Tabriz, and Qom, chanting slogans against Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and banging pots from balconies. Videos verified by international media showed cars

honking in support as crowds gathered, even as security forces attempted to suppress the unrest.

Reacting to the developments, US President Donald Trump said Iran's leadership appeared to be "in big trouble," noting that protesters were gaining control of areas previously thought unlikely to see such resistance. He reiterated an earlier warning that military action could be considered if peaceful protesters continue to be killed.

The renewed demonstrations follow massive rallies on Thursday described as the largest since the 2022–2023 protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini while in police custody. As tensions escalated, internet monitoring group NetBlocks reported a nationwide shutdown lasting more than 24 hours, calling it a violation of basic rights and a move designed

to conceal violence by authorities.

Human rights organisations have raised alarm over the rising death toll. Norway-based Iran Human Rights reported that at least 51 protesters, including nine children, have been killed, with hundreds injured. Amnesty International said the blackout is intended to hide "grave human rights violations," while warning of excessive and lethal force used against largely peaceful demonstrators.

Iran's Supreme Leader responded on Friday with his first public remarks since the protests intensified, branding demonstrators as "vandals" and "saboteurs." In a televised speech, Khamenei accused President Trump of having "blood-stained hands," referencing US-backed military actions against Iran, and vowed that the Islamic Republic would

not retreat.

Iranian officials have accused the US and Israel of inciting violence, claims dismissed by Washington as baseless. Meanwhile, judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei warned that punishment for "rioters" would be severe and uncompromising.

International condemnation has grown. Foreign ministers from Australia, Canada, and the European Union called on Iran to immediately halt the use of lethal force, while leaders of France, the UK, and Germany urged restraint. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi warned that the blackout could be a prelude to mass violence.

State media, however, aired images of pro-government counter-protests, underscoring the deep divisions as Iran faces mounting unrest and international scrutiny.



# Sebi Proposes Major Overhaul of Trading Rules to Simplify Framework and Ease Compliance

Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on Friday proposed a sweeping revamp of the trading framework at stock exchanges, aimed at simplifying regulations, eliminating duplication, and easing the compliance burden on market participants. The move is part of Sebi's broader effort to promote ease of doing business across all exchanges, including those dealing in commodity derivatives.

In a consultation paper, Sebi suggested consolidating several overlapping and fragmented trading-related rules into a single, unified framework applicable to both equity and commodity segments. The regulator proposed merging provisions related to trading norms, price bands, circuit breakers, bulk and block deal disclosures, call auction mechanisms, liquidity enhancement schemes, margin trading facility (MTF), unique client code (UCC), PAN requirements, trading hours, and daily price limits.

To reduce regulatory overlap, Sebi recommended that provisions specifically relevant to clearing corporations be separated and housed in a dedicated master circular. This would clearly distinguish the roles and responsibilities of stock exchanges and clearing corporations.

In a bid to enhance transparency and reduce manual compliance, the regulator proposed merging bulk and block deal disclosures and shifting reporting to the client PAN level instead of the UCC level. Sebi also suggested presenting market-wide circuit breaker rules, dynamic price band flexing, IPO price bands, and call auction procedures in a simplified tab-



ular format, while removing outdated or repetitive operational examples.

The regulator further proposed rationalising norms for the margin trading facility, including increasing the minimum net worth requirement for brokers from the current Rs 3 crore to Rs 5 crore or a higher threshold as specified by exchanges. Timelines for submitting net worth and auditor certificates would be aligned with standard financial reporting cycles, and redundant due diligence provisions would be removed.

Obsolete market-making provisions in the cash segment are proposed to be scrapped and merged into a principle-based Liquidity Enhancement Scheme (LES) framework, which would uniformly cover

equities, derivatives, and commodities. Under the revised framework, exchanges would have greater flexibility in designing liquidity schemes, offering incentives, and conducting half-yearly board reviews, with higher incentive caps for new exchanges or new market segments.

Sebi has also proposed eliminating several outdated provisions, including negotiated deal exemptions, guidelines for dedicated debt segments, forward contracts in commodities, MOU-based trading, and unnecessary reporting requirements. Trading hours across all market segments—equity, derivatives, commodities, currency, RFQ, EGR, and the Social Stock Exchange—would be consolidated into a single section.

Client Code Modification

rules would be liberalised to allow genuine corrections, permit PAN-linked multiple UCCs for specified client categories, ease obligation transfers among FPI family accounts, increase waiver frequency to once a month, and discontinue quarterly waiver reporting to Sebi. Penalties would be harmonised between exchanges and clearing corporations.

Short-selling and securities lending and borrowing provisions would be clarified and integrated into the main framework, with mandatory daily disclosures. Commodity-specific disclosures, UPI-based secondary market trading with blocked funds, and other updates would also be incorporated. Sebi has invited public comments on the proposals until January 30.

# Wall Street Hits Record Highs as Broad Risk Rally Signals Renewed Confidence in US Economic Momentum

US equity markets kicked off 2026 on a powerful note, with stocks closing at record highs amid growing optimism about the strength and direction of the American economy. The rally, which unfolded during the first full trading week of the year, has been driven by improving economic data, rising productivity, and easing inflation concerns—

together creating a favorable environment for risk-taking across asset classes. Wall Street's appetite for risk has broadened well beyond last year's narrow leadership by technology megacaps. A synchronized rally is now visible across equities, credit, commodities, and even speculative corners of the market. Small-cap stocks, high-yield bonds, meme stocks, and industrial-linked assets have all surged, suggesting investors are positioning for an economic upswing rather than hiding in defensive plays.

There was no single catalyst behind the rally. Instead, a steady stream of better-than-expected data has reinforced confidence that growth is stabilizing and potentially improving. Strategists at firms such as Nomura Securities International point to resilient employment conditions, rising shipping rates, and firm demand in the auto sector as signs that the economy is regaining momentum. This has encouraged investors to rotate out of safe-haven trades and high-flying technology giants into cyclical sectors that typically outperform in the early stages of economic expansion.

Markets advanced even in the absence of clarity on major policy uncertainties, including the future of Trump-era tariffs and the Federal Reserve's next interest-rate move. Industrial stocks posted strong gains, metal prices climbed, and demand for semiconductors remained robust—particularly chips used in automobiles, appliances, and industrial machinery—underscoring the breadth of economic activity.

Policy developments in Washington also added fuel to the rally. President Donald Trump announced new measures aimed at supporting the housing market, injecting fresh momentum into credit-sensitive and real estate-related sectors that were already performing well. According to Julie Biel, portfolio manager at Kayne Anderson Rudnick, the



scale of fiscal and monetary support means investors cannot afford to remain overly defensive. "There's too much sugar coming into the economy," she said.

Still, not everyone is convinced the enthusiasm is perfectly timed. The S&P 500 is now nearly double its level from three years ago, and some strategists see signs of speculative excess. Michael O'Rourke, chief market strategist at JonesTrading, argued that markets appear overly reactive to marginal developments. He cited instances where individual stocks surged 10% or more on relatively minor news, such as executive meetings with political leaders or reiterations of existing policy themes. To him, the speed and intensity of these moves suggest a market driven as much by sentiment as by fundamentals.

The hunger for risk has been unmistakable. The S&P 500 gained 1.6% for the week, while the Russell 2000, a benchmark for small-cap stocks, jumped 4.6%. The Vanguard S&P 500 ETF attracted nearly \$10 billion in inflows in just a few days, an unusually rapid pace for a passive investment vehicle. A meme-stock-focused ETF soared almost 15%, while a basket of heavily shorted stocks advanced 7%, reflecting renewed enthusiasm for speculative trades.

Credit markets have echoed this optimism. Spreads on junk bonds tightened by around 10 basis points, lowering borrowing costs and encouraging new cor-

porate debt issuance. Even meprecins—often seen as a barometer of speculative fervor—have rebounded after their sharp declines last year.

Some investors argue the broadening rally is justified. Sameer Samana, head of global equities and real assets at Wells Fargo Investment Institute, said improving data across sectors and regions supports the shift toward riskier assets, though he cautioned against venturing too far down the market-cap spectrum.

Rather than relying solely on a handful of technology behemoths, investors are increasingly betting on real economic strength. Industrial production is showing signs of recovery, while December car sales exceeded expectations despite shrinking dealership inventories and fewer discounts—signals of resilient consumer demand. The US services sector expanded at its fastest pace in more than a year in December, defying softer readings elsewhere in the global economy.

Productivity has also emerged as a key positive. Labor productivity rose at its fastest rate in two years, helping to offset wage pressures and contain employment costs. In the semiconductor sector, long viewed as a proxy for industrial demand, Microchip Technology raised its outlook after reporting stronger-than-expected sales tied to the physical economy.

According to Nathan Thooft,

chief investment officer at Manulife Investment Management, accommodative monetary policy and robust fiscal support continue to provide a favorable backdrop. He expects economic activity to strengthen further in the second quarter of 2026 and beyond, driven by the lagged effects of monetary stimulus, fiscal measures, and tax refunds boosting lower-income households.

Friday's employment report added another layer of nuance. While it triggered fresh buying in equities, the data itself was mixed. Nonfarm payrolls increased by just 50,000, falling short of expectations, and previous months were revised lower. The unemployment rate edged down to 4.4% following the end of a prolonged government shutdown. For some investors, the report suggests stability rather than acceleration.

Priya Misra, a portfolio manager at JPMorgan Asset Management, said she would stop short of calling the current environment a growth re-acceleration. However, she noted that GDP growth of 2-3% combined with a stable labor market would still be supportive for equities.

For now, markets appear content to focus on improving fundamentals, abundant liquidity, and a policy environment that continues to favor risk. Whether the rally proves durable or overheated remains an open question—but the year has begun with unmistakable confidence.

# US Tariff Uncertainty Clouds India-US Trade Deal Hopes, Fund Managers Urge Long-Term Focus



The US Supreme Court on Friday did not deliver a ruling on the legality of former President Donald Trump's sweeping tariff regime, extending uncertainty over whether existing tariffs will remain in place or be struck down following legal challenges. Adding to the unease, proposed legislation currently under discussion in the United States includes provisions for punitive tariffs of up to 500 per cent, a move that could significantly hurt Indian exports if implemented.

Against this backdrop, expectations around the timing of an India-US trade agreement have weakened. Fund managers say the likelihood of a near-term deal has diminished, and even if an agreement is delayed or announced unexpectedly, it may not have a meaningful impact on Indian equity markets.

Speaking at the CFA Society's India Investment Conference on Friday, WhiteOak Capital founder Prashant Khemka said he had been optimistic about a trade deal until a few months ago, based on public statements and developments at the time. However, he noted that the probability of a deal being concluded soon now appears to be falling. "At this point, from whatever little I know, I'd be happy if it happens within this calendar year," he remarked.

Khemka also pointed to the legal uncertainty surrounding US tariffs, observing that the Supreme Court appears cautious about executive overreach. While some tariffs could eventually be challenged or moderated, he cautioned investors against assuming that any rollback would automatically trigger a positive market reaction, given broader

macroeconomic and liquidity considerations. He acknowledged that certain sectors, particularly textiles, remain under significant pressure and would benefit from a resolution.

Other fund managers noted that markets have so far shown limited sensitivity to tariff-related developments. Addressing investment opportunities amid ongoing trade tensions, Carnelian Capital's Vikas Khemani stressed the importance of focusing on individual companies rather than entire sectors. "In every sector that we don't like, there are companies that we like, and vice versa," he said, adding that the macro impact of trade tensions remains limited. He pointed out that US exports account for less than 2 per cent of GDP, a figure India adds in growth within a single quarter.

Beyond tariffs, fund managers highlighted a deeper shift in the global economic order. HDFC AMC's Chirag Setalvad said the issue extends beyond trade barriers, noting that countries are increasingly prioritising self-interest over global integration. "We are no longer in a phase of globalisation," he said, adding that even if tariffs are resolved, new concerns are likely to emerge.

Khemka concluded that sharp market corrections typically occur only when there is widespread economic distress. Rather than reacting to headline-driven trade developments, fund managers advised investors to stay focused on long-term fundamentals, invest systematically, and take advantage of opportunities that arise during periods of crisis.

# Walmart to Join Nasdaq 100, Replacing AstraZeneca After Historic Listing Switch



Walmart Inc. is set to join the Nasdaq 100 Index, replacing pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca Plc, according to an announcement by Nasdaq Global Indices on Friday. The change will take effect before the US market opens on January 20, with markets closed on January 19 for a public holiday.

Walmart's inclusion follows its landmark decision last year to shift its stock listing from the New York Stock Exchange to the Nasdaq, marking the largest exchange transfer in US market history. The move paved the way for the retail behemoth's entry into the Nasdaq 100, which tracks the largest non-financial companies listed on the exchange.

Analysts at Jefferies Financial Group Inc. estimated in December that Walmart's addition to the benchmark could trigger close to \$19 billion in inflows, as index-tracking funds and exchange-traded products rebalance their portfolios to reflect the new composition. Although Walmart had been widely expected to enter the index during Nasdaq's annual December reconstitution, the timing of its listing switch meant it missed the cutoff used for compiling market data, delaying its inclusion.

Based in Bentonville, Arkansas, Walmart has seen its market capitalisation surge to nearly \$1 trillion, driven by consistent sales growth and rising market share as consumers increasingly turn to lower-priced essentials. The company has also made significant progress in its digital transformation. Its US e-commerce business is expected to turn profitable this year, supported by strong growth in advertising, third-party marketplace services and membership programs.

Beyond retail expansion, Walmart has been ramping up its use of artificial intelligence across internal operations, including workforce scheduling and supply-chain optimisation. The company has also begun rolling out AI-powered tools for shoppers, developed in partnership with OpenAI, as it looks to enhance customer experience and efficiency.

Walmart's stock performance has been equally striking. The shares have delivered a total return of about 146% over the past three years, far outpacing AstraZeneca's 42% gain over the same period.

For AstraZeneca, the removal from the Nasdaq 100 reflects a longer-term retreat from its pandemic-era highs. The drugmaker was added to the index when its Covid-19 vaccine drove a surge in revenue and investor interest. Since then, shares have lagged as vaccine-related sales declined and market attention shifted toward obesity and weight-loss treatments being developed by rival pharmaceutical companies.

The Nasdaq 100 underpins hundreds of billions of dollars in investment products worldwide. As of December 2025, more than \$600 billion in assets tracked the index through exchange-traded funds, according to Nasdaq, including the \$408 billion Invesco QQQ Trust Series 1.

The index itself posted a strong performance in 2025, rising about 21% on a total-return basis. That outpaced gains of roughly 18% for the S&P 500 and 16% for the Dow Jones Industrial Average, underscoring the continued strength of large-cap growth and technology-oriented companies listed on the Nasdaq.



## Mumbai Local Train Ride Turns Emotional as Woman Reunites With School Teacher After 10 Years



What began as an ordinary commute on a Mumbai local train turned into a deeply emotional and heartwarming moment when a woman unexpectedly reunited with her former school teacher after a decade. The chance encounter, captured on video and later shared on Instagram, has since gone viral, winning over viewers with its simplicity, nostalgia, and quiet display of pride and affection.

The video was shared by Krupaya Rahate, who documented the special moment as she sat beside her school teacher in a crowded local train compartment. Despite the years that had passed, their conversation flowed effortlessly, reflecting the bond they once shared in the classroom. The casual exchange made it seem as though their school days were not far behind, highlighting the timeless connection between a teacher and a student.

In the clip, Rahate can be seen updating her teacher about her professional journey. She explains that she is currently working for an American trader, but that the role is coming to an end as it is her last month with the company. She also shares her plans to begin something of her own, signaling a new chapter in her career. Throughout the conversation, her teacher listens with genuine interest, her expressions reflecting pride and happiness at seeing her former student grow and succeed.

One of the most touching moments in the video occurs when the teacher, visibly moved, leans over and gives Rahate a warm hug while they remain seated in the train. The simple gesture speaks volumes, conveying encouragement, approval, and affection without the need for words. It is a moment that resonated strongly with viewers who understand the emotional significance of making one's teachers proud.

Rahate accompanied the video with a heartfelt caption that further amplified its impact. She wrote about meeting her once-strict school teacher after ten years and noted how her facial expressions revealed happiness and pride. Rahate also reflected on how small milestones and moments of success can carry deep emotional meaning, especially when shared with those who played a role in shaping one's journey.

As the video spread across social media, it drew warm reactions from users who found the reunion both touching and relatable. Some commented that the teacher had taught them as well, while others expressed pride and admiration for the moment. Many viewers were reminded of their own teachers and the lasting influence they have long after school ends.

In a fast-paced city and an even faster digital world, this quiet train-side reunion stood out as a reminder of gratitude, growth, and the enduring bonds formed in classrooms.

## Bengaluru IT Park Mistaken for 'New York' in Viral Video Sparks Debate on Urban Infrastructure



A Bengaluru-based content creator recently grabbed widespread attention on Instagram after sharing a humorous yet thoughtful video comparing a local IT park to New York City. The creator, Sagar Sonawane, used satire to highlight the quality of urban infrastructure in parts of Bengaluru, sparking conversation about walkable cities and workplace environments across India.

In the viral clip, Sonawane appears dressed in business formal attire and wearing his official Cognizant ID badge, creating the impression that he is heading to work at an international tech hub. Speaking in Marathi, he jokingly tells viewers that he is working from New York's IT park. As the camera pans around, he showcases a sleek foot overbridge equipped with escalators, pointing out how pedestrians can cross busy roads without having to battle traffic.

He further draws attention to the well-maintained surroundings, emphasising the greenery, clean pathways, and organised layout of the area. According to Sonawane, these features make daily commuting smoother and safer for employees. "Guys, I am in New York's IT park. To cross the roads, they have escalators. Look at the roads and the greenery," he says in the video, before delivering the punchline: "This is not New York. This is Bengaluru."

While the tone of the video is lighthearted, it also carries a subtle message. Sonawane goes on to question when similar pedestrian-friendly infrastructure will become common in Pune, another major IT and commercial hub in India. His remark resonated with many viewers who often compare the quality of urban planning across Indian cities.

The video quickly gained traction online, crossing 1.47 lakh views and attracting hundreds of comments. Social media users expressed admiration for Bengaluru's infrastructure and shared their own experiences. One user pointed out that the location featured in the video is Manvata Tech Park, noting that it was built nearly 18 years ago. Another commented that greenery combined with walkable roads significantly improves everyday work life.

The discussion also took a more serious turn when some users argued that such facilities exist only within gated IT parks. Responding to this, Sonawane agreed but stressed that basic infrastructure should not be a privilege limited to private campuses. He wrote that having a "gate" should not be a requirement for decent footpaths, safe crossings, and green surroundings.

He further added that every taxpayer and employee deserves a safe, accessible, and walkable work environment, whether they work in a government industrial area or a privately developed tech park. Through humour and relatable observation, Sonawane's video not only entertained viewers but also reignited an important conversation about inclusive urban planning and the need for better pedestrian infrastructure across Indian cities.

## Viral Video Shows Swift Forest Team Action Safely Guiding Elephant Herd Away from Village

Elephants are among the most intelligent and socially complex animals on the planet, living in close-knit herds led by experienced matriarchs who guide them using generations of inherited knowledge. These leaders remember ancient migration routes that ensure access to food, water, and safety. However, with rapid urbanisation and the steady expansion of human settlements, many of these traditional elephant corridors now pass through villages, farms, and plantations. This overlap has led to a rise in human-elephant conflict, often resulting in damage, fear, and sometimes tragic outcomes. Amid these challenges, a recently viral video has offered a hopeful example of how such encounters can be handled calmly and effectively.

The video, shared by Indian Forest Services (IFS) officer Parveen Kaswan on social media, captures an elephant herd assembling in a tea garden during the evening hours. The animals appeared to be preparing to move forward, potentially towards a nearby village. Thanks to constant camera surveillance in the area, the control room detected the herd's movement at around 9:20 pm and immediately alerted forest officials stationed nearby.

In his caption, Kaswan explained the swift chain of events: the control room spotted the elephants gathering, sent an alert to the nearest response team, and within minutes, forest officials reached the location to intervene. The footage shows six forest department personnel arriving in a mini truck and carefully guiding the elephants away from the tea garden and back into the forest, ensuring safety for both the animals and local residents.

Kaswan noted that such situations are not unusual. Vigil teams monitor vulnerable areas every night to track elephant movements and prevent potential accidents or confrontations. While many interventions go unnoticed, some, like this one, are captured on camera and shared widely, offering insight into the behind-the-scenes efforts of forest officials.

As the video circulated online, it drew widespread praise from social media users who applauded the team's quick and effective response. Many expressed gratitude for the officials' dedication, highlighting how rare it is to see wildlife conflicts resolved without harm. Comments poured in commending the calm handling of the situation, with users noting their relief that no villagers, elephants, or team members were injured.

Some viewers also suggested that integrating advanced technologies, such as AI-based recognition systems and multi-channel alert mechanisms, could further improve response times and reduce risks. Overall, the viral video has sparked positive conversation, showcasing how vigilance, coordination, and compassion can play a crucial role in managing human-wildlife coexistence in an increasingly shared landscape.



## Life Comes Full Circle: Bombay Shaving Company Founder's Emotional Post on Father Visiting His Office Wins Hearts Online

Shantanu Deshpande, founder and CEO of Bombay Shaving Company, recently shared a deeply emotional and relatable moment on social media that struck a chord with audiences across platforms. In a touching Instagram post, Deshpande reflected on how life had come full circle for him, as his father visited the company's new office and experienced firsthand the world his son has built.

The video shared by Deshpande shows his father quietly walking through the office premises, observing employees at work across different departments. His expressions reflect a mix of curiosity, pride, and gentle wonder as he takes in the bustling workspace. Without saying much, his calm presence and attentive gaze captured a powerful, unspoken emotion that resonated with viewers.

Accompanying the video was a heartfelt caption in which Deshpande revisited his own childhood memories. He recalled how visiting his father's office as a young boy used to be a special and exciting event. At the time, he was fascinated by the large computers, important meetings, and the intelligent people who filled the workplace. Though he didn't fully understand what his father or his colleagues did, Deshpande remembered being deeply impressed by the seriousness and purpose that surrounded their work.

He wrote about how, back then, work symbolised responsibility, discipline, and dedication—values he subconsciously absorbed while watching his father. Those early experiences, he suggested, played a significant role in shaping his own professional journey, even if he didn't realise it at the time.

Reflecting on the present, Deshpande noted how roles and responsibilities have now reversed. Today, it is his father who visits his office with the same innocent curiosity he once had as a child. He shared that his father eagerly asked questions about modern business concepts such as direct-to-consumer (D2C) models, performance marketing, design thinking, consumer insights, quick commerce economics, and artificial intelligence. The founder added that his father appeared genuinely happy and proud while exploring the new office space.

The post quickly gained traction on social media, with users praising its honesty and emotional depth. Many commented on how the video stirred strong feelings, with one user writing, "Videos like this make me so emotional always." Another called it "so inspiring," while others described the moment as "wholesome" and deeply meaningful.

In an age dominated by fast-paced content, Deshpande's post stood out for its simplicity and sincerity, reminding people of the quiet pride parents feel and the invisible influence they have on their children's journeys.



## Delhi Auto Driver's Simple Act of Kindness Leaves Internet Emotional, Restores Faith in Humanity

Kindness and empathy often reveal themselves in the smallest, most unexpected moments, reminding us of the humanity that binds people together. Such qualities help build trust, compassion, and a sense of belonging—especially in large, fast-paced cities where daily life can feel rushed and impersonal. Recently, one such moment of quiet generosity captured the attention of social media users after a Delhi man shared a heartwarming experience involving an autorickshaw driver.

The story was posted on Reddit under the title "Kind of crazy, wholesome story" and quickly went viral for its emotional simplicity. The man recalled how he had been trying to book a cab late in the evening when his phone battery was critically low. Unable to secure a ride, he eventually found an autorickshaw, and the driver agreed to take him to his destination using the meter.

Halfway through the journey, the man realised he was in trouble. He had no cash in his wallet—not even a few rupees. Relieved at first, he assumed he could make a digital payment using PhonePe. However, fate had other plans. As soon as they reached his drop location, he pulled out his phone to scan the driver's QR code, only for the device to shut down completely.

"My heart literally sank," the man wrote, describing the panic he felt while standing outside his colony gate in the cold, with no working phone and no way to pay the fare. Nervously, he explained the situation to the driver and offered to go home to get the cash, expecting irritation or suspicion in return.

Instead, the autorickshaw driver responded with surprising warmth. Smiling calmly, he reassured the man, saying, "Arre koi nahi bhai, aap ghar jao, thand ho rahi hai" (It's okay, brother. You go home, it's cold). Despite the passenger insisting on paying, the driver simply started his vehicle and told him not to worry about the Rs 150 fare.

The driver added that if they ever met again, the man could pay him then—or better yet, pass on the kindness by helping someone else. The gesture left the passenger feeling both guilty and deeply touched. Reflecting on the moment, he wrote that in a city where people often argue over small amounts of change, this man chose compassion over money.

As the post gained traction, users across social media praised the autorickshaw driver's generosity. Many called the incident heartwarming and hopeful, with one user writing, "Some people don't have much, yet give the most." Others said the story made them smile and restored their faith in everyday kindness, proving that empathy still thrives in unexpected corners of city life.





# India Take on New Zealand in Vadodara for 1st ODI, Kohli, Rohit, and Gill Back in Action

India will take on New Zealand in the first match of a three-game ODI series in Vadodara, with several senior players returning to action. Veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are back in the squad and could feature in India colors for the last time until July, as this series serves as the team's final ODI assignment before the T20 World Cup and the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL). The series also marks the return of Shubman Gill as India's ODI captain, following his omission from the T20 World Cup squad.

On the eve of the match, Kohli and Rohit spent nearly 90 minutes in net practice against Indian pacers, spinners, and throwdown specialists, fine-tuning their batting skills. Kohli, coming off two strong performances in the Vijay Hazare Trophy where he scored 77 and 131 runs, faced variable bounce from throwdowns and spinners, testing his timing and technique. Notably, other key players like Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant, and pacer Mohammed Siraj did not participate in the session, having recently played for their respective state sides in the Vijay Hazare Trophy on



## Thursday. IND vs NZ 1st ODI – Predicted Playing XI

India: Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill (c), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer (vc), KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Harshit Rana, Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh

Key player to watch: Yashasvi Jaiswal may miss out to accommodate Shubman Gill, with India likely retaining both KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant to strengthen the middle or-

der. This could be unfortunate for Jaiswal, who scored his maiden ODI century in his previous match.

## IND vs NZ – ODI Head-to-Head

- Matches played: 120
- India wins: 62
- New Zealand wins: 50
- No result: 7
- Tied: 1

## Squads

India: Shubman Gill (c), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (wk), Shreyas

Iyer (vc), Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit Rana, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Arshdeep Singh, Yashasvi Jaiswal.

New Zealand: Michael Bracewell (c), Adi Ashok, Kristian Clarke, Josh Clarkson, Devon Conway (wk), Zak Foulkes, Mitch Hay (wk), Kyle Jamieson, Nick Kelly, Jayden Lennox, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Glenn Phillips, Michael Rae, Will Young.

## India vs New Zealand 1st ODI – Live Streaming and Telecast

The opening ODI between India and New Zealand will be streamed live on the JioHotstar app and website and televised on Star Sports network starting at 1:30 PM IST on Sunday.

This first clash in Vadodara promises to be exciting, with India looking to assert dominance at home before the T20 World Cup while New Zealand aims to make an early statement on foreign soil.

# Boxers, Coaches Left Stranded in Cold as BFI Fails to Arrange Accommodation at Elite Nationals

Boxers, coaches and support staff from several states were left stranded in the cold on Friday night after being abruptly asked to vacate their accommodation during the ongoing Elite National Boxing Championships in Greater Noida. The incident unfolded after teams returned from the penultimate day of competition, triggering widespread anger and embarrassment for the Boxing Federation of India (BFI).

Multiple contingents reported that their luggage had been moved outside their rooms at hostels and lodges where they were staying, with authorities informing them that the bookings were valid only until Friday. As a result, athletes and officials were forced to look for alternative arrangements late in the evening, with temperatures hovering between 6 and 7 degrees Celsius.

Teams from Telangana, Kerala, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh were



among those affected. Several officials said they were caught completely off guard by the situation, especially after a long day that featured around 40 semifinal bouts.

"This happened around 7:30 pm when we returned from the venue," said a coach, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Players and staff were told to vacate immediately, saying the rooms were booked only till today. We were left standing outside with no clarity on where to go next."

Another coach pointed out that the disruption was particularly distressing for athletes who were scheduled to compete in finals the following day. "We have a boxer in the final tomorrow. This kind of uncertainty at such a crucial stage is unacceptable. Something similar happened the previous night as well, though not at this scale," the coach said.

The situation placed the BFI in an awkward position. Federation officials were initially unreachable, but later issued a state-

ment claiming that remedial measures had been taken. According to the BFI, affected athletes were shifted to a nearby facility at Gautam Buddha University, where temporary sleeping arrangements were made.

"Immediate steps have been taken to ensure accommodation at the nearest facility, and the federation is closely monitoring the situation," the statement read. However, several teams said the solution came only after they had spent hours in the

cold, and some contingents were still awaiting proper accommodation at the time of reporting.

Officials also questioned how such a lapse could occur when the tournament prospectus clearly states that free lodging and boarding would be provided to boxers and officials for the duration of the event. "It is the basic responsibility of the organisers to ensure accommodation throughout the tournament. Our biggest concern right now is the well-being of the boxers," a team official said.

The championships, being held at Gautam Buddha University, were originally scheduled from December 30 to January 7 but were postponed to January 4-10 due to poor air quality in the National Capital Region. The event has already faced multiple controversies, including a five-hour delay on the opening day because of logistical issues and allegations of biased refereeing.

# Shubman Gill Respects T20 World Cup Omission, Stresses Need for Red-Ball Preparation

India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill has expressed his respect for the selectors' decision to leave him out of the T20 World Cup squad last month, while also reflecting on his focus and priorities as he prepares to lead the team in the ongoing ODI series against New Zealand. The 26-year-old, who was appointed T20I vice-captain in August, was omitted from the 15-member squad, with Axar Patel reinstated as deputy to Suryakumar Yadav.

"I respect the selectors' decision. All the best to the team for the T20 World Cup. I am where I have to be, and whatever is written in my destiny, no one can take that from me," Gill told reporters ahead of India's first ODI against New Zealand. "A player always believes he will try his best for the country, and the selectors have taken their decision."

Gill, who took over as In-



dia's ODI captain in October, has been sidelined since mid-November due to a neck injury sustained during the Test series against South Africa. Speaking about the experience of being out of action, he admitted it was frustrating to watch the team play while being unable to contribute.

"Never easy, especially whenever you get injured, watching your team play and feeling like you are missing out on all those games, particularly when you have just been named the captain," he said. "There are so many things you want to do, and when you're unable to, it is definitely frustrating. But at

the same time, you have to focus on what you can do in that moment and build on it."

The right-handed batter also highlighted the need for more preparation in red-ball cricket, particularly when transitioning from white-ball formats. He noted that in the last two Test series, India had

limited time to prepare, making it challenging to perform consistently across conditions.

"One of the suggestions I was very keen on is to have more preparation for red-ball cricket. It's not easy playing in India and then in another country shortly after," Gill explained. "Even if we had won the series against South Africa, it wouldn't have made a huge difference because preparation is key to winning Test matches worldwide. We didn't have enough time to prepare after Australia or the Asia Cup and West Indies series."

Gill emphasized that proper preparation, especially when switching formats, is essential for consistent performance. "This is something we'll take action on and keep in mind for future red-ball series," he said, underlining his commitment to ensuring the team is ready for challenges across formats.

# Tamil Nadu Dragons Stay Unbeaten at Home After Thrilling 4-4 Draw and Shootout Win Over SG Pipers



Tamil Nadu Dragons completed their home leg of the season unbeaten, securing one outright win and two shootout bonus points after a thrilling 4-4 draw against SG Pipers at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai on Friday. The Dragons edged past the Pipers in the shootout to maintain their perfect record, while SG Pipers remain winless in outright matches since last season.

A flurry of goals marked the high-octane encounter, with Amit Rohidas (9'), Tom Craig (18'), Paul Philipp Kaufmann (17'), and Selvaraj Kanagaraj (40') scoring for the Dragons. For the Pipers, Tomas Domene (13', 18'), Ky Willott (38'), and Aditya Lalage (59') found the net, keeping the match balanced throughout.

The game began with Rohidas converting a low hit from a penalty corner to give the Dragons the lead. A minute later, the home side appeared to extend their advantage, but the goal was overturned after a successful review by the Pipers. Domene quickly equalized, ending the first quarter at 1-1.

The second quarter delivered instant drama, with three goals in just two minutes. Kaufmann restored the Dragons' lead with a spectacular diving effort, only for Domene to convert a penalty stroke moments later to level the score again. Craig then struck from a

penalty corner to give the Dragons a 3-2 advantage heading into the half.

The third quarter saw the Pipers exploit counter-attacking opportunities, with Willott converting a penalty corner in the 38th minute to make it 3-3. The Dragons regained the lead through Selvaraj's precise deflection from a long ball. In the dying minutes, Pipers removed their goalkeeper in favor of an extra outfield player, and Aditya Lalage scored a brilliant goal to force a shootout.

In the shootout, SG Pipers converted four of their five attempts, all from penalty strokes awarded due to repeated fouls by Dragons' goalkeeper Prince Deep Singh. However, Singh made the decisive save that secured victory for the home side.

Earlier in the day, Soorma Hockey Club earned their first points of the season with a 3-1 shootout win over Hyderabad Toofans, following a 1-1 draw in regulation. Captain Harmanpreet Singh (20') and Amandeep Lakra (46') scored during regulation, helping set up the shootout triumph.

The Tamil Nadu Dragons' unbeaten home performance highlighted their attacking prowess and resilience under pressure, while SG Pipers continue to seek their first outright victory of the season.

# From Backup to Key All-Rounder: Axar Patel Credits MS Dhoni for Boosting Batting Confidence



Axar Patel has transformed from being viewed as a spinner who could bat into a senior all-rounder, particularly in T20 Internationals, where he has recently been promoted as high as No. 3 in the batting order. The 31-year-old credits legendary former India captain MS Dhoni, under whom he began his international career, for helping him change his mindset toward batting.

"I started as a batter but became a full-time spinner when I reached the NCA. In my early days, I didn't do well with the bat and started doubting myself," Axar told Times of India. "When I got dropped in 2018, I worked very hard on my batting. During the 2021 T20 World Cup, when MS Dhoni was the team mentor, he told me that in my earlier days, under his captaincy, I put too much pressure on myself, thinking I had to perform all the time, instead of simply believing I was a capable batter. Slowly, I started implementing what Mahi bhai had told me and regained my confidence."

Axar's batting prowess was on full display in the final of the 2024 T20 World Cup, India, struggling at 34 for 3 inside the first five overs,

where he was steadied by a 72-run partnership off 54 balls between Axar and Virat Kohli. Although he was slightly expensive with the ball, Axar took a crucial wicket, contributing significantly to India's remarkable victory. "After the T20 WC final, I never thought I would be dropped again," he said.

India's flexible batting approach has seen Axar occupy various positions in the order. However, in recent matches, he has been trusted more often in and around the top order, a role that emphasizes stability rather than just acceleration. "If I've been sent up the order, it means the team trusts me and believes I have the talent to perform this role. When I go out to bat, I don't think of myself as a floater. The team management doesn't send me just to blindly accelerate the scoring or handle a tough spell. I am given a role like any other specialist batter," Axar explained.

With his evolving role and newfound confidence, Axar Patel has cemented himself as a key all-rounder in India's T20I setup, blending the responsibility of stabilizing the innings with his proven skills as a spinner.



Vishnu Manchu Launches 100% Sports Scholarships at MBU & SVIS, Aims to Nurture India’s Future Olympians



In a move that could redefine India’s sporting landscape, renowned actor and MAA President Vishnu Manchu has announced a pioneering initiative: 100% sports scholarships at Mohan Babu University (MBU) and Sree Vidyaniketan International School (SVIS). The program, set to commence in the 2026-27 academic year, seeks to identify and nurture young athletes with exceptional potential, providing them with world-class support to excel in sports.

The scholarship program will initially focus on three major disciplines: Cricket, Basketball, and Badminton. Selected students will receive comprehensive assistance, covering not just tuition fees but also professional coaching, nutrition, access to high-end training facilities, and accommodation. The institutions plan to col-

laborate with top-tier coaches from India and abroad, ensuring athletes receive guidance on par with international standards.

Speaking about the initiative, Vishnu Manchu explained that the idea is rooted in a personal vision to contribute meaningfully to India’s sporting future. “Many talented children lose out on opportunities due to financial constraints, lack of mentorship, or inadequate infrastructure. Through this scholarship program, we aim to remove all such barriers and create a structured ecosystem where young athletes can thrive,” he said.

Vishnu further highlighted the long-term ambition behind this initiative, noting that India is gearing up for a bid to host the 2036 Olympics. “Our vision is to see athletes from MBU and SVIS

representing India on the Olympic stage. This is not just about nurturing talent; it’s about building a legacy of sports excellence from the grassroots level,” he added.

The scholarship program represents a significant step toward fostering India’s next generation of sporting stars. By integrating academic and athletic development, Vishnu Manchu’s initiative provides a platform where young talent can balance education with intensive sports training.

Parents and aspiring athletes interested in the scholarships can reach out for more details at: sports@mbu.asia.

With this ambitious move, Vishnu Manchu is not only cementing his role as a champion of Indian cinema but also emerging as a visionary in shaping the nation’s future Olympians.

Mahesh Babu Unveils First Look of Nephew Jaya Krishna From Srinivasa Mangapuram



Superstar Mahesh Babu has unveiled the highly anticipated first look of Srinivasa Mangapuram, marking the debut of his nephew Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni. The announcement has already created a buzz across the Telugu film industry, with fans eager to see the latest addition to the Ghattamaneni legacy step onto the big screen.

The first look poster presents Jaya Krishna in a rugged and stylish avatar, holding a gun while riding a motorcycle. The intense action-packed vibe of the poster hints at a thrilling drama, capturing the attention of audiences and industry insiders alike.

Jaya Krishna, grandson of the legendary actor Superstar Krishna and son of the late Ramesh Babu, carries forward his family’s cinematic legacy. Expectations are high for his performance, and the de-

but is being seen as one of the most awaited in Tollywood this year.

The film is directed by acclaimed filmmaker Ajay Bhupathi, known for his successful and high-octane films, and also stars Rasha Thadani, daughter of Bollywood icon Raveena Tandon, in her Telugu debut opposite Jaya Krishna. The pairing of these fresh faces promises to bring a mix of energy and charm to the screen.

Produced by P. Kiran under the Chandamama Kathalu banner and presented by veteran producer C. Ashwini Dutt of Vyjayanthi Movies, the film boasts a strong production team. Music is composed by GV Prakash Kumar, adding to the anticipation around the film’s soundtrack and overall presentation.

Mahesh Babu shared the first look with a heartfelt message wishing his nephew and the entire

team success, calling it a “strong start” and highlighting the collaborative effort behind the project. His support has added to the excitement and goodwill surrounding the debut.

The film has been shot across varied locations, with significant portions of production already completed. The makers are targeting a 2026 release, and insiders suggest that the timing may coincide with celebrations honoring the legacy of Superstar Krishna.

With its combination of cinematic legacy, talented new faces, and high-octane visuals, Srinivasa Mangapuram is being positioned as one of the most anticipated films in Tollywood for 2026. Fans are eagerly awaiting teasers, trailers, and music releases as the countdown begins for Jaya Krishna’s much-anticipated entry into the film industry.

Rebel Star Prabhas’The Raja Saab Opens to a Massive ₹112 Crore Worldwide Gross on Day One

Rebel Star Prabhas has once again demonstrated his formidable box-office pull with the grand opening of his latest film, The Raja Saab. Released worldwide on Friday, the much-anticipated horror-fantasy entertainer stormed cinemas with an extraordinary response, collecting a staggering ₹112 crore gross on its very first day. The sensational opening has positioned The Raja Saab as the highest opener in the horror-fantasy genre, setting a new benchmark for films in this space.

From early morning shows to late-night screenings, theatres across India and overseas reported packed houses, celebratory fan shows, and an electrifying atmosphere. Trade analysts attribute the massive opening to Prabhas’ pan-Indian stardom, strong pre-release buzz, and the film’s intriguing genre combination, which stands apart from conventional commercial entertainers. The unique mix of horror and fanta-

sy has clearly resonated with a wide spectrum of audiences, including youth, children, and family viewers, making it a true four-quadrant success on day one.

Directed by Maruthi, The Raja Saab has been designed as a visually rich and engaging cinematic experience. Known for his flair in blending emotion, entertainment, and humour, Maruthi ventures into the horror-fantasy zone with confidence, delivering a film that balances thrills with mass appeal. The director’s storytelling approach, combined with large-scale production values, has been widely appreciated by audiences on its opening day.

The film is produced on a lavish scale by T. G. Vishwa Prasad and Krithi Prasad under the renowned People Media Factory banner. The producers spared no expense in mounting the project as a global spectacle, evident in its grand visuals, elaborate sets, and extensive international re-

lease. Their ambitious vision has paid off handsomely, at least in the opening phase, with The Raja Saab registering record-breaking numbers.

Adding to the film’s appeal are the performances of the leading ladies—Malavika Mohanan, Nidhi Agerwal, and Riddhi Kumar—who have impressed viewers with their screen presence and roles that complement the narrative. The ensemble cast, coupled with technical finesse and a strong background score, has further enhanced the overall cinematic experience.

With Sankranti festivities underway, industry observers expect the film’s box-office momentum to accelerate further over the coming days. Given its thunderous start and positive audience response, The Raja Saab is well on course for a highly successful theatrical run, reaffirming Prabhas’ status as one of Indian cinema’s biggest box-office draws.



VeCura ReSculpt Launches in Kukatpally, Hyderabad; Redefines Non-Surgical Body Sculpting with a Science-First Vision



VeCura ReSculpt, a trailblazer in next-generation aesthetic and body sculpting care, has officially entered the Hyderabad market with the launch of its cutting-edge clinic in Kukatpally. The launch marks a significant milestone for the brand, which made a strong impression with its successful debut in

Chennai and is now gearing up for further expansion into Bengaluru.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the presence of eminent doctors, healthcare professionals, industry experts, and members of the media. Adding glamour to the event, popular actress and television personality Dimple Hayathi graced



the occasion as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the clinic. Her presence underscored the growing intersection of wellness, science, and lifestyle in contemporary aesthetic care.

VeCura ReSculpt stands out with its unwavering “science-first” philosophy, aimed at redefining non-surgical body sculpting in India. The clinic emphasizes that aesthetic transformation should be rooted in medical science, personalized care, and uncompromised safety, rather than fleeting beauty trends. Every technology deployed at the facility undergoes rigorous medical scrutiny and is backed by global clinical evidence, FDA approvals, and CE certifications.

Speaking at the launch,

Dr. Ram Gautham, Medical Director of VeCura ReSculpt, highlighted the clinic’s core approach. “We strongly believe aesthetic care should deliver tangible, measurable results. Our treatment protocols are designed to provide a comprehensive 360-degree solution—addressing fat reduction, muscle toning, skin tightening, and lymphatic health through a medically structured and ethical framework,” he said.

Designed to go beyond conventional cosmetic clinics, VeCura ReSculpt prioritizes in-depth diagnosis and assessment before initiating any procedure. This ensures that every client receives safe, individualized, and goal-oriented care, aligning wellness with aesthetics in a holistic manner.

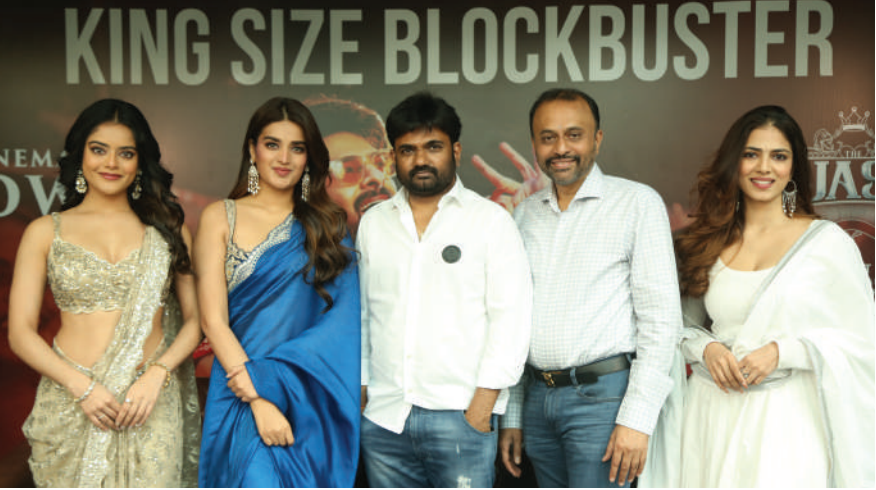
Director E. Carolin Praba Reddy emphasized the brand’s long-term vision, stating, “We are not merely launching a clinic; we are setting a new standard in non-surgical aesthetics. As we expand across Hyderabad and Bengaluru, our commitment will remain focused on consistent medical quality, advanced technologies, and a patient experience built on trust and transparency.”

The Kukatpally clinic is equipped with a comprehensive suite of advanced, globally certified technologies, including medical-grade body composition analysis, non-invasive fat reduction systems, muscle stimulation devices, skin tightening and cellulite reduction solutions, AI-assisted visceral fat management tools, and wellness-focused recovery therapies such as whole-body cryotherapy.

With its Hyderabad launch, VeCura ReSculpt reinforces its mission to elevate non-surgical aesthetics in South India—blending science, innovation, and ethical care to redefine body transformation for the modern audience.

The Raja Saab Celebrates King-Size Blockbuster Success

Rebel Star Prabhas’ prestigious horror-fantasy entertainer The Raja Saab has taken the box office by storm following its theatrical release on Friday. Directed by Maruthi, the film has opened to blockbuster collections worldwide and is currently running successfully across theatres. To celebrate the massive response, the makers hosted a grand “King-Size Blockbuster Success Meet” in Hyderabad on Saturday, attended by the film’s cast, crew, and media.



Produced on a lavish global scale by T. G. Vishwa Prasad and Krithi Prasad under the People Media Factory banner, The Raja Saab has been positioned as an evergreen cinematic experience blending horror, fantasy, and family entertainment. Actresses Malavika Mohanan, Nidhi Agerwal, and Riddhi Kumar have drawn praise for their performances and strong screen presence, adding

further value to the film’s appeal.

Speaking at the event, Riddhi Kumar expressed joy over the audience response, saying viewers and fans are thoroughly enjoying the film. She shared that the team worked on the project for nearly three years and that seeing their efforts being appreciated feels deeply rewarding. She thanked audiences for the overwhelming support and noted that so-

cial media is flooded with positive messages praising the film.

Nidhi Agerwal described The Raja Saab as a perfect Sankranti family entertainer. She highlighted the blockbuster openings and said the film is being enjoyed by children and families together. Special mention was made of key sequences such as the crocodile episode and the climax, which have received loud cheers in

theatres. She added that hearing chants of “Darling Darling” in cinemas has been a memorable experience.

Malavika Mohanan shared that the film is not only entertaining audiences but also registering strong collections. She said her character Bhairavi is receiving an encouraging response, particularly for the action sequences. Thanking director Maruthi for the

powerful role and producer T. G. Vishwa Prasad for backing the film with a big vision, she called acting alongside Prabhas a dream come true.

Producer T. G. Vishwa Prasad revealed that while the team expected ₹100 crore worldwide on day one, the film surpassed expectations with a massive ₹112 crore gross. He also announced that Prabhas’ old-getup scenes, initially excluded due to technical reasons, have now been added to all shows.

Director Maruthi said working with Prabhas was a memorable experience and confirmed that based on audience feedback, additional scenes and a rooftop fight sequence have been included. From the latest shows onward, he said, audiences will witness the “real Raja Saab,” expressing confidence that the film will continue its strong run throughout the Sankranti season.