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India Sets Four Guinness Records in Bengaluru-Kadapa-Vijayawada Economic Corridor Construction



TPN Bureau | January 12

Amaravati: In a remarkable display of engineering prowess, India has once again etched its name in the Guinness World Records with four new feats achieved during the construction of the Bengaluru-Kadapa-Vijayawada Economic Corridor in Saty sai district. Under the supervision of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), these milestones highlight the nation's accelerating infrastructure ambitions.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu virtually participated in the celebratory event, congratulating all involved while joining ministers, secretaries, and district collectors from the ongoing GSDP review meeting. Speaking on the occasion, CM Naidu hailed the achievement of four

Guinness records on the Bengaluru-Vijayawada Economic Corridor as a collective triumph. "We are all part of this united victory," he said, praising the virtual participation of ministers, officials, and collectors.

Naidu lauded Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's unmatched speed and efficiency, known nationwide, and extended special commendation to contractor Rajpath Infracon. He highlighted their swift construction of the world's longest bitumen-laid six-lane national highway, underscoring India's global competence.

Under Gadkari's leadership, the project notched a world record by continuously laying 10,655 metric tons of bituminous concrete. From January 6 to 11, teams built 52 kilometers of six-lane highway and 84.4 kilometers of four-lane road without interruption. Naidu

noted the rapid progress on 10,000 kilometers of greenfield expressways nationwide. He announced plans for a straight road from Amaravati to Bengaluru, proposing it be named the "Amaravati-Bengaluru Road."

The CM extended heartfelt congratulations to the entire team for their collaborative success. As part of the corridor works near Puttaparthi in Saty sai district, contractors completed 156 lane kilometers of highway in just six days—a testament to unprecedented efficiency. NHAI's standout effort included laying 28.8 kilometers of road in a single 24-hour period on January 6, verified by IIT Bombay experts.

These records not only boost connectivity between Bengaluru, Kadapa, and Vijayawada but also signal Andhra Pradesh's pivotal role in India's infrastructure renaissance. The corri-

dor promises economic growth by linking key industrial hubs, enhancing trade, and spurring development across districts. Naidu's vision aligns with the state's push for world-class roads to attract investments and improve logistics.

Officials emphasized the project's adherence to high safety and environmental standards, with IIT Bombay's oversight ensuring accuracy. This follows India's string of infrastructure records, reinforcing its position as a global leader in rapid highway construction. The event underscored the synergy between central and state governments, with Gadkari's ministry driving national highway expansion.

Andhra Pradesh, under Naidu's TDP-led administration, continues to prioritize such mega-projects amid ongoing political focus on governance and development.



NMC Chairman Unveils NEXT Exam, PPP Push for Medical Education Overhaul in India

TPN Bureau | January 12

Amaravati: National Medical Commission (NMC) Chairman Dr. Abhijat Chandrakant Sheth today described the upcoming National Exit Test (NEXT) as a "game-changer" that will guide the future of medical education in India. Speaking at a press briefing, he positioned NEXT as a nationwide evaluation system set to launch in the next two to three years, promising to outperform current NEET, PG, and FMGE frameworks. Dr. Sheth emphasized stakeholder engagement, assuring that universities, institutions, students, and faculty concerns would be addressed before implementation.

"We will roll out this robust policy only after gaining their approval and positivity," he stated, highlighting its potential to streamline medical assessments across the country. PPP Model: Optimal Path to Strengthen Medical Sector Addressing gaps in India's dual public-private healthcare systems, Dr. Sheth advocated Public-Pri-

vate Partnership (PPP) as the best route to bolster medical education. He noted the lack of coordination between government and private entities currently hampers efficiency. Under PPP, both sectors could collaborate on medical needs, optimizing resources for mutual benefit. "This will enhance quality healthcare for the poor and deliver superior medical training," he added. Merit-Based Seats and Stricter Infrastructure Norms NMC has issued guidelines on medical college fees, with states like Andhra Pradesh holding decision-making authority. Per NMC rules, half of all seats must go to meritorious state students, while the rest can be allocated to management quota. Recognition for colleges will be denied without full infrastructure development. The updated application guidelines have streamlined 42 standards to 20, ensuring no seats or approvals for subpar facilities. Ambitious Target: 75,000 New UG/PG Seats in Five Years NMC has set a five-year goal to add

75,000 undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) seats nationwide. Over 18,000 seats were added in the 2024-25 academic year alone. Future expansions will prioritize state needs, adhering to government guidelines and international standards for equitable distribution. Committee to Tackle FMG Challenges Foreign Medical Graduates (FMGs) face high failure rates in licensing exams due to language barriers, inconsistent curricula, poor teaching quality, and misalignment with Indian standards. NMC has formed a committee with the Ministries of External Affairs and Home Affairs to study these issues. It will review foreign institutions, syllabus gaps between theory and practice, and recommend accreditation processes. "NMC will recognize only eligible foreign medical schools, implementing robust screening and filtration," Dr. Sheth affirmed. Boosting Rural Doctors via Family Medicine To increase doctors in rural areas, NMC is promoting Family Medicine as a mandatory focus.

ISRO's PSLV-C62 Mission Encounters Technical Glitch Mid-Flight from Sriharikota



TPN Bureau | January 12: Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh: In a setback for India's space ambitions, the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) prestigious PSLV-C62 rocket launch ran into a technical snag today, disrupting communication with satellites after the third stage. The mission, ISRO's first of the new year, lifted off successfully from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre but failed to complete its planned 18-minute trajectory due to the anomaly. The countdown began 22 hours earlier, on Sunday afternoon at 12:17 PM IST, building anticipation for this critical launch. At 10:18 AM on Monday, the PSLV-C62 roared into the skies from the First Launch Pad at Sriharikota, Tirupati district, carrying

the advanced Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-N1) alongside 15 smaller co-passenger satellites. Among these, eight are foreign payloads, which would have elevated India's tally of launched foreign satellites to 442 if successful.

EOS-N1, designed for monitoring climate change and environmental research, was slated for precise orbit insertion. The accompanying nanosatellites targeted polar sun-synchronous orbits, underscoring PSLV's reliability for commercial and scientific missions. However, elation turned to concern as telemetry links severed post-third stage separation. ISRO Chairman Dr. V. Narayanan addressed the media shortly after: "An anomaly occurred during the PSLV-C62 mission. The launch progressed smoothly

through the first three stages. We're analyzing the technical issue that arose afterward." Engineers are racing against time to troubleshoot and potentially salvage the payloads. The fourth stage,

responsible for final orbit placement, appears to be the culprit, though specifics remain under investigation. ISRO's track record with PSLV—over 50 successful missions—offers hope, but this glitch highlights the razor-thin margins in spaceflight. Adding a cultural touch, Dr. Narayanan and his team visited sacred sites ahead of the launch. On Saturday, they prayed at Tirumala's Lord Venkateswara Temple, Srikalahasti's Shiva Temple, and Chengalam Ammavari Temple in Sullurupeta. Placing a satellite model at the deity's feet, they sought divine blessings for success a tradition blending science and spirituality unique to India's space program. This mission holds strategic importance amid global de-

mand for Earth observation data. EOS-N1's hyperspectral imaging capabilities could aid disaster management, agriculture, and urban planning in India. The foreign satellites, from undisclosed partners, reflect ISRO's growing commercial footprint. ISRO has promised a detailed failure report soon, emphasizing lessons learned for future launches like the upcoming GSLV missions. Despite the hiccup, the agency's resilience shines through previous PSLV recoveries, such as C-37 in 2018, prove anomalies don't define legacies. Stakeholders worldwide await updates as ISRO's scientists work tirelessly. The space community remains optimistic, knowing India's space odyssey presses on.



Vijay Sai Reddy's Political Limbo: Who is Blocking His BJP Entry?



TPN Bureau | Jan 12:

Visakhapatnam: Former YSRCP Rajya Sabha MP V. Vijay Sai Reddy, once a key architect of the party's Delhi operations and a fierce defender during high-profile cases like Quid Pro Quo and the CBI chargesheet against Jagan Mohan Reddy, finds himself in an unexpected bind. The man credited with shielding YSRCP from central agency probes now struggles to secure even a basic political foothold, sparking whispers of internal sabotage and high-level interventions.

Reddy's fall from grace within YSRCP began subtly after Bharati and Sajjal Reddy reportedly started sidelining him. Despite his Delhi connections and reported liaisons with BJP leaders, he was pushed out of his Uttara Andhra stronghold and handed a losing Nellore MP ticket in the recent elections. Post-defeat,

Reddy went public, slamming the "coterie" around Jagan Mohan Reddy and issuing veiled warnings over the liquor scam, hinting at explosive revelations.

He announced his exit from politics, only to tease a "re-entry" recently amid swirling rumors of a BJP switch. Speculation intensified with talk of his daughter joining the BJP first, followed by Reddy himself. Yet, months later, no formal entry has materialized. Sources close to the matter point to TDP's influence as the primary roadblock.

"TDP is sending clear signals to BJP high command, ensuring Reddy stays out," one party insider revealed anonymously. A state minister even let slip that Reddy has been pleading for Delhi introductions, underscoring his desperation. Reddy's historical role adds intrigue. He long served as YSRCP's bridge to BJP in Delhi, but that slot now belongs to Mithun Reddy.

Why hesitate on

someone so "close," critics ask? TDP's veto power stems from the NDA alliance dynamics in Andhra Pradesh, where TDP holds sway over seat-sharing and strategy. BJP, wary of alienating ally N. Chandrababu Naidu, appears to be complying. In a bid to pivot, Reddy is reportedly eyeing Janasena chief Pawan Kalyan as a lifeline, hoping to leverage the ally's clout within the coalition. Meanwhile, BJP's broader strategy toward Jagan's YSRCP could shift. Taking in Reddy a commerce-savvy operator with insider dirt on scams might supercharge their game against the opposition, especially if alliance tensions ease. Political analysts see this as a high-stakes chess move. "Reddy's baggage from YSRCP makes him toxic for TDP, but gold for BJP if they want to expose Jagan's vulnerabilities," said a Visakhapatnam-based commentator. As TDP consolidates power with recent governance wins, will BJP prioritize alliance harmony or grab a tactical edge? Reddy's next move and who truly pulls the strings remains the burning question in Andhra's fluid political arena. For now, the once-mighty Reddy hunts for an "adda" (base), a stark fall for a Delhi heavyweight. Developments are unfolding rapidly.



CID Rescues 22 Andhra Pradesh Youths from Cyber Slavery Traps in East Asia

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026
Amaravati: In a major operation against international cybercrime syndicates, Andhra Pradesh CID police have rescued 22 locals trapped in “cyber slavery” rings in East Asian countries. CID SP Adiraj Singh Rana briefed the media today, revealing how jobless youth are lured abroad with fake offers, only to be forced into cyber fraud under brutal conditions. The victims, seeking high-paying jobs, fell prey to scams promising lucrative roles in places like Bangkok, Myanmar, and Cambo-

dia. “Call centers use sweet talk to hook youngsters, even arranging flight tickets to build trust,” Rana explained. Upon arrival, after 15-hour journeys, they are dragged to remote forest areas, stripped of passports and phones, and coerced into crimes like honey traps and fake account scams. Rana detailed the horrors: Non-compliance means no food, beatings, electric shocks, or worse. “They work 18 hours a day, hitting targets of 500K to 1,000K [likely fraudulent transactions]. Escape demands 10 lakh ransoms,” he said. Gangs,



backed by armed enforcers, house 10 victims per room in guarded compounds. Defiance leads to torture or threats of death some escape attempts have ended in shoot-

ings. India’s government has ramped up efforts, repatriating 1,586 victims nationwide in three months, including 120 from Andhra Pradesh men, women, and youth among them.

The latest 22 AP natives were safely brought back, interrogated by CID, and shared insights into the traps. Scammers target those fluent in Indian regional languages via

Telegram ads, exploiting desperation. Victims recounted their ordeals: “We saw job ads on social media, got tickets from them. They shifted us to remote areas, held our visas for two

months, seized passports and phones,” one said. Forced to operate gang-provided devices, they created fake accounts and followed scripts in Chinese-dominated setups. “No salary for three months of ‘training.’ Agents took 2 lakh from us, then got paid by the gangs. Talking back meant guns to our heads,” they added. Isolation was total no outside contact, scripted dialogues only. Rana urged caution: “Verify overseas job offers thoroughly before going. Inform police for background checks on companies.” He warned parents against loans

for dubious prospects, noting the dual risk to finances and futures. “Media must amplify awareness,” he appealed. This crackdown highlights a growing menace: Cyber syndicates exploit India’s job crisis, turning aspirants into unwilling criminals. With fluency in Telugu and other languages a key lure, AP youth remain vulnerable. Authorities advise checking official portals and avoiding unverified Telegram or social media gigs. As investigations continue, CID vows stricter vigilance to dismantle these networks.

Andhra Pradesh Government Transfers 14 IAS Officers in Major Bureaucratic Shuffle

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026
Amaravati: In a significant administrative reshuffle, the Andhra Pradesh government has transferred 14 IAS officers, reassigning them to key positions across districts and departments. The orders, issued by the General Administration Department on Monday, aim to streamline governance and bolster local administration amid ongoing development initiatives. Guntur Municipal Corporation Commissioner P. Srinivasa Reddy has been transferred and appointed as Joint Collector of Markapuram in Prakasam district.

Incumbent Markapuram JC Ronanki Gopalakrishna moves to the position of Joint Secretary in the Medical and Health Department. In another notable shift, Srivasa Nupur Ajay Kumar takes over as Director of the Public Supplies Department. Prakasam district sees further changes with Kalpana Kumari appointed as Joint Collector. Guntur’s new Municipal Commissioner is Mayur Ashok, while Mallavarapu Suryateja assumes the role of Joint Collector in Anakapalli. Adarsh Rajendran joins as Joint Collector in Chittoor district. Other key appointments in-

clude S.S. Shobik as Managing Director of the Girijana Cooperative Corporation, Nidhi Meena as Joint Collector in Kadapa, Gobbilla Vidhyadhar in Visakhapatnam, Shiv Narayan Sharma in Annamayya district, and V. Sanjana Singh in Palnadu district. A highlight of the transfers is Nidhi Meena’s posting as Kadapa Joint Collector; she is the wife of Kadapa District Superintendent of Police Nachiket Vishwanath, underscoring familial ties in the state’s bureaucracy. This move has sparked discussions on potential synergies in district administration and law en-



forcement coordination. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s admin-

istration has emphasized efficient implementation of welfare schemes, infrastructure projects, and urban development, particularly in light of recent TDP-led initiatives. Officials suggest these transfers address gaps in municipal governance and district-level execution, especially in coastal and Rayalaseema regions. The reshuffle impacts multiple sectors, from urban local bodies to health and cooperatives, reflecting the government’s focus on agile administration. Guntur and Prakasam districts, key to agricultural and industrial growth, receive fresh leadership to

accelerate projects like irrigation and housing under the AP Capital Region Development Authority. No official reasons were cited for the transfers, but sources indicate performance reviews and workload balancing. The officers assume charge immediately, with full notifications published on the state government portal. This is the second major IAS rejig in three months, following similar moves in October 2025 to align with the 2026 budget priorities. Stakeholders welcome the changes, expecting improved service delivery in rural and urban areas.

CM Chandrababu Naidu Hails 2025 Achievements, Outlines Ambitious Plans for Andhra Pradesh

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026
Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu declared that his government has restored public faith and turned the state into a model of “super governance” after dismantling previous “destructive systems.” Addressing ministers and secretaries during a comprehensive review meeting at the secretariat, Naidu reviewed key metrics like GSDP, RTGS, and pattadar passbooks. He praised the Super Six initiatives for accelerating welfare and development, urging officials to work even harder this year. Naidu highlighted landmark welfare milestones. Under “Talli ki Vandanam,” 10,090 crore was credited to the accounts of mothers of 67 lakh students. The Stree

Shakti scheme enabled 3.5 crore women to travel, with expenditures reaching 1,114 crore so far. Farmers benefited from the “Annamdata Sukhibhava” program, with 6,310 crore disbursed to 46 lakh farmers. Over 18 months, 50,000 crore in pensions marked a new high in social welfare, Naidu noted. Defending Amaravati’s revival, Naidu countered past critics who called it a “cemetery” or “desert,” now hailing it as an inspiring project. He emphasized farmer involvement in development and spotlighted Polavaram as a “miraculous” endeavor. “Once completed, no southern state will rival us,” he asserted. Naidu promoted Nallamala Sagar to irrigate Rayalaseema and parts of Prakasam district using Polavaram surplus water, stressing no losses for any-

one. “Why object to channeling upper releases to Nallamala? Telangana can use remaining Polavaram water, and I’ve never opposed their projects,” he added. Infrastructure and industry took center stage too. Bhogapuram airport will soon be handed over to the nation, while Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was saved with central support—“it’s Andhra sentiment, and we’ll stabilize it.” Naidu revealed 25% of India’s FDI flowed to AP, positioning the state as an investment destination. Through SIPB, approvals for 8.74 lakh crore in investments promise massive job creation. Naidu’s upbeat assessment underscores TDP’s focus on growth amid YSRCP’s past tenure, signaling a proactive 2026 agenda.



Telangana Withdraws Supreme Court Writ on Polavaram-Nallamala Sagar Project After CJI Guidance



TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026
New Delhi: In a significant development in the long-standing inter-state water dispute, the Telangana government withdrew its writ petition in the Supreme Court challenging Andhra Pradesh’s Polavaram and proposed Nallamala Sagar projects. The decision came during today’s hearing, following suggestions from Chief Justice of India (CJI) that Telangana refile the matter as a civil suit under Article 131. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi represented Telangana, presenting detailed arguments on alleged violations by Andhra Pradesh. Post-hearing, Telangana’s Civil Supplies and Irrigation Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy addressed the media outside the court, explaining the withdrawal aligned with the CJI’s procedural advice. “The CJI indicated that this

should proceed as a civil suit under Article 131. We’ve withdrawn the petition accordingly,” Reddy stated. The petition stemmed from Telangana’s objections to Andhra Pradesh’s construction plans, particularly claims of exceeding allocated water shares. Reddy highlighted that Andhra Pradesh has been allocated 484.5 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of Godavari water, yet persists in efforts to utilize more. “The key issue is they shouldn’t use more water than allocated. AP has repeatedly violated norms, ignoring stop-work orders,” he said. Telangana’s arguments emphasized procedural lapses. Reddy noted that last Monday’s hearing was followed by additional submissions today. These included Andhra Pradesh’s failure to secure approvals from the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), Krishna

River Management Board (KRMB), and the Apex Council. “Without these clearances, AP is pushing ahead. We’ve brought this to the court’s notice,” he added. A core contention was design alterations. Telangana argued that Andhra Pradesh cannot deviate from the original Polavaram project blueprint. “No additional work beyond the designed form is permissible. We’ve stressed that the project must stick to its original format,” Reddy elaborated. He accused AP of non-compliance with prior court directives, including stop-work orders on unauthorized expansions linking Polavaram to Nallamala Sagar a reservoir proposed on the Godavari to transfer surplus water. This dispute traces back to the 2014 Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, which mandates equitable Godavari water sharing. Polavaram, a mega ir-

rigation and hydropower project in AP, has been contentious since Telangana’s formation, with fears it could submerge Telangana lands and divert excess water. Nallamala Sagar, envisioned as a balancing reservoir in the Eastern Ghats, amplifies concerns over unapproved upstream storage affecting downstream flows to Telangana. The withdrawal signals no immediate halt to construction but sets the stage for a fresh civil suit, potentially prolonging resolution. Andhra Pradesh officials were unavailable for comment, but the state has defended Polavaram as vital for its farmers and power needs. Telangana remains vigilant. “We’ve placed all violations before the court. The matter will be pursued appropriately,” Reddy affirmed. Stakeholders await the refiled suit, underscoring ongoing tensions in federal water governance.

TTD Board Member Bhanu Prakash Reddy Slams YSRCP Leaders Over Tirumala Allegations

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026

Vijayawada: Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Board Member Bhanu Prakash Reddy launched a scathing attack on YSRCP leaders, accusing them of political irrelevance and exploiting religious sentiments for gain. Speaking here today, Reddy claimed YSRCP leaders have become “political unemployed” after their 2019-2024 tenure, facing not just public wrath but also the anger of Lord Venkateswara himself. Reddy alleged that the YSRCP government transformed the sacred Tirumala into a “money-making field,” with party leaders colluding with “target Tirumala” elements.

“They lack the guts or courage to face us politically and are spreading lies without evidence,” he thundered, dismissing YSRCP’s accusations against TTD as baseless fabrica-

tions—from “goshala to Govinda,” they fabricate proofs to smear opponents. YSRCP Turned Theft into Gift Intensifying his critique, Reddy questioned YSRCP’s handling of the Parakamani issue, accusing them of “panchayati under the banyan tree.”

He mocked whether YSRCP chief Jagan Mohan Reddy even understands temple consecration rituals. “Is disregarding Hindu sentiments such a degenerate thought?” Reddy fumed, labeling past YSRCP leaders as “mad and intoxicated” after pledging to Lord Venkateswara. He equated betraying the deity with national treason: “Just as betraying the country is wrong, so is betraying Swami.” Reddy accused YSRCP of exploiting legal loopholes while indulging in excesses. He challenged YSRCP spokesperson Bhuman Karunakar Reddy:



“How justified is it to carry liquor bottles and hurl accusations at TTD and its dharmakartas?” Promising legal action with evidence, he warned, “Even the five elements are watching YSRCP’s moves. In the Parakamani theft case, YSRCP turned the thief into a donor they converted theft into a gift.”

Public Retribution Inevitable, Warns Reddy Reddy dared YSRCP to debate policies and answer public questions, asserting TTD’s

readiness. “Every TTD issue links back to Tadepalli Palace,” he claimed, vowing punishment for all culprits actors, puppeteers, and beneficiaries in the coming days. Highlighting transparency reforms, he noted past “embezzlements” in religious affairs are now public on TTD’s website. “If you call it ‘fire and salt,’ why hide the graft?” he quizzed YSRCP. Reddy cautioned that continued misconduct would lead to pub-

lic backlash: “People will skin them alive.” He predicted severe consequences ahead, urging YSRCP to mend ways amid TDP-BJP’s warnings. The remarks escalate tensions between TTD and opposition YSRCP, amid ongoing probes into alleged irregularities during the previous regime. TTD’s push for accountability resonates with devotees, as Reddy positions the board as guardians of Tirumala’s sanctity.

TDP MP Questions Jagan’s Flood Claims, Demands CBI Probe into YSRCP Assets and Bengaluru ‘Plotting’

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026

Undavalli (Amaravati): TDP Member of Parliament Kalisetty Appalanayudu sharply criticized former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy over his recent remarks on Amaravati’s flood vulnerability, demanding a CBI investigation into alleged conspiracies hatched from Jagan’s Bengaluru residence. Speaking to reporters on Sunday outside Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s residence in Undavalli, Appalanayudu dismissed Jagan’s claims that Amaravati would submerge like other riverbank areas.

“Jagan’s Tadepalli Palace is right in the Krishna River floodplain. Has it ever flooded?” he questioned, highlighting what he called hypocrisy amid ongoing development in the state capital. Appalanayudu accused Jagan of masterminding plots against Andhra Pradesh’s progress from his Yalanka Palace in Bengaluru. “The conspiracies being im-

plemented in AP are being scripted from Jagan’s Bengaluru palace. A CBI probe should investigate what’s happening there,” he demanded.

He announced plans to write to the Central government urging such an inquiry. Turning to YSRCP leaders’ finances, the TDP MP pointed to the sudden asset surges of party MPs Avinash Reddy and Mithun Reddy. “Their assets have grown disproportionately, shocking MPs across India. They’ve amassed wealth through looting, land grabbing, irregularities, and intimidation,” he alleged.

He further slammed YSRCP MLAs for skipping Assembly sessions while drawing salaries via alleged forged signatures. “At least come to the Assembly and raise issues of the Pulivendula people who elected Jagan,” he advised. Appalanayudu lambasted Jagan’s three-capitals proposal as a ploy that “destroyed the state.”

He recalled how, during the alliance govern-



ment’s tenure, Prime Minister Narendra Modi supported Chandrababu Naidu’s efforts to build Amaravati, only for YSRCP to obstruct it. Mocking YSRCP leader Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy’s claim that “Jagan likes Amaravati,” he said, “People are laughing at these statements.”

“Praising current Amaravati development works, Appalanayudu highlighted how major cities thrive along riverbanks. “I’ll prepare a video on

these projects and ongoing riverfront developments and send it to Jagan in his Bengaluru palace,” he added, underscoring the TDP’s commitment to reviving the capital.

The remarks come amid heightened political tensions in Andhra Pradesh, with the TDP-led coalition government pushing Amaravati as the sole capital after scrapping Jagan’s three-capitals plan. YSRCP has boycotted recent Assembly sessions, protesting alleged TDP

high-handedness, while opposition leaders continue targeting the government’s policies from afar. Appalanayudu’s outburst reflects TDP’s aggressive counteroffensive against YSRCP’s narrative on governance failures, floods, and capital ambiguity. As development accelerates in Amaravati including land acquisition resolutions and infrastructure tenders such exchanges signal a protracted pre-election battle ahead of local body polls.

Visakhapatnam Mental Hospital Upgrades with New Courses at Centre of Excellence



TPN Bureau | January 12

Visakhapatnam, (Andhra Jyothi): Authorities are finalizing regulations to launch new courses at the Centre of Excellence, approved as part of the government mental hospital’s upgrade. The newly inaugurated building at the mental hospital campus in Pedavalthuru will soon host full-scale operations.

Officials are gearing up to provide enhanced medical services alongside training specialized professionals. The central government upgraded the facility to Centre of Excellence status, opening doors for fresh academic programs set to begin next academic year. Currently, the Government Nursing College within King George Hospital (KGH) premises offers a three-year Psychiatry Nursing course. For 2024-25, ten students enrolled, but

only one joined in 2025-26.

Lack of dedicated infrastructure and other factors deterred interest. Mental health hospital officials have written to Andhra Medical College authorities, requesting permission to shift these courses to the Centre of Excellence. With approval, classes could start as early as the first week of February in the new building. Four faculty members are already available for the program.

New Admissions Planned Officials have decided to introduce Clinical Psychologist and Psychiatry Social Work courses at the Centre, each with 30 seats. They’ve submitted a file to the Director of Medical Education seeking approval. Upon green signal, they plan to approach the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI).

An RCI inspection team will verify infrastructure and facilities before granting permission, which looks promising. For each course, appointments include one professor, one associate professor, two assistant professors, and support staff. Hospital Superintendent Dr. Ramireddy confirmed that preparations for the Psychiatry Social Work course are complete first. Hostel facilities, library, and faculty chambers are ready for students.

“This upgrade addresses the shortage of mental health experts while improving patient care,” he added. The initiative aligns with broader efforts to strengthen mental health infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh.

Enhanced training will boost the supply of skilled professionals, crucial amid rising demand for psychiatric services. Admissions details and timelines will follow regulatory nods.

Amaravati Minister Slams YSRCP Over Tirumala Vaikunta Dwara Darshan ‘Smear Campaign’

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Minister Kolu S Parthasarathy on Monday accused the opposition YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) of spreading malicious disinformation about the seamless conduct of Vaikunta Dwara Darshans at Tirumala, claiming it as part of a desperate political conspiracy.

Speaking to the media here, the minister asserted that the high-profile darshans—annual rituals during the Vaikunta Ekadasi festival at the sacred Tirumala Venkateswara Temple—were executed flawlessly under the current TDP-led government’s oversight. “We conducted the darshans efficiently and without any hitches,” Parthasarathy declared, emphasizing the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD)’s robust arrangements that ensured smooth pilgrim access despite massive crowds.

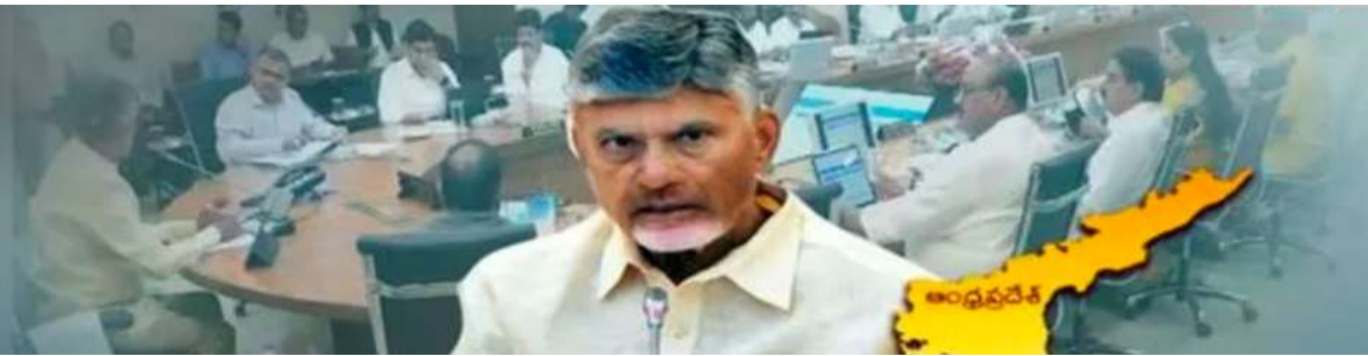
He lambasted YSRCP leaders for their inability to digest this success, alleging they fabricated claims of “impurity” or desecration at the temple to malign the administration. “They’re plotting smears be-



cause they can’t stomach our competent handling,” the minister fumed. Parthasarathy revealed that police investigations have already nabbed several culprits behind the disinformation drive, with suspects confessing links to Bhuman Karunakar Reddy, a prominent YSRCP loyalist in Tirupati. The controversy erupted amid heightened devotee fervor for the 10-day Vaikunta Dwara Darshans, which commenced on December 31, 2025, drawing lakhs of pilgrims seeking special entry through the temple’s golden doorway. TTD authorities reported over 5 lakh darshans on peak days, with advanced crowd management, AI-enabled token systems, and enhanced security preventing any disruptions contrasting sharply with past complaints under the previous YSRCP regime.

YSRCP’s accusations, circulated via social media and

fringe outlets, alleged lapses in ritual purity, prompting swift rebuttals from TTD executives. Parthasarathy highlighted that forensic probes into viral videos and audio clips peddled as “evidence” exposed them as doctored propaganda. “These conspirators are Bhuman Karunakar Reddy’s followers, as they’re admitting in Tirupati police custody,” he added, urging stricter action against those undermining religious sentiments for political gain. This episode underscores ongoing TDP-YSRCP tensions post the 2024 elections, where Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s alliance ousted YSRCP. The minister reaffirmed the government’s commitment to temple reforms, including digital pilgrim services and hygiene upgrades, positioning Tirumala as a global benchmark. Devotees and BJP allies have praised the arrangements, with no official complaints registered. As investigations continue, Parthasarathy called for unity in protecting sacred sites from partisan mudslinging. TTD has vowed zero tolerance for future misinformation.



CM Naidu Chairs Key Review Meeting on AP Development, Governance Reforms

Amaravati, January 12 (Andhra Jyothi English): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is presiding over a high-level review meeting at the AP Secretariat today, focusing on state development, transparent governance, and enhanced public services. Ministers, secretaries, senior IAS officers, and department heads are attending the session, which began at 10:30 AM and is scheduled to conclude at 2:00 PM.

During the discussions, the CM is issuing critical directives to streamline administration and accelerate progress. The meeting delves deeply into Andhra Pradesh’s growth trajectory. Naidu is reviewing the state’s Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), outlining ten key principles for administrative efficiency, and assessing the performance of revenue-generating sectors. Discussions cover the

implementation and progress of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), investment proposals under Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), and file clearance status via the RTGS system.

Digital transformation takes center stage, with emphasis on online services like WhatsApp Governance, alongside revenue department operations. Naidu highlighted the distribution of Patta-dar Passbooks, resolu-

tion of revenue disputes, ongoing land surveys, and the ‘Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin)’ scheme. These initiatives aim to boost rural employment and livelihoods. The CM stressed the need for a more efficient, accountable, and transparent government machinery to drive infrastructure improvements and overall state progress. “Our focus is on people-centric governance,” Naidu re-

portedly said, urging officials to prioritize service delivery and economic revival.

This comprehensive review underscores the TDP-led government’s commitment to fulfilling electoral promises through data-driven decisions. Officials indicated that actionable plans emerging from the meeting will be rolled out swiftly across districts, aligning with Naidu’s vision for a developed Andhra Pradesh by 2029.

YSRCP NTR Doctors Wing Slams NMC Chairman for Relaxing Medical College Standards, Demands CBI Probe

TPN Bureau | January 12:

Vijayawada: In a fiery press note issued today, the YSRCP NTR District Doctors Wing has unleashed scathing criticism against National Medical Commission (NMC) Chairman Dr. Abhijat Sheth, accusing him of drastically diluting essential standards for approving medical colleges. The wing claims Dr. Sheth admitted to slashing 42 strict norms down to just 20 to “facilitate permissions,” a move they label as a direct assault on medical education quality and public

health. The press release, released from Vijayawada, paints a grim picture of compromised infrastructure, faculty requirements, clinical facilities, and patient care benchmarks. “This brazen dilution prioritizes private medical college managements’ profits over student welfare and lives,” stated Dr. Ambati Naga Radhakrishna Yadav, Chairman of the YSRCP NTR District Doctors Wing. He highlighted how the NMC has already suspended key regulations like the 150-seat cap per college and population-based doctor ratios until 2026-



27, citing nationwide doctor shortages. Now, with standards further relaxed, Yadav warns of substandard institutions churning out inadequately trained doctors, eroding trust in India’s healthcare

system. The controversy stems from recent reports quoting Dr. Sheth’s own statements, where he acknowledged the reduction in norms to ease approvals amid rising

demand for medical seats. Critics within the YSRCP wing argue this reeks of favoritism and corruption, potentially opening doors to bribery and undue influence from private players. “How can future doctors get quality training in these lax setups? This endangers lives,” the note thundered, urging restoration of all 42 original standards and an immediate halt to approvals under the new regime. YSRCP leaders in Andhra Pradesh have long voiced concerns over healthcare governance, especially post the party’s ouster from power in 2024. The

TDP-led coalition government, in alliance with Janasena and BJP, has pushed infrastructure projects and welfare schemes, but opposition voices like YSRCP continue to target perceived lapses in regulation. This latest salvo aligns with their narrative of central interference undermining state-level medical education, particularly in NTR District, a hub for several medical institutions. Dr. Yadav demanded a high-level CBI inquiry to probe the “scandalous relaxation,” including any financial improprieties or vested interests. “Healthcare workers

and students of Andhra Pradesh stand united against this travesty,” he asserted, calling for swift action to protect medical integrity. NMC officials have not yet responded to the allegations as of this evening. However, sources indicate the relaxations aim to address acute doctor shortages, with India needing over 2 lakh more physicians by 2030 per government estimates. Proponents argue temporary measures boost seat intake without compromising core quality, but YSRCP dismisses this as a cover for profiteering. The development has

sparked debates across Telugu news channels and social media, with hashtags like #SaveMedicalEducation and #NMCStandards trending in Andhra Pradesh. Medical student associations in Vijayawada echoed concerns, fearing long-term impacts on professional standards. As political temperatures rise ahead of potential 2029 assembly polls, this could escalate into a broader controversy, drawing in state health minister and central health ministry. YSRCP’s doctors wing vows sustained protests until accountability is ensured.

Manipal Hospital Vijayawada starts Dept of pain, Palliative Care



TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026

Vijayawada: In a major boost to regional healthcare, Manipal Hospital Vijayawada has inaugurated its specialized Department of Pain & Palliative Care. Announced on December 12, 2025, the new unit underscores the hospital’s commitment to multidisciplinary management of chronic pain, cancer-related suffering, and advanced illnesses, filling a vital gap for patients in Vijayawada and surrounding districts. Led by Dr. B.K. Deepak, a seasoned Consultant in Anaesthesia, Pain & Palliative Care, the department brings over a decade of expertise in interventional pain medicine. Dr. Deepak specializes in advanced, minimally invasive procedures including ultrasound-guided nerve blocks, ozone nucleolysis, transforaminal epidural injections, radiofrequency ablation (RFA and cooled RFA), cryoablation, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) and bone marrow aspirate concentrate (BMAC) regenerative therapies, and targeted cancer pain blocks like coeliac plexus, splanchnic, and hypogastric plexus interventions under imaging guidance. The facility targets a broad range of conditions: chronic musculoskeletal disorders, neuropathic pain, spine issues, arthritis, tendon injuries, post-operative pain, and cancer-related discomfort. Beyond pain relief, it emphasizes palliative care to enhance quality of life through symptom management, emotional support, counseling for patients and families, pharmacological controls, and end-of-life planning.

This holistic model integrates with hospital departments like oncology, orthopaedics, neurology, neurosurgery, physiotherapy, and rehabilitation for seamless care. In Andhra Pradesh, where chronic pain and age-related degenerative diseases are rising due to an aging population and lifestyle factors, such specialized services were previously scarce. Patients often traveled to Hyderabad or Visakhapatnam for similar treatments. “This launch bridges that gap, making world-class care accessible locally,” said Mr. J. Ramamjaneya Reddy, Hospital Director at Manipal Hospitals Vijayawada. Dr. Deepak elaborated, “Pain is not just a symptom it is an experience that affects a person physically, emotionally, and socially. Our goal is personalised, minimally invasive treatments that restore function, relieve suffering, and provide dignity-centered palliative support. No patient should endure unmanaged pain when solutions exist.” Mr. Reddy added, “Chronic and cancer pain are under-treated epidemics. With Dr. Deepak’s expertise, we’re delivering compassionate, evidence-based services to Andhra Pradesh residents.” The initiative aligns with growing demands for palliative care amid rising cancer incidences and post-pandemic health challenges. Experts hail it as a milestone, potentially reducing patient burdens and improving outcomes across Krishna, Guntur, and neighboring districts.

Lepakshi Showrooms Launch Discount Sales to Boost Artisan Livelihoods

Amaravati: In a bid to provide market access for traditional crafts from various regions and ensure financial stability for artisans, Andhra Pradesh Handlooms and Textiles Minister S. Savit announced the launch of discount sales at Lepakshi showrooms, offering up to 30% off on handicrafts. The sales, featuring 10%, 20%, and 30% discounts, will run until the end of this month, timed ahead of the Sankranti festival. Speaking at a review meeting with Lepakshi officials in her chamber at the State Secretariat on Monday, Minister Savit emphasized that the initiative aims to make crafts affordable for consumers while increasing sales volumes to generate more employment for artisans.

“With lower prices, buyers get value, and higher footfall means better livelihoods for our skilled craftsmen,” she stated. She directed officials to promote the sales extensively through media and social platforms. To attract modern shoppers, the government plans to upgrade three state-run Lepakshi showrooms at a cost of up to Rs 15 lakh each. The first phase targets Visakhapatnam, Anantapur, and Kadapa outlets, with renovations already underway or completed. Work on the Delhi showroom has been finalized, and the remaining 15 showrooms across the state and country will follow in subsequent phases. Lepakshi MD Vishwa informed that the organization operates 19 showrooms nation-



wide, 16 of which are in Andhra Pradesh. Phased Upgrades for Customer Appeal Minister Savit stressed redesigning showrooms to align with contemporary tastes and preferences. “Structures must draw in customers effectively,” she said, underscoring the 15 lakh investment per outlet for aesthetic and functional improve-

ments. Online Sales Push for Crafts Recognizing shifting consumer habits, Savit ordered the launch of online sales for Lepakshi handicrafts, similar to handloom fabrics already available on e-commerce platforms. “Shoppers now prefer online purchases for essentials, clothing, and electronics. We must adapt to sell

regional crafts digitally,” she noted. Officials have been instructed to develop a dedicated website to facilitate this. The meeting, attended by MD Vishwa and other officials, focused on leveraging Sankranti demand. Savit reviewed current discount implementation and urged measures to maximize sales.

YSRCP Leader Slams Coalition Govt Over Temple Irregularities, Demands G.O. 15 Revocation



YPN Bureau | Jan 12, 2026

Vijayawada: Former minister Vellampalli Srinivas Rao accused the coalition government of fostering a surge in temple desecrations, scandals, and accidents across Andhra Pradesh since it as-

sumed power. Speaking after offering special prayers at Kanaka Durga Temple here, he condemned coalition leaders for now targeting temple priests with attacks. “From the day the coalition took office, sacrileges have become routine,” he charged.

Srinivas Rao specifically criticized the recent issuance of G.O. No. 15, alleging it was designed to seize valuable temple lands under the guise of leases to religious institutions. He demanded its immediate withdrawal, warning of public backlash if ignored. The YSRCP leader performed remedial rituals at the temple to atone for ongoing irregularities at Durga Temple. He offered a silk sari and bangles to Goddess Kanaka Durga, urging an end to the “full stop” on desecrations. “The government must act with pure intent, especially ensuring quality annaprasadam for devotees,” he said. He strongly ob-

jected to using packaged milk for the goddess’s abhishekam, insisting goshalas be relocated from Kanuru to the hilltop without delay. Failure to comply would prompt protests alongside devotees, he cautioned. Directly appealing to Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, who has declared himself a Sanatana Hindu, Srinivas Rao implored him to intervene. He lamented the coalition’s tenure tarnishing the prestige of the renowned Durga Temple in Vijayawada. “Daily lapses due to negligence by temple officials and leaders humiliate the deity and distress her devotees,” he said. Highlighting specific grievances, he

pointed to temple EO and Chairman stripping devotees some wearing the goddess’s garland after traveling long distances of their sacred items, defying scriptures. Such repeated sacrileges have caused profound mental anguish among believers, he added. The once-glorious shrine risks infamy under coalition rule, he alleged. Srinivas Rao’s outburst underscores deepening political tensions over temple administration in Andhra Pradesh, with opposition parties accusing the TDP-Jana Sena-BJP alliance of undermining Hindu traditions amid governance disputes.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Lokesh Arrive in Nara Waripalem for Sankranti Celebrations

TPN Bureau | Jan 12 Nara Waripalem, Chittoor District: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and his son, Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics Nara Lokesh, reached their native village Nara Waripalem in Chandragiri Mandal on Monday to participate in the annual Sankranti festivities. Accompanied by family members, the duo was accorded a rousing welcome by local leaders, party workers, and villagers en route, particu-

larly at Rangampeta junction. The father-son pair’s arrival marks a cherished family tradition, with the Nara and Nandamuri families celebrating Sankranti every year in this sleepy village. Enthusiastic supporters, including TDP leaders, activists, and residents, gathered in large numbers to greet them with garlands, fireworks, and chants. Minister Lokesh warmly reciprocated, shaking hands with



well-wishers, posing for selfies, and boosting the spirits of the crowd. This visit underscores the Naidu family’s deep-

rooted connection to their roots. Lokesh, who serves as a key figure in the state cabinet, joined his father after a brief

stopover, emphasizing the personal significance of the occasion. “It’s heartwarming to be back home with fam-

ily and our people during Sankranti,” Lokesh reportedly told the gathering, as per local sources. The family plans to stay in Nara Waripalem for four days, immersing themselves in festivities alongside relatives and villagers. Traditional rituals, community feasts, and cultural events are on the agenda, continuing the legacy of the Nara and Nandamuri clans who have upheld this custom for years. Beyond celebra-

tions, Chief Minister Naidu’s itinerary includes official engagements. He is scheduled to inaugurate several development projects and lay foundation stones for key initiatives in the region. This blend of personal festivity and public service highlights Naidu’s hands-on approach to governance, even during holidays. Sources indicate the programs will focus on local infrastructure, aligning with TDP’s promises for ru-

ral Andhra Pradesh. The visit has generated significant buzz in Chittoor district, with TDP cadres viewing it as a morale booster ahead of upcoming political activities. Security has been tightened around the village to ensure smooth proceedings. As Andhra Pradesh gears up for Sankranti, the Naidu-Lokesh duo’s presence in Nara Waripalem symbolizes continuity, tradition, and development in the state’s political heartland.



YSRCP District President Organizes Vibrant Sankranti Competitions

TPN Bureau | Jan 12
Guntur: In a spirited celebration of Andhra Pradesh's iconic Sankranti festival, YSRCP Guntur District President Ambati Rambabu spearheaded a series of traditional competitions in Guntur city on Sunday. The event, held under his leadership, drew enthusiastic crowds and featured active participation from former minister R.K. Roja, injecting high energy into the festivities.

This annual extravaganza underscores Rambabu's commitment to preserving cultural traditions while fostering community spirit amid the state's vibrant political landscape. The highlight of the day was

the women's rangoli (muggulu) competition, which showcased the artistic talents of local women. Participants created intricate designs depicting Sankranti motifs like harvest scenes, cows, and festive symbols, blending creativity with cultural reverence. The first-place winner walked away with a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, while the second-place recipient received Rs 50,000. Rambabu personally handed out the awards, praising the contestants for their dedication and skill. "These competitions not only celebrate our heritage but also empower women in our communities," he remarked, emphasizing the event's role in pro-

moting local talent. Following the rangoli contest, the excitement escalated with the much-anticipated cockfight (kodipandelu) segment, a quintessential Sankranti attraction in rural Andhra Pradesh. Rambabu and Roja released the roosters into the arena, cheering as the birds clashed in thrilling bouts. The cockfights, conducted under regulated conditions, symbolized the festival's blend of tradition and spectacle, drawing cheers from spectators who gathered in large numbers.

Security was tight, ensuring a safe and orderly environment, reflective of the organizers' attention to detail. Address-



ing the gathering, Rambabu shared his personal tradition of hosting Sankranti events every year. He re-

called similar competitions in Sattenapalli in the past, highlighting his long-standing involvement in cultural

activities. "Sankranti is more than a festival; it's a time for unity, joy, and reconnecting with our roots," he said.

The event also served as a platform for YSRCP leaders to engage with grassroots supporters, reinforcing party bonds ahead of upcoming political developments in Andhra Pradesh. In a light-hearted moment, Roja bestowed a catchy title on Rambabu: "In the state, Rambabu means Sankranti, and Sankranti means Rambabu!" Her endorsement elicited laughter and applause, underscoring the camaraderie within YSRCP ranks. Roja, known for her fiery political style, used the occasion to praise Rambabu's organizational prowess and community outreach. The Sankranti celebrations come at a time when Andhra Pradesh is

buzzing with festival fervor across districts like Guntur, Ongole, and beyond. With TDP, YSRCP, and Janasena navigating governance and opposition dynamics, such events provide leaders a chance to connect culturally. Rambabu's initiative aligns with YSRCP's focus on welfare schemes and regional traditions, potentially boosting morale among party workers. As the sun set on the Guntur venue, participants and attendees left with prizes, memories, and a renewed sense of cultural pride. Rambabu announced plans to expand these events further, promising bigger spectacles in the coming years.

MLA Bhuma Akhila Priya Thwarts Illegal Cattle Transport on NH-40 in Allagadda

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026
Allagadda, Nandyal District: In a decisive late-night operation, Nandyal district MLA Bhuma Akhila Priya intercepted a brazen attempt to smuggle cattle illegally along the 40th National Highway in Allagadda mandal. Acting on credible intelligence about the illicit transport, the TDP leader, accompanied by party cadre including her father, senior TDP figure Bhuma Vikhyat Reddy, rushed to the Chagalamarri Toll Plaza shortly after midnight on Saturday.

The team swiftly halted five container trucks loaded with livestock, alerting Allagadda police for immediate intervention. DSP K. Promod Kumar and SI Varaprasad arrived promptly at the scene, seizing the vehicles and

escorting them to the Grameena Police Station for inspection. Authorities rescued dozens of cattle from cramped, inhumane conditions and transferred them to a goshala (cattle shelter) in Nandikotkur for care and rehabilitation.

A case was registered, and those responsible were taken into custody. Preliminary investigations revealed shocking violations: each container crammed 40-50 cattle, far exceeding legal limits and endangering animal welfare. The trucks were reportedly en route from Pebbair in Telangana to Kadapa district in Andhra Pradesh, likely for unauthorized slaughter or sale, in blatant defiance of state and national regulations on cattle transport and cow protection laws.

MLA Akhila Priya, known for her staunch



advocacy on rural issues, hailed the operation as a victory against smuggling networks exploiting porous interstate borders. "Illegal cattle trafficking not only violates animal protection norms but also undermines farmers' livelihoods by depriving them of their livestock," she stated at the site. Bhuma Vikhyat Reddy echoed her sentiments, crediting vigilant TDP workers for the tip-off and urging strict-

er highway patrols. This incident underscores ongoing challenges in curbing cattle smuggling along NH-40, a vital corridor linking Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Police sources indicate such operations often occur under cover of darkness, fueled by demand in unregulated markets. The Nandyal district administration has vowed enhanced surveillance, including more toll plaza checks and coordination with

Telangana counterparts. Local farmers and animal welfare activists praised the MLA's hands-on approach, calling for permanent solutions like GPS tracking for livestock vehicles and harsher penalties.

As the investigation deepens, authorities are probing potential links to larger syndicates. This crackdown serves as a strong message: illegal cattle trade will face zero tolerance in Andhra Pradesh.

Sankranti Rush Turns Srikakulam into a Sea of Crowds



TPN Bureau | January 12
Arasavalli: The festive fervor of Sankranti has arrived in full swing, transforming quiet towns into bustling hubs across Andhra Pradesh. Migrant workers, who had ventured to distant cities for livelihood, are flocking back to their native

villages, swelling the ranks of travelers and shoppers. Bus complexes and railway stations are overflowing with passengers, creating a chaotic yet vibrant scene as families reunite for the harvest festival.

In Srikakulam town, the pre-Sankranti shopping

frenzy has peaked, drawing crowds from every corner of the district. GT Road, the main artery lined with clothing stores on both sides of the platforms, resembled a human anthill. Shoppers jostled for space to browse new clothes, traditional attire, and festival essentials, turn-

ing the area into an impenetrable sea of people.

Pedestrians struggled to navigate the narrow pathways, while vehicle drivers faced severe bottlenecks, honking in frustration amid the gridlock. Local authorities anticipated the surge and sprang into action. Police erected barricades along GT Road, prohibiting cars and autos from entering the core shopping stretch.

Traffic personnel directed diversions, ensuring smoother flow on peripheral routes. "We're managing the crowds to prevent accidents and allow safe shopping," said a senior traffic officer on duty. Similar scenes unfolded in nearby markets, where vendors reported record sales of sarees, kurtas, and children's wear must-haves for Sankranti celebrations.

The festival, marking the sun's transition into Capricorn, symbolizes prosperity

and fresh beginnings. Families stock up on rangoli powders, sweets like pongal, and harvest produce, blending tradition with commerce. However, the rush highlights infrastructure challenges: narrow roads and limited parking exacerbate the chaos annually. Residents expressed mixed feelings.

"It's joyful to see everyone together, but walking feels impossible," remarked Lakshmi, a local shopper laden with bags. Migrant worker Ravi Kumar, returning from Visakhapatnam, added, "The crowds remind me why home is special during festivals."

"As Sankranti dawns on January 14, authorities urge caution: shop early, use public transport, and follow traffic rules. With clear skies and high spirits, Srikakulam gears up for kite-flying, bonfires, and feasting, promising an unforgettable celebration amid the revelry.

AP CM at his native village for Sankranthi

TPN Bureau | January 12

Chittoor: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu arrived at his native village, Naravaripalli, on Monday to take part in Sankranti festivities, continuing a long-standing family tradition that draws state-wide attention every year. The Chief Minister flew in from the state capital Amaravati by helicopter and landed near Naravaripalli amid tight security arrangements. District top officials, local leaders, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) cadre and villagers turned out in large numbers to extend a rousing welcome. The festive atmosphere in and around the village intensified with the arrival of the Chief Minister, who is considered a local icon in this part of Chittoor district. Ahead of Chandrababu Naidu's visit, his wife Nara Bhuvaneswari and daughter-in-law Nara Brahmani, wife of IT and Rural Development Minister Nara Lokesh, reached

Naravaripalli on Monday morning to oversee family and festive arrangements.

Their early arrival set the tone for the day's celebrations and religious rituals. The Sankranti celebrations in Naravaripalli are not just a private family affair, but have evolved over the years into a high-profile public event. Members of the extended Nandamuri family have also reached the village. Notably, Nandamuri Balakrishna's family, Nandamuri Ramakrishna, and Visakhapatnam MP M. Bharat, who is Balakrishna's younger son-in-law, have all arrived to join the festivities. With both the Nara and Nandamuri families assembling in Naravaripalli, the Chief Minister's native village has taken on a special festive sheen. In view of the Chief Minister's presence and the movement of several prominent political and film personalities, police have strengthened security not only in Naravaripalli but also in

the surrounding villages. Barricades, traffic regulation and deployment of additional forces are in place to ensure smooth conduct of the program and orderly movement of visitors.

For the Nara and Nandamuri families, celebrating Sankranti in Naravaripalli has become an annual custom. As part of the tradition, they visit the village deity Nagalamma, offer special prayers and perform religious rituals seeking blessings for the year ahead. Chandrababu Naidu also pays homage at the memorials of his parents, offering floral tributes and observing a moment of remembrance. The convergence of political, familial and religious elements each year at Naravaripalli during Sankranti highlights the emotional bond the Chief Minister's family maintains with its ancestral roots, even as it remains at the center of Andhra Pradesh's political spotlight.



Skill Soft IT Donates Computers Worth Rs2 Lakh to Govt Schools in Narasaraopet, MLA Praises CSR Initiative

TPN Bureau | January 12, 2026
Narasaraopet (Palnadu District): Donors' support for strengthening government schools is unforgettable, declared Narasaraopet MLA Dr. Chadlavada Aravind Babu during a CSR event here on Monday evening. As part of its Social Responsibility (CSR) program, Skill Soft IT Company stepped forward to enhance government schools in the Narasaraopet constituency. Aiming to provide students with modern

technological skills, the company donated computers worth 2 lakh to these schools. The handover took place grandly at the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) office in Narasaraopet. Skill Soft IT representatives presented the computers to MLA Dr. Chadlavada Aravind Babu and District Education Officer Ramarao, who then facilitated distribution to the schools.

Speaking at the event, MLA Dr. Aravind Babu commended corporate institutions for their proactive support in



bolstering government

schools. "It's highly

praiseworthy that cor-

porates are coming forward to aid public education. Students in these schools need quality education alongside digital knowledge," he said. He added that the donated computers would guide students toward a brighter future by equipping them with essential tech skills.

The MLA highlighted the government's priority on education, implementing various school development programs. "With corporates and donors joining hands, even better results are possible. Their services

to government school growth will never be forgotten," he emphasized. District Education Officer Ramarao echoed these sentiments, stressing the need for such support to promote digital education in public schools. "This assistance is crucial for encouraging digital learning.

Students will gain computer proficiency, preparing them to face the competitive world ahead," he noted. The event saw participation from Skill Soft IT representatives Nallapati

Shiva Kumar, former Municipal Chairman Subbaraya Gupta, DEO Ramarao, MEO Nageswara Rao, TDP leaders Vasireddi Ravi, Mannan Shareef, Nallapati Chinnabbayi, Batula Selvaraj, education department officials, headmasters, and others.

This initiative aligns with TDP-led government's push for educational infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh's Palnadu district, fostering public-private partnerships for rural student upliftment.

Trump’s Unilateralism and the Unravelling of the Global Order

US President Donald Trump appears determined to dismantle the global system just as relentlessly as he has weakened democratic norms at home. Domestically, constitutional checks and balances have steadily eroded, leaving him virtually unconstrained. Internationally, his actions face little effective resistance. The result is a presidency marked by unprecedented unilateralism and a profound disregard for international law and institutions.

Despite the rise of China and the re-emergence of Russia as a major power, the United States under Trump has reverted to a starkly unilateral posture. He has imposed sweeping tariffs on virtually all countries, in blatant violation of World Trade Organization rules. These tariffs are not merely economic instruments; they are weapons deployed to extract political and strategic concessions. India has been a notable target, facing an additional 25 per cent penalty tariff for purchasing discounted Russian oil.

Trump’s disdain for multilateralism is neither subtle nor selective. While earlier US administrations also bypassed multilateral frameworks when convenient, Trump has done so openly and contemptuously. During his first term, he withdrew the US from the Paris Climate Agreement, the World Health Organization, UNESCO and the UN Human Rights Council. Now, he has gone much further, announcing the US exit from 66 international organisations, including key UN bodies. Among them are institutions central to climate governance, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well



as trade and development bodies like UNCTAD and ECOSOC.

His hostility to climate action is ideological as well as commercial. Trump dismisses climate change as a “hoax,” ignoring overwhelming scientific consensus and global concern. This posture aligns closely with the interests of the US oil industry, a major financial and political backer of both Trump and the Republican Party. It explains his embrace of the slogan “Drill, baby, drill” in his January 2024 inaugural address, his pressure on Europe and India to buy American LNG, and the tightening of sanctions on Russian oil.

Most dramatically, it underpins his recent military action against Venezuela, including the abduction of President Nicolás Maduro, with the

declared intention of taking control of the country’s oil reserves—the largest in the world. Trump has advanced the legally absurd claim that Venezuelan oil belongs to the United States because American companies originally developed parts of the infrastructure. According to this logic, Venezuelan oil would be extracted, shipped and sold by the US, with revenues allocated at Trump’s discretion. Venezuela, in turn, would be permitted to spend only what Washington allows, and only on American goods.

This aggression represents a “Trump Corollary” to the revived Monroe Doctrine outlined in the National Security Strategy 2025. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has questioned why Venezuela should sell oil to China,

Russia and Iran, ignoring the fact that US sanctions forced Venezuela to turn to China, which now buys roughly half of its oil exports. China has also emerged as Venezuela’s largest lender since the Chávez era, with outstanding loans of around \$10 billion.

Trump’s contempt for international norms was laid bare in a recent interview with The New York Times. Asked whether international law constrained his actions, he replied bluntly: “I don’t need international law.” When pressed on what limits his power globally, he answered: “My own morality. My own mind.” Given his transactional worldview and erratic decision-making, such statements raise serious concerns.

As part of this power projection, Trump has

signalled that he will allow the New START Treaty to lapse, effectively ending decades of US–Russia arms control efforts. Combined with plans for a nationwide Iron Dome-style missile defence system and a projected \$1.5 trillion defence budget by 2027, this points toward a renewed arms race and heightened strategic instability.

Yet Trump continues to insist that he deserves the Nobel Peace Prize. His aggression against Venezuela, the kidnapping of its president, and his repeated threats to seize Greenland by force have not tempered this sense of entitlement. He has even complained publicly that Norway made a “big mistake” by not awarding him the prize and claimed he would accept Venezuelan

opposition leader María Corina Machado’s offer to hand over her 2025 Peace Prize—an offer the Norwegian Nobel Institute has rightly ruled invalid. Trump has further asserted, without evidence, that he has resolved eight conflicts, including the India–Pakistan standoff, and therefore merits multiple Nobel Prizes. His resentment that Barack Obama received the award clearly continues to rankle.

Trump’s attitude toward India has become increasingly patronising and, at times, openly offensive. He has claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to “make him happy” by stopping purchases of Russian oil and deferentially asking for an audience—an assertion firmly rebutted by India’s

Ministry of External Affairs, which has reiterated that both leaders engage with mutual respect.

The situation has worsened with the proposed Russia Sanctions Bill, strongly backed by Senator Lindsey Graham, who publicly congratulated Trump for endorsing it. The bill envisages punitive tariffs of up to 500 per cent on countries such as India, China and Brazil that continue to buy Russian oil. Trump’s casual remark that it was “easy” to impose tariffs on India underscores how lightly he treats a matter of great sensitivity for bilateral relations.

The bill, which has broad bipartisan support and is likely to pass, also seeks to expand CAATSA sanctions, including restrictions on uranium

trade with Russia—even though the US itself continues to import Russian uranium. One clear objective is to obstruct Russia’s cooperation with other countries in building nuclear power plants, a move that could theoretically affect India’s Kudankulam project. While presidential waivers are предусмотрен, they merely serve as leverage to extract unrelated concessions.

Adding to the strain, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has reignited controversy by claiming that a trade deal with India had been finalised at his level but fell through because Modi was reluctant to call Trump. He further alleged that India “missed its slot” after the US–UK agreement and that when New Delhi was ready to sign, the opportunity had passed. India has dismissed these claims as inaccurate, noting that Modi and Trump spoke by phone eight times in 2025 alone.

This cavalier handling of a crucial economic issue reveals how deeply Trump’s approach to India is shaped by personal ego rather than strategic calculation. Modi’s decision to avoid a direct call without a finalised deal was prudent, preventing Trump from applying direct pressure to extract further concessions or from prematurely declaring victory, as he has done with other leaders.

India–US relations have undoubtedly entered a difficult phase under Trump, but India is far from alone. Even longstanding US allies are grappling with similar challenges. No American president since the Second World War has disrupted the global order as profoundly as Trump has managed to do in just one year. With three more years remaining in his term, the turbulence may only intensify.

When Cinema, Silence and Strategy Collide in Tamil Nadu Politics

For more than three decades in Tamil cinema, Thalapathy Vijay has built a carefully honed screen persona: street-smart, instinctive, always thinking three steps ahead, adept at reading the opponent’s mind and unafraid to speak his truth. From youthful rebellion to mature authority, almost every adult character he has played over the last 33 years has embodied these traits. It is therefore striking—almost disorienting—that in his political avatar, Vijay has chosen silence as his primary response to a moment tailor-made for confrontation.

When the Censor Board’s actions effectively ensured that his supposed farewell film, Jana Nayagan, would not secure the Pongal release it was aiming for, Vijay did not utter a word. No public statement. No political charge. No attempt to frame the move as institutional pressure. This silence is intriguing, especially given the timing. Tamil Nadu goes to the polls in just three months. Jana Nayagan is widely seen as Vijay’s campaign vehicle. And Vijay himself has claimed that his fledgling party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), will win the election. If there was ever a moment to seize political momentum, this was it. Instead, the opportunity slipped by.

Ironically, the develop-

ments of the past 48 hours have turned into a political windfall—not for Vijay, but for the ruling DMK. With Jana Nayagan effectively pushed out of the Pongal frame until at least January 21, unless the Supreme Court intervenes, Parasakthi now has a clear, uninterrupted run across nearly 1,000 screens in Tamil Nadu. Pongal 2026 was initially billed as a cinematic and political showdown—Jana Nayagan versus Parasakthi. That clash has evaporated. Parasakthi has emerged as the sole major festival release, giving it unprecedented visibility and recall.

This is no ordinary film. The DMK has, quite literally, “owned” Parasakthi. The title itself evokes an unmistakable Karunanidhi connection; the late chief minister wrote the screenplay and dialogues for the original Parasakthi in 1952, a film that reshaped Tamil cinema and politics alike. The subject—rooted in the anti-Hindi agitations of the mid-1960s—is inseparable from DMK ideology. The party has also backed the project financially, with Red Giant Movies, run by the DMK’s first family, acting as distributor. In every sense, Parasakthi is a cultural extension of the DMK’s political narrative.

Where Vijay chose silence, Chief Minister MK Stalin chose speed and



timing. Demonstrating why he remains the undisputed “Thalapathy” of realpolitik, Stalin moved quickly to condemn the Censor Board’s actions, branding it a “political tool” of the Union government. In one stroke, he turned the controversy into a weapon against the BJP. Ideally, this should have been Vijay’s moment—to accuse the BJP of subterfuge, to allege pressure tactics, to frame himself as a victim of institutional overreach. By not doing so, Vijay allowed the Congress—and then the DMK—to seize the

narrative.

For a political start-up like TVK, this is not a trivial lapse. Electoral politics in Tamil Nadu demands constant signalling, narrative control and rapid response. If Vijay believes that charisma and scripted dialogue alone—however powerful on screen—can win over one of India’s most politically aware electorates, he may be badly mistaken. The episode underscores the urgent need for TVK to build a professional team of political strategists who understand timing as much as messaging.

Stalin’s intervention also had a secondary, subtler effect. By indirectly backing Vijay on the Jana Nayagan issue, he blunted the Congress’s attempt to position itself as Vijay’s principal political sympathiser. Until now, a perception had been building of DMK versus Congress in their attitudes toward Vijay. Stalin deftly reframed it as DMK plus Congress standing with Vijay—at least in the specific context of the film controversy.

In most Indian states, Jana Nayagan and Parasakthi would be dismissed

as mere movies. In Tamil Nadu, especially with elections just months away, they are campaign dynamite. Cinema and politics have long been intertwined here, and these two films are loaded with ideological messaging. That is why the manoeuvring around them in Chennai has been so intense, with wheels turning within wheels.

The Congress, in particular, finds itself deeply divided. MPs like Manickam Tagore and Jothimani have openly supported Jana Nayagan, a move widely interpreted as

more than cinematic solidarity. For one faction within the party, Vijay represents a potential alternative to a continued alliance with the DMK. Even if a formal break does not occur, this group hopes that visible support for Vijay will strengthen the Congress’s bargaining position—more seats, and perhaps even a share in power, should the alliance return to office in May 2026.

On the other side is the pro-DMK faction within the Congress, which believes that disturbing the status quo would be politically suicidal. For them, the DMK–Congress alliance remains the most viable path forward. The irony, however, lies in the content of Parasakthi itself. The film reportedly portrays the Congress in an unflattering light. Historically, this is accurate: the anti-Hindi agitations were directed against a Congress-led government at the Centre. In today’s political shorthand, anti-Hindi sentiment is often equated with anti-BJP politics. In the world of 1960s Parasakthi, however, the Congress is unmistakably the antagonist.

Yet the DMK’s objectives extend beyond a single movie release. With Parasakthi now the sole Pongal attraction, the party sees an opportunity to forge an emotional and ideological bond with a

younger generation that is largely disconnected from events that unfolded six decades ago. The film becomes a context-setting device, placing pride in Tamil language, history and culture within a contemporary political framework. In the months leading up to the election, the DMK ecosystem is expected to amplify this narrative through social media, reels, memes and storytelling.

Finally, there is the question of whether the Jana Nayagan controversy helps or hurts the BJP. If the party’s intention was to gently nudge Vijay toward the NDA, this episode appears counterproductive. Even as the BJP denies any role in the Censor Board’s decision, the opposition is certain to amplify the perception that institutional power was weaponised against a political rival.

For Vijay and TVK, however, there is a silver lining. Even if Jana Nayagan misses the Pongal window, the film—reportedly a remake of the Telugu hit Bhagavanth Kesari—is now surrounded by unprecedented hype. Commercially, it is well-positioned to become a blockbuster. Politically, though, the episode stands as a reminder: in Tamil Nadu, silence can be louder than dialogue—and not always to one’s advantage.

PM Modi Strengthens Diplomatic Ties Through Informal “Car Diplomacy” with World Leaders

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has increasingly embraced informal car rides as a unique form of diplomacy, using them to signal warmth and personal connection with visiting world leaders. Following rides with Russian President Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, PM Modi continued the tradition today by sharing a car ride with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Chancellor Merz is on his first official visit to India, which included attending a traditional kite festival and visiting the historic Sabarmati Ashram, the spiritual retreat of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of India’s independence movement. A German government spokesperson in Berlin noted that Merz’s choice of India for his first trip to Asia as chancellor “demonstrates how India, the world’s largest democracy, is an important strategic partner for Germany.”

Highlighting the growing friendship between the two countries, PM Modi shared a picture on X of the car ride with Chancellor Merz. “The friendship between India and Germany continues to grow through shared values, extensive cooperation and mutual understanding,” he wrote.

The Rise of PM Modi’s Car Diplomacy

In recent years, world leaders meeting PM Modi have increasingly shared informal car rides or personally driven him, gestures widely seen as symbols of friendship and trust.



- Russia: In September 2025, PM Modi and President Putin rode together in a car during a major bilateral meeting at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, China. In December 2025, Modi personally received Putin at Palam Airport, and the Russian President travelled with him in a white Toyota Fortuner to 7 Lok Kalyan Marg.
- Jordan: During a two-day visit in December 2025 marking 75 years of diplomatic relations, Jordan’s Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II personally drove PM Modi to a museum in Amman, with Modi later sharing images from the passenger seat of the Prince’s BMW.
- Ethiopia: PM Modi was greeted with a hug at the airport by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, who then drove him to his hotel in Addis Ababa.
- United Kingdom: In October 2025, PM Modi shared a car ride with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer before attending the Global Fintech Fest 2025 in Mumbai, calling the ties between India and the UK “on the move” and “filled with great vigour.”

These informal interactions highlight PM Modi’s distinctive diplomatic style, where personal gestures and shared experiences complement formal talks, fostering trust and closer international ties.

Delhi Political Row Escalates as BJP Challenges AAP Over Controversial Atishi Video

New Delhi: The controversy surrounding a video of Delhi Assembly Leader of Opposition Atishi intensified on Sunday, with senior BJP leaders daring Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal to take legal action against them. As BJP leaders and workers began widely sharing the Assembly clip on social media, the hashtag #KejriwalMaafiMaango trended online.

The flashpoint is a video from Delhi Assembly proceedings, initially shared on X by Delhi minister Kapil Mishra. The Punjab Police in Jalandhar registered an FIR after allegations emerged that the clip had been “doctored” to falsely attribute derogatory remarks against Sikh Gurus to Atishi. This sparked a sharp backlash from the BJP, which questioned both the FIR and the police’s jurisdiction.

BJP Issues Direct Challenge

At a Delhi press conference, BJP Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva posted the same video on X, challenging Kejriwal to act.



“Thousands of BJP workers and I are posting Atishi’s video. If Kejriwal has the courage, he should get FIRs registered against all of us,” Sachdeva said.

Rejecting claims that the video was manipulated, Sachdeva said the clip was authentic and under examination. “The Speaker of the Assembly has ordered an investigation. Once the report comes, the truth will be clear,” he added. He also accused the AAP of using intimidation tactics against BJP workers and said the party was

not afraid of legal action.

FIR in Punjab and the Delhi Fallout

The FIR against Kapil Mishra followed AAP’s claim that the video had been altered. Punjab Police later said a forensic review found that a specific word attributed to Atishi was not part of the original audio, and captions had been added.

The BJP countered that proceedings inside the Delhi Assembly fall under the Speaker’s jurisdiction, not an

external police force. “Arvind Kejriwal knows that only the Speaker can examine such incidents. Yet, an FIR was registered in Punjab before the forensic report was even released,” Sachdeva said. He also alleged that Atishi did not respond to the Speaker’s notices following the incident.

BJP MPs Join the Fray

Several BJP MPs joined the challenge, sharing the video and demanding an apology from the AAP leadership. BJP MP Praveen Khandelwal tweeted that the alleged remarks were “condemnable” and questioned how many FIRs Kejriwal would register against those sharing the clip. BJP MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat described the comments as “a direct attack on the faith of crores of devotees” and called out the Punjab Police to take action against all sharers of the video.

With the hashtag trending and leaders doubling down on their stance, the controversy shows no sign of abating, setting the stage for further escalation in the coming days.

ED Moves Supreme Court Against “Wrongful Restraint” During I-PAC Raids in Kolkata

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday filed a second writ petition in the Supreme Court, challenging what it called the “wrongful restraint” of its officers during raids at the I-PAC office and its director’s residence in Kolkata last week.

The petition, filed by ED Assistant Directors Nishant Kumar, Vikram Ahlawat, and Prashant Chandila, names West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, DGP Rajeev Kumar, Kolkata Police Commissioner Manoj Verma, and Deputy Commissioner Priyoboto Roy.

The agency alleged that during searches on December 8 in connection with an alleged coal pilferage scam, state authorities “illegally and unauthorisedly” intervened. According to the petition, the Chief Minister and police officers entered the residence of I-PAC director Pratik Jain at 6:20 AM while the search was ongoing, restrained the officers, and removed seized documents, laptops, and mobile phones.



“The laptop of an ED officer was also taken and returned only after two hours, which amounts to theft,” the 160-page petition claimed. It added that the backup of computer systems and emails was halted midway, storage devices of security cameras were seized, and mobile phones of I-PAC employees were taken, leaving the ED unable to seize any data or documents.

The petition also seeks a stay on four FIRs filed by the West Bengal Police against ED officials following the high-voltage face-off during the raids.

The searches, conducted across 10 premises — six in West Bengal and four in Delhi — are linked to a 2020 CBI case against a coal-smuggling syndicate led by Anup Majhi, alias “Lala,” accused of illegally

excavating coal from Eastern Coalfields in Paschim Bardhaman district.

The ED further alleged that a hawala operator connected to the coal scam facilitated tens of crores of rupees in transactions to Indian PAC Consulting Private Limited, the registered company of political consultancy firm I-PAC, linking the firm to alleged hawala dealings.

Ahead of PMC Elections, Leaders Clash Over Crime, Minority Representation and Party Unity



Pune: As the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) elections approach, NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) MP Supriya Sule on Monday dismissed claims of any family rifts, emphasizing unity within the party. Addressing reporters, she questioned the Mahayuti government over rising crime in Pune.

“I have written to the Chief Minister multiple times regarding the surge in crimes in Pune. I want to ask what has been done about it. There have never been issues within our family—we are all here to serve the public,” Sule said.

Her remarks come after the NCP (SP) joined hands with the Ajit Pawar-led NCP ahead of the PMC elections. Sule also highlighted her party’s pro-

gressive manifesto, expressing confidence that voters in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) would support them.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut targeted the ruling BJP and Ajit Pawar’s faction, accusing them of promoting “hooliganism” to win elections. Speaking at a public rally, Raut claimed that Pune, once celebrated for its beauty, has now become a “city of goons.”

“Whether it is the BJP or Ajit Pawar’s party, there is hardly any gang whose relatives have not received election tickets from these parties. I once said, if they had met Dawood Ibrahim, they would have given tickets to his brother or relatives, including Chhota Shakeel and Chhota Rajan.

These people cannot win elections without hooliganism,” Raut said.

In a separate rally in Jalna, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi urged the Muslim community to “develop their own political agency” rather than rely on parties that have historically opposed minority leadership. Criticizing both the Mahayuti and MVA alliances, Owaisi said, “Congress, NCP, Shiv Sena, Shiv Sena (UBT) or BJP, none of them supports the rise of leaders from the Muslim minority community.”

The State Election Commission of Maharashtra has announced polls for 29 municipal corporations, including the BMC, PMC, and PCMC. Voting is scheduled for January 15, with counting on January 16.

Three Months After Karur Stampede, Actor-Politician Vijay Appears Before CBI



New Delhi: Three months after the tragic Karur stampede that claimed 41 lives, Tamilaga Vettai Kazhagam (TVK) president and actor-politician Vijay appeared before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in New Delhi on Monday, January 12, for questioning.

Vijay was interrogated on several key aspects of the incident, including his decision to leave the venue as the situation worsened, and the delay in his arrival. Investigators asked him to narrate the sequence of events leading to the stampede, as he understood them, and whether he was aware of the overcrowding and anticipated footfall at the event.

The CBI also questioned Vijay on specific developments during his speech, including whether an announcement regarding a missing child had been made and if he noticed the ensuing commotion. Additionally, he was asked whether he knew that the

police had resorted to lathi charges to control the crowd.

Authorities are also summoning other key TVK officials. DGP Armed Police Davidson Devasirvatham appeared before the CBI on Monday, while TVK general secretary for elections Adhav Arjuna, joint general secretary Nirmal Kumar, and producer Jagadish Palanisamy have all been issued summons in connection with the case.

The Karur stampede occurred on September 27, when thousands of TVK supporters and Vijay fans gathered at Velusampuram in Karur town to attend a public event. Vijay was scheduled to arrive at 12:45 PM but reached only at 7 PM, a delay of more than six hours. During this time, the crowd grew restless, suffering from heat exhaustion and dehydration.

When Vijay finally arrived, approximately 5,000 supporters who had been following his campaign bus

merged with the waiting crowd, creating a chaotic situation. The resulting stampede led to the deaths of 41 people, including nine children. Eyewitnesses and reports indicate that the delay and mismanagement at the venue significantly contributed to the tragedy.

Following the incident, Vijay left for Chennai from Trichy on a chartered flight as the death toll reached 30, reportedly ignoring questions from the press at both airports.

Investigations into the stampede were transferred to the CBI on October 13, following a Supreme Court ruling. The central agency has since been probing the sequence of events, crowd management failures, and the role of event organizers and authorities in the disaster. Vijay’s questioning marks a critical step in the CBI’s inquiry, as investigators seek to establish accountability for one of Tamil Nadu’s deadliest stampedes in recent years.

Trump’s “Acting President of Venezuela” Claim Sparks Global Attention



A social media post by US President Donald Trump declaring himself the “Acting President of Venezuela, Incumbent January 2026” has ignited widespread debate about America’s role in the ongoing crisis in Venezuela. The image, styled to resemble an edited Wikipedia page and shared on Trump’s Truth Social platform, featured his official portrait and listed him as both the 45th and 47th President of the United States, as well as Venezuela’s current head of state—an assertion not supported by any official record or international recognition.

The unusual declaration comes in the wake of a dramatic US military operation in Venezuela earlier this month that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. In the early-January raid, which involved strikes around Caracas, US forces took Maduro into custody and flew him to New York, where he has been arraigned on federal drug-trafficking and narcoterrorism charges.

In several public statements, Trump said the United States would “run” Venezuela temporarily to ensure stability and oversee what he described as a secure and orderly transition of power. He also suggested that Venezuela’s rich oil resources could be managed in a way that benefits both Venezuelans and the US, including plans for US energy firms to help rebuild the country’s battered oil industry.

Despite Trump’s online proclamation, international law and diplomatic practice do not recognise him as Venezuela’s acting president. Instead, Venezuela’s Supreme Tribunal

of Justice invoked constitutional succession provisions and on January 5, 2026, swore in Delcy Rodríguez—Maduro’s former vice president and oil minister—as the interim President to provide administrative continuity.

Rodríguez, however, has rejected US assertions of authority. She has demanded Maduro’s release and reaffirmed his legitimacy as Venezuela’s rightful leader. Many other countries and legal experts have criticised the US intervention, calling it a violation of international law and national sovereignty. Nations including China, Russia, and Spain have publicly condemned the operation.

Trump’s social media post has fueled intense discussion around the nature of US involvement in Venezuelan affairs. Critics argue the claim blurs established norms of sovereignty and diplomatic recognition, while supporters frame it as part of a bold strategy to displace a regime accused by Washington of corruption and drug trafficking.

In addition to the political controversy, Trump has pursued policies aimed at reshaping Venezuela’s energy landscape. He has issued directives to US oil companies regarding investment opportunities and signed an executive order protecting revenues from Venezuelan oil sales held in the United States. He has also warned that Venezuela’s interim authorities must cooperate, suggesting consequences for non-compliance.

The situation remains fluid and continues to draw global scrutiny, as debates over legality, legitimacy and the future of governance in Venezuela play out on the world stage.

Himachal Merchant Navy Officer Detained After US Seizes Russian-Flagged Tanker; Family Appeals to PM Modi



A 26-year-old merchant navy officer from Palampur in Himachal Pradesh’s Kangra district has been detained by United States authorities after a Russian-flagged oil tanker he was serving on was seized in the North Atlantic, his family said. Rikshit Chauhan was preparing to return home for his wedding next month when the vessel was intercepted by US forces following a prolonged maritime pursuit.

Chauhan, who joined the merchant navy on August 1, 2025, was on his first sea assignment aboard the tanker Marinera—formerly known as Bella 1—operated by a Russian company. The ship had been sailing toward Russia after stopping near Venezuela when US Coast Guard units intercepted and seized it on January 7 amid broader efforts to enforce sanctions on vessels believed to be linked to sanctioned oil shipments.

The seized tanker was carrying 28 crew members, including three Indians, 20 Ukrainians, six Georgians and two Russians. All of the crew are currently detained by US authorities pending legal and diplomatic procedures, although the two Russian crew members were reported released by US officials recently.

In Palampur, Chauhan’s family has made an emotional appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to secure his safe return. Reeta Devi, the officer’s mother, told reporters that her son’s wedding is scheduled for

February 19 and the family is praying he will be back in India before then. “We talked to Rikshit for the last time on January 7 and are praying to God for his safe return,” she said. She urged the government to facilitate the repatriation of her son and the two other Indian crew members from Goa and Kerala who were also on board.

Chauhan’s father, Ranjit Singh Chauhan, explained that his son had been sent to Venezuela to load oil as part of the ship’s assignment but the vessel was stopped at the border. After waiting for about 10 days, the Russian firm instructed the ship to return, but the US seizure occurred before it could complete the journey. The family last heard from Rikshit just hours before the interception.

Local officials have also expressed concern. Palampur MLA Ashish Butail has sought details about Chauhan’s whereabouts and said he will raise the matter with the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. The state’s Deputy Commissioner said they are coordinating with the Indian embassy to follow developments and assist the family.

The incident has highlighted the risks faced by merchant navy personnel caught up in geopolitical tensions and international maritime disputes. With no direct communication from government authorities so far, Chauhan’s family remains anxious and hopeful for swift diplomatic action to bring him home safely.

Trump Weighs ‘Strong Options’ as Iran Faces Widespread Protests and Mounting Death Toll

US President Donald Trump has said that Washington is closely monitoring the escalating unrest in Iran and is considering “very strong options” as the country enters its third week of nationwide protests—the largest since 2022—against the Islamic Republic’s ruling establishment led by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Speaking to reporters on Sunday as he returned to Washington from his Mar-a-Lago residence, Trump said the situation was under serious review at the highest levels of the US government. “We’re looking at it very seriously. The military is looking at it, and we’re looking at some very strong options. We’ll make a determination,” he said.

The protests, triggered by a severe currency crisis and worsening economic collapse, have rapidly evolved into a broader challenge to Iran’s political system. Demonstrations have spread across all 31 provinces, making the unrest the most serious threat to the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution. According to the US-based Human Rights Activist News Agency, more than 540 people have been killed, and over 10,000 arrests have been made since the protests began.

Tracking the full scale of the unrest has become increasingly difficult due to a near-total communications blackout. Iran’s internet shutdown entered its 84th hour on Monday, severely limiting information flow from within the country. While President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for dialogue and restraint, other senior officials have taken a harsher stance, warning of swift trials and even the death penalty as unrest and fatalities mount.

Trump’s Open Backing for Protesters

Trump has openly voiced support for Iranian protesters and issued re-



peated warnings to Tehran, unsettling both US allies and adversaries. On January 2, he said the US was “locked and loaded” and warned Iranian authorities against killing peaceful demonstrators. On Friday, he went further, stating that the US would “start shooting” if Iranian forces opened fire on protesters.

“Iran is looking at FREEDOM, perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!!!” Trump wrote on social media on Saturday.

At the same time, Trump revealed that Iran’s leadership had reached out to seek negotiations following his threats. “The leaders of Iran called yesterday. A meeting is being set up... They want to negotiate,” he said. However, he added that US action could precede any talks. “We may have to act before a meeting.”

Any US military strike on Iran would mark the second such action authorised by Trump. In August, US B-2 stealth bombers struck three Iranian nu-

clear facilities, significantly setting back Tehran’s nuclear programme.

Options Under Consideration

According to The Wall Street Journal, US military and diplomatic officials are expected to brief Trump on Tuesday on a range of options, including cyber operations and possible military action. One proposal under discussion involves sending Starlink satellite internet terminals—owned by Elon Musk—into Iran to help protesters bypass the government’s internet shutdown. Trump said he plans to speak with Musk about the idea.

Politico reported that the administration is also examining non-kinetic measures, such as cyber and covert operations, rather than deploying US ground forces. There has been no major movement of American military assets toward the region so far.

Other options include tightening sanctions, launching cyberattacks

against Iranian military or civilian infrastructure, and amplifying anti-regime messaging online.

Why Military Action Remains Risky

Despite his rhetoric, Trump has stopped short of committing to military action. Analysts say heightened security around senior Iranian leaders, including Revolutionary Guard commanders and Ayatollah Khamenei, has complicated any potential “decapitation” strategy.

Experts have warned that even limited strikes could spark a wider conflict. “The dilemma is at its peak,” said Danny Citrinowicz of the Institute for National Security Studies. “A strong strike could weaken repression, but it could also unify the regime and trigger a much broader escalation. Without organised opposition leadership, a strike may succeed operationally but fail strategically.”

Several US lawmakers have urged caution. Republican Senator Rand

Paul said bombing Iran may not achieve the intended outcome, while Democratic Senator Mark Warner warned that an attack could rally Iranians against an external enemy rather than weaken the regime.

By contrast, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham advocated a far more aggressive approach, urging Trump to “embolden the protesters and scare the hell out of the regime,” even calling for targeting Iran’s leadership.

Adding to the political dimension, Reza Pahlavi—the US-based son of Iran’s last shah—said he is prepared to return to Iran to help guide a democratic transition. “I’m already planning on that,” Pahlavi said, claiming he would oversee a transparent process allowing Iranians to freely choose their leaders.

As protests continue and international pressure mounts, the coming days may prove decisive for both Iran’s leadership and US policy in the region.

India Is the US’s Most Essential Partner, Says Ambassador-Designate Sergio Gor as Trade Talks Resume

Calling India the United States’ most essential global partner, US ambassador-designate Sergio Gor on Monday announced that Washington and New Delhi are set to resume the next round of negotiations on a long-pending bilateral trade deal starting Tuesday, January 12. Gor also indicated that US President Donald Trump may visit India by next year, underscoring the importance both countries attach to the relationship.

Speaking at the US Embassy in New Delhi following his arrival, Gor—who also serves as the US Special Envoy to South and Central Asia—emphasised the strength of ties between the two democracies and highlighted the personal rapport between President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“The United States and India are bound not just by shared interests, but by a relationship anchored at the highest levels,” Gor said. “Real friends can disagree, but they always resolve their differences in the end.”

Describing India as a critical partner on the global stage, Gor acknowledged the complexity of trade negotiations between two large economies but expressed confidence that progress would be made. “India is the world’s largest nation. It’s not an easy task to get this across the finish line, but



we are determined to get there,” he said.

Trade, Security and Strategic Cooperation

While trade remains a key pillar of the India-US relationship, Gor stressed that cooperation between the two countries extends far beyond commerce. He noted that New Delhi and Washington work closely together in areas such as security, counter-terrorism, energy, technology, education and healthcare.

Responding to questions about the stalled trade agreement, Gor confirmed that both sides remain actively engaged. “Many of you have asked for an update on the trade deal negotiations. Both sides continue to engage, and the next call on trade will take place tomorrow,” he said, adding that reaching an

agreement would require persistence and mutual understanding.

Trump-Modi Relationship and Possible India Visit

Gor repeatedly highlighted the personal bond between President Trump and Prime Minister Modi, calling it genuine and enduring. “I have travelled all over the world with President Trump, and I can attest that his friendship with Prime Minister Modi is real,” he said.

He also suggested that a presidential visit to India could be on the horizon. “During my last dinner with him, President Trump recalled his previous visit to India and spoke warmly about his friendship with the Prime Minister,” Gor said. “I hope the President will be visiting India soon, hopefully in

the next year or two.”

In a lighter moment, Gor joked about the time difference between Washington and New Delhi, noting that Trump’s habit of making early-morning phone calls might work well for India.

‘No Partner More Essential Than India’

Emphasising the strategic importance of the relationship, Gor said his mission as ambassador would be to take India-US ties to the next level. “No partner is more essential than India,” he declared. “In the months and years ahead, my goal is to pursue an ambitious agenda. We will do this as true strategic partners, each bringing strength, respect and leadership to the table.”

India to Join Pax Silica

Alliance

In a significant announcement, Gor revealed that India will be invited to join the Pax Silica alliance as a full member next month. The Pax Silica initiative is a US-led strategic framework aimed at building a secure, resilient and innovation-driven global silicon and semiconductor supply chain.

“I am pleased to announce that India will be invited to join this group of nations as a full member,” Gor said, signalling deeper technological and supply-chain cooperation between the two countries.

The announcement comes at a time when India and the US are seeking to strengthen strategic trust and economic collaboration amid evolving global challenges.

Dollar Slides, Gold Hits Record as Trump–Powell Clash Raises Fears Over Fed Independence

The US dollar weakened sharply, Wall Street futures slipped, and gold surged to a fresh record on Monday after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell disclosed that the Trump administration had threatened him with a criminal indictment linked to the refurbishment of the central bank’s headquarters.

The revelation has intensified concerns over the independence of the Federal Reserve, adding to an already volatile start to 2026 that has seen the United States capture Venezuela’s President Nicolás Maduro and escalate rhetoric about potentially taking control of Greenland.

S&P 500 futures fell more than 0.5 per cent, while gold — a traditional safe-haven asset — soared past \$4,600 an ounce, its highest level ever. Investors rushed to hedge against political turmoil and inflation risks, as money markets priced in a slightly higher probability of near-term US interest rate cuts.

European equities also opened lower, with regional indices dipping about 0.2 per cent from record highs. Safe-haven currencies strengthened, with the Swiss franc rising 0.6 per cent to 0.796 per dollar, while the euro gained 0.4 per cent to trade at \$1.168.

“The latest development marks a significant escalation in the fight between President Trump and Fed Chair Powell,” said Lee Hardman, senior currency analyst at MUFG. He added that the administration’s repeated attacks on the Fed’s autonomy continued to pose downside risks for the dollar.

Fed funds futures reflected a modest shift, adding roughly three basis points of expected rate cuts for 2026 — a small move,



but one that underscored concerns that political pressure could push the Fed toward a more accommodative stance.

Gold Rally, Oil Steady

Gold’s rally was also supported by mounting geopolitical tensions surrounding Iran. However, oil prices showed little immediate reaction. Brent crude slipped 9 cents to just over \$63 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate eased 10 cents to \$59.02 in early London trading.

Both benchmarks had gained more than 3 per cent last week — their strongest weekly rise since October — as Iran intensified its crackdown on nationwide protests.

While oil markets have built in a modest geopolitical risk premium, analysts warn that prices may still be underestimating the potential fallout. “The market is

saying, ‘Show me the disruption to supply,’ before materially responding,” said Saul Kavonic, head of energy research at MST Marquee, noting that any escalation affecting the Strait of Hormuz could have far-reaching consequences.

On Sunday, President Trump said he was considering a range of “very strong” responses, including military options, following Iran’s violent suppression of protests — the most serious challenge to the country’s clerical leadership since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi insisted on Monday that the situation was “under total control.”

Trump vs Powell

The coming week is packed with key events, including US inflation data, Chinese trade figures, and the start of the US

earnings season led by JPMorgan Chase and Bank of New York Mellon. But for markets, the confrontation between the White House and the Federal Reserve has taken centre stage.

Powell, whose term ends in May, described the threat of criminal charges as a “pretext” designed to pressure the Fed into cutting interest rates. “This unprecedented action should be seen in the broader context of the administration’s ongoing threats,” he said.

Economists say the dispute marks a dramatic escalation in a long-running conflict dating back to Trump’s first term. “Trump is pulling at the loose threads of central bank independence,” said Andrew Lilley, chief rates strategist at Sydney-based Barrenjoey. “Investors won’t like it, but it also suggests the administration has few levers left to influence monetary policy.”

The dollar bore the brunt of the reaction, falling even against typically risk-sensitive currencies such as the Australian and New Zealand dollars. The dollar index dropped 0.4 per cent in European trading, putting it on course for its biggest one-day fall since mid-December.

The greenback had a bruising 2025, losing more than 9 per cent against major peers amid narrowing interest rate differentials, rising fiscal deficit concerns, and growing political uncertainty.

“This open warfare between the Fed and the US administration is clearly not a good look for the dollar,” said Ray Attrill, head of currency strategy at National Australia Bank.

Sensex, Nifty Rebound Sharply After Five-Day Rout on India–US Trade Optimism



Indian equity benchmarks staged a strong recovery on Monday, snapping a five-session losing streak as positive comments from US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor on ongoing trade negotiations buoyed investor sentiment. Bargain hunting in banking, energy and metal stocks further supported the rebound from intraday lows.

The BSE Sensex climbed 301.93 points, or 0.36 per cent, to close at 83,878.17, after plunging as much as 715 points earlier in the day and slipping below the 83,000 mark. Similarly, the Nifty 50 gained 106.95 points, or 0.42 per cent, to settle at 25,790.25, recovering sharply from an intraday low of 25,473.40.

Markets reversed course after Gor said that India and the United States remain actively engaged in trade discussions. “Both sides continue to engage actively, and the next call on trade will take place tomorrow,” he said, lifting hopes of progress on a bilateral trade agreement. Investor confidence also improved after Gor indicated that US President Donald Trump may visit India in the next one to two years.

Key Drivers Behind the Market Recovery

1) India–US Trade Deal Optimism: Gor’s remarks underscored the strategic importance of India to Washington. Calling India the most essential partner for the US, he said real friends may disagree but always resolve differences. He highlighted the strong personal relationship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Trump, adding that both nations remain committed to finalising the trade deal despite its complexity. Gor also announced that India would be invited to join the US-led Pax Silica alliance, aimed at strengthening global semiconductor supply chains.

Ajit Mishra, Senior Vice President (Research) at Religare Broking, said the rebound was largely driven by short-covering in heavyweight stocks following six straight sessions of losses. However, he cautioned investors against reading too much into the bounce, noting that a sustained move above the 25,600 level on Nifty is required to confirm a meaningful recovery.

2) Value Buying After Sharp Correction:

Value buying emerged after markets suffered a steep decline last week amid foreign fund outflows, profit-taking, concerns over potential additional US tariffs, and geopolitical uncertainties. Over the past five sessions, the Sensex had dropped 2,185.77 points (2.54 per cent), while the Nifty had fallen 645.25 points (2.45 per cent).

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments, said improved sentiment around trade talks and expectations of stronger December-quarter earnings encouraged investors to selectively accumulate beaten-down stocks, particularly in banking and consumer segments.

3) Strong Buying in Banking Stocks: The Nifty Bank index led the recovery, rebounding sharply from its day’s low to rise about 677 points intraday, hitting 59,540.95. Banking stocks gained on expectations of solid quarterly earnings. IndusInd Bank emerged as the top gainer, rising over 2 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, which gained more than 1 per cent. Shares of SBI, AU Small Finance Bank, Yes Bank, and Union Bank of India also posted gains of nearly 1 per cent each.

Overall, the market rebound reflected a mix of trade optimism, value buying, and sector-specific strength, though analysts remain cautious about the sustainability of the recovery.

BSE Warns Investors Against Deepfake Video Falsely Showing CEO Giving Stock Tips



Leading stock exchange BSE Ltd on Monday issued a strong advisory urging investors to remain alert against a fraudulent deepfake video circulating on social media platforms that falsely portrays its Managing Director and CEO, Sundararaman Ramamurthy, offering stock recommendations and investment advice.

In a statement, the exchange said it had become aware of an unauthorised and fabricated video that uses deepfake technology to impersonate Ramamurthy and mislead the public. “The video is fraudulent and has been created to deceive investors by falsely claiming to provide stock recommendations and investment guidance,” BSE said.

According to the exchange, the video contains misleading claims promising extraordinary or super-normal profits, including suggestions of lucrative stock investments for 2026. It also urges viewers to join a WhatsApp channel, with fabricated statements such as, “You will have Rs 8 million by 2027,” being used to lure unsuspecting investors.

BSE clarified that neither Ramamurthy nor any official of the exchange is authorised to provide stock tips, investment advice, or operate WhatsApp, Telegram, or similar groups in either an official or personal capacity. The exchange stressed that any such claims should be treated as false and malicious.

“The video being circulated is fake, unauthorised, doctored and fabricated using deepfake technology,” the exchange said, adding that it is taking necessary steps to have the content removed from social media and messaging platforms. BSE also said it is initiating appropriate legal action against those responsible for creating and circulating the fraudulent material.

The exchange advised investors and the general public not to rely on or act upon such videos, messages or links. It urged market participants to seek information only through BSE’s official communication channels and from SEBI-registered intermediaries for any market-related guidance.

This is not the first instance of such fraud. Earlier in April, both BSE and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) had issued similar warnings after deepfake videos falsely depicting their CEOs offering stock tips surfaced online.

Deepfakes are manipulated videos, images or audio clips created using artificial intelligence to convincingly depict individuals saying or doing things they never did. Regulators and exchanges have flagged such content as a growing threat, as it can spread misinformation, facilitate financial fraud and severely damage public trust and reputations.

BSE reiterated its commitment to investor protection and urged vigilance against such evolving digital scams.

TCS Headcount Falls by Over 11,000 in Q3FY26 Amid Workforce Restructuring

India’s largest IT services firm, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), reported a net decline of 11,151 employees during the December quarter of FY26 as the company continued with workforce restructuring and role realignment initiatives.

According to TCS’ quarterly factsheet released on January 12, the company’s total employee strength stood at 5,82,163 at the end of Q3FY26, down from 5,93,314 in the September quarter. The sequential decline extends the contraction seen in the previous quarter, highlighting a broader organisational reset underway at the Mumbai-headquartered IT major.

The headcount reduction coincided with a quarter marked by significant exceptional charges related to restructuring efforts and statutory changes following the implementation of India’s new labour codes. These developments underline the scale of the company’s realignment as it adapts to shifting client demand, evolving skill requirements and rapid technological changes.



While restructuring continues, one-time restructuring expenses eased considerably in the December quarter, falling by over 77 per cent to Rs 253 crore, suggesting that the bulk of major realignment costs may now be behind the company.

Despite the workforce reduction, voluntary attrition remained elevated at 13.5 per cent on a last-twelve-month basis within IT services. This indi-

cates that the decline in headcount was driven largely by planned workforce optimisation measures rather than a sudden spike in employee exits.

The latest contraction adds to a longer-term shift in TCS’ employment trends. In FY24, the company reported a decline in employee numbers for the first time since its listing in 2004, breaking a long-standing pattern of consistent workforce

expansion.

On the financial front, TCS reported a 14 per cent year-on-year decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 10,657 crore for the October–December quarter of FY26. The drop was primarily due to exceptional items totalling Rs 2,128 crore, even as the company posted sequential revenue growth.

Of the exceptional charges, Rs 1,816 crore was attributed to the incremental cost of gratuity, while Rs 312 crore related to long-term compensated absences. TCS said these costs arose largely due to changes in wage definitions under the new labour laws, adding that the assessment was based on legal opinion and the best available information.

Despite near-term pressures, TCS highlighted continued momentum in its artificial intelligence business, which is now running at an annualised revenue rate of \$1.8 billion, underscoring the company’s focus on next-generation growth areas amid ongoing structural changes.

Stock Market Holiday 2026: BSE, NSE to Remain Closed on January 15 for Maharashtra Civic Polls

Indian stock exchanges BSE and NSE will remain closed on Thursday, January 15, 2026, due to municipal corporation elections in Maharashtra, according to a circular issued by the National Stock Exchange (NSE). The decision follows the Maharashtra government’s declaration of a public holiday to facilitate voting across the state.

“In partial modification to an earlier exchange circular, the Exchange hereby notifies Thursday, January 15, 2026, as a trading holiday in the Capital Market segment on account of Municipal Corporation Elections in Maharashtra,” the NSE said in its notification.

Earlier, the exchange had indicated that trading would remain open on January 15, with only a settlement holiday in place. However, the revised circular confirms a complete trading holiday across key segments.

As a result, trading in equities, equity derivatives, securities lending and borrowing (SLBs), currency derivatives, and interest rate derivatives will remain suspended for the day on both the NSE and the BSE. In addition, the commodity derivatives segment will remain closed



during the morning session, with no trading activity scheduled.

The market closure follows the Maharashtra government’s decision to declare January 15 a public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, to ensure smooth conduct of elections across 29 municipal corporations, including those in Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban districts, which fall under the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The holiday notification was

issued under Section 25 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, using powers delegated to the state government by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1968. In a statement released on Saturday, the BMC said the public holiday was announced through an order issued jointly by the state’s General Administration Department and Industries and Labour Department.

“The public holiday will apply across Mumbai, including the city and both eastern and western suburbs. Government and

semi-government offices, public sector undertakings, banks, and other establishments will remain closed. The order also applies to voters registered in Mumbai but working outside the city, enabling them to exercise their voting rights,” the BMC said.

Vote counting for the civic polls is scheduled to take place on January 16. Notably, stock markets were also shut during the previous municipal corporation elections held in 2017.

Stock Market Holidays in 2026

In total, Indian stock markets will observe 16 holidays in 2026, although four of these fall on weekends, when markets are already closed. The highest number of market holidays will occur in March, with closures for Holi (March 3), Shri Ram Navami (March 26) and Shri Mahavir Jayanti (March 31). Meanwhile, February, July, and August will see no effective trading holidays, as national holidays during these months coincide with weekends.

Investors are advised to plan their trading and settlement schedules accordingly.

Makar Sankranti 2026: Date, Significance, Rituals and Regional Celebrations

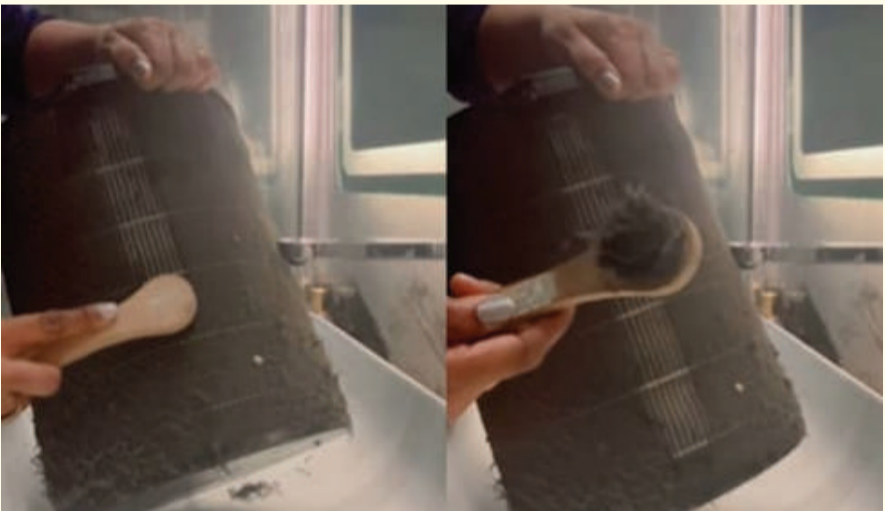


Makar Sankranti is one of India's most widely celebrated harvest festivals, observed across the country with great enthusiasm and regional diversity. In 2026, Makar Sankranti will be celebrated on Wednesday, January 14. The festival marks the Sun's transition into the zodiac sign of Capricorn (Makara), an event of immense astronomical and cultural importance in Hindu tradition. It symbolises gratitude for a bountiful harvest and reverence for the Sun God, believed to be the source of life, prosperity and well-being. Unlike most Hindu festivals that follow the lunar calendar, Makar Sankranti is based on the solar cycle, making it one of the few festivals with a fixed date each year. Astronomically, it marks the Sun's northward journey, known as Uttarayan, and signals the end of the winter solstice. The gradual lengthening of days is seen as a transition from darkness to light, ignorance to

knowledge, and hardship to abundance. Historically, Makar Sankranti is deeply rooted in India's agrarian culture. Closely tied to the harvest season, the festival reflects the intimate relationship between human life and nature. Ancient texts and folklore link the day to auspicious beginnings and mythological narratives, including Lord Vishnu's victory over the demon Sankarasura, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. Religious rituals form an essential part of Makar Sankranti celebrations. Devotees take holy dips in sacred rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery, believing it cleanses sins and brings spiritual merit. The Punya Kaal, considered the most auspicious time for rituals, typically begins early in the morning and lasts till late afternoon, though exact timings vary by region. People offer Surya Arghya (water to the Sun), chant

prayers, and engage in acts of charity by donating sesame seeds, jaggery, food, clothes and blankets to the needy. Makar Sankranti is celebrated under different names across India, each reflecting local traditions. In Punjab, it coincides with Lohri, marked by bonfires, folk songs and energetic dances. Gujarat and Rajasthan host vibrant kite-flying festivities during Uttarayan, filling the skies with colour. In Tamil Nadu, the festival is celebrated as Pongal, a four-day thanksgiving ritual centred on cooking a sweet rice dish. Maharashtra observes the day by exchanging sesame and jaggery sweets with the greeting, "Tilgul ghya, god god bola." In Assam, Magh Bihu is celebrated with community feasts, games and bonfires. Together, these diverse traditions make Makar Sankranti a festival that unites India through shared gratitude, renewal and joy.

Viral Video of Foreigner Cleaning Air Purifier Filter Sparks Fresh Alarm Over Delhi's Air Pollution



A viral Instagram video featuring a foreign resident in Delhi cleaning his air purifier filter has once again brought the capital's worsening air quality into sharp focus. The clip, shared by Andy Evans—popularly known on social media as "Aussie Bhai"—has garnered thousands of views and reactions, with users expressing shock at how polluted the air has become in just two months. In the video, Evans is seen removing the filter from his air purifier and showing it to the camera. Typically, such filters remain white or light grey after regular use. However, the filter in Evans' purifier was almost entirely black, caked with thick layers of dust, soot and pollutant particles. The striking visual served as a stark illustration of the level of air contamination residents are breathing daily in the national capital. Evans explained that he had been thinking throughout the night about cleaning his air purifier and decided to do so first thing in the morn-

ing. "Look at this, brother," he says in the video. "This is a filter from just two months in Delhi. It's completely filled with dust and pollution." His candid reaction underscored the alarming speed at which pollutants accumulate indoors, even in homes equipped with air purification systems. Adding a touch of dark humour, Evans pointed out that the filter was from only one of the three air purifiers running in his house. He joked that the thick layer of dust collected on the filter was so dense it could be spread across the floor like a carpet or even used to keep the house warm. While light-hearted, the comment only reinforced the seriousness of the underlying issue. The video quickly triggered widespread reactions on Instagram, with many users expressing disbelief and concern over Delhi's air quality. Several commenters shared their own experiences of frequently cleaning air purifier filters, while others called for urgent steps to tackle

pollution levels in the city. "Don't touch it, lol," one user commented, reacting to the visibly grimy filter. Another wrote, "Recycling pollution won't be a bad idea," highlighting the scale of the problem. A third user added, "That is why I try to check it every two weeks—it's crazy." The viral clip has reignited conversations around Delhi's chronic air pollution problem, particularly as winter approaches and air quality often deteriorates further. Environmental experts have repeatedly warned about the health risks associated with prolonged exposure to polluted air, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. While Evans' video was shared in a casual, personal tone, its impact has been far-reaching—serving as a visual reminder of the urgent need for sustained policy action, improved urban planning and greater public awareness to address one of Delhi's most pressing environmental challenges.

National Youth Day 2026: Honouring Swami Vivekananda and Empowering India's Youth

National Youth Day is celebrated every year in India on January 12 to mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, one of the country's greatest spiritual leaders, philosophers and youth icons. In 2026, the day once again serves as a reminder of Vivekananda's timeless message of self-belief, discipline and service to the nation. Recognising his profound influence on young minds, the Government of India declared January 12 as National Youth Day in 1984, with the objective of inspiring the youth to actively participate in nation-building.



Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863, in Kolkata. A foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, he played a pivotal role in introducing Indian spiritual traditions—particularly Vedanta and Yoga—to the Western world. His historic address at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893 brought global recognition to India's philosophical heritage. Vivekananda believed that the strength of a nation lies in its youth, and he consistently

emphasised character-building, fearlessness, compassion and service as the foundations of a strong society. The significance of National Youth Day lies in reconnecting young Indians with these ideals. Across the country, schools, colleges and universities mark the day with debates, speeches, essay competitions and cultural programmes focused on leadership, ethics and social responsibility. Youth conferences, seminars and workshops

are organised to discuss issues such as innovation, entrepreneurship, nation-building and civic engagement. Community service initiatives are also conducted by organisations like the National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) and various youth groups, encouraging students to contribute positively to society. National Youth Day is not merely commemorative; it is forward-looking. The day serves as a platform to encourage

young people to think critically about India's future and their role in shaping it. Swami Vivekananda's teachings—such as "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached"—continue to resonate strongly in a rapidly changing world where youth leadership and innovation are crucial. On the occasion of National Youth Day 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the concluding session of the Viksit Bharat

Young Leaders Dialogue 2026 on January 12 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, at around 4:30 PM, according to an official government release. The Prime Minister is expected to interact with approximately 3,000 young leaders from across the country. Youth representatives from the Indian diaspora are also expected to be present, reflecting the global dimension of India's youth engagement. The government release noted that selected participants will make final presentations to the Prime Minister across ten thematic tracks, sharing youth-driven perspectives and practical ideas on key areas of national importance. These discussions aim to channel the creativity, energy and innovation of young Indians toward the vision of a Viksit Bharat (Developed India). National Youth Day thus stands as a powerful reminder that India's future rests in the hands of its youth—and that Swami Vivekananda's vision remains as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

Magh Bihu 2026: Significance, Rituals and Celebrations in Assam

Magh Bihu, one of the most important festivals of Assam, marks the joyous conclusion of the harvesting season and celebrates abundance, community and renewal. Observed in the Assamese month of Magh, which falls between January and February, the festival is also known as Bhogali Bihu or Maghor Bihu. In 2026, Magh Bihu will be celebrated on Thursday, January 15. The festival coincides with Makar Sankranti and symbolises a subtle shift in the Earth's cycle that signals the end of harsh winter and the gradual arrival of spring. Magh Bihu is one of the three major Bihu festivals of Assam, the others being Rongali Bihu in April and Kati Bihu in October. The name Bhogali is derived from the word bhog, meaning enjoyment and feasting, which aptly reflects the spirit of the celebration. After months of hard agricultural labour, people



come together to indulge in food, music, dance and social bonding. Preparations for Magh Bihu begin a day earlier on Uruka, the last day of the month of Pausa. This night is dedicated to grand community feasts. Young men build temporary huts known as Bhelaghar using bamboo, straw, grass and banana leaves. Large bonfires,

called Mejhi, are also constructed in open fields. Women prepare traditional Assamese delicacies in the Bhelaghar, including rice-based sweets such as til pitha, sunga pitha, narikel ladu (coconut laddus) and other seasonal dishes. On the night of Uruka, families and villagers gather around the Bhelaghar and Mejhi, singing

folk songs, performing traditional dances, and sharing meals. The atmosphere is filled with warmth, joy and togetherness. People customarily bathe before participating in the festivities, symbolising physical and spiritual purification. The following morning marks the main day of Magh Bihu. Devotees take an early bath and

light the Mejhi bonfire, offering prayers as the flames rise. The burning of the Mejhi symbolises the end of winter and the casting away of negativity. Offerings of rice cakes and agricultural produce are made to the fire as a gesture of gratitude to nature and ancestral spirits. Several traditional rituals are associated with Magh Bihu. Tekeli Bhonga, the breaking of earthen pots, is performed as a symbolic act of discarding the old. In rural areas, traditional games and events such as buffalo fights are organised, reflecting Assam's agrarian culture. Prayers are also offered to ancestral deities, seeking blessings for prosperity, health and a good harvest in the coming year. Magh Bihu beautifully captures the essence of Assam's cultural heritage, celebrating abundance, harmony with nature and the enduring bonds of community life.

Viral Video of Mahindra Thar Driver Boasting About Breaking Traffic Rules Sparks Outrage

A video circulating widely on social media has triggered public outrage after showing a man openly boasting about flouting traffic rules while driving a Mahindra Thar on the wrong side of the road. In the self-recorded clip, the driver claims that owning the popular SUV gives him immunity from consequences, asserting that "the biggest advantage" of driving a Thar is that "no one will bother you even if you drive on the wrong side."



The exact location where the video was filmed has not been independently verified. However, the clip has drawn sharp criticism online, with users tagging traffic authorities, including the Delhi Traffic Police, and demanding strict legal action against the driver. Several users have also called for the suspension or cancellation of his driving licence, arguing that such behaviour poses a serious threat to public safety. The video has become a lightning rod for broader anger over reckless driv-

ing and perceived entitlement on Indian roads. One user on X shared the video with a scathing comment, comparing the behaviour to a spreading "epidemic." "COVID ended, but another epidemic took over our roads—the Thartards mentality virus," the user wrote, accusing some Thar owners of abandoning basic civic sense after purchasing the vehicle. "How does buying a vehicle suddenly delete common sense? It's honestly shocking

and dangerous," the post added. The term "Thartard mentality" trended briefly as users debated what they see as a pattern of aggressive and irresponsible driving associated with certain owners of high-powered SUVs. Many, however, were quick to point out that the problem lies not with the vehicle itself, but with the mindset of some drivers. "The problem isn't the Thar or the Scorpio. It's

the entitlement some drivers think comes free with it," one user commented. Another suggested harsh penalties for repeat offenders, writing, "If anyone is caught driving recklessly, fine them heavily, seize the vehicle, sell it, and use the money to employ people to clean our public places." A third user argued that the issue goes beyond a single car model, stating, "It's not just Thar owners—it's every entitled driver today. Civic sense

on Indian roads is going to zero." The controversy has gained traction partly because it follows a series of recent, high-profile traffic violations involving Mahindra Thar vehicles. In December 2025, a driver in Ballabgarh was fined ₹7,000 after being caught driving a Thar using his feet. In March 2025, a Thar driver in Noida was arrested and fined ₹38,000 for driving on the wrong side of the road and ramming into multiple vehicles following an altercation. Earlier, in December 2024, a Thar was impounded in Ghaziabad after its driver was caught performing stunts on a pedestrian walkway for social media content. Together, these incidents have reignited debate over road safety, enforcement of traffic laws, and the growing culture of social media-driven recklessness. Many users have urged authorities to act swiftly and decisively, warning that failure to do so could encourage more such behaviour and put lives at risk.

Virat Kohli’s Stellar Form Sees Him Rise Among Cricket’s Elite in Player of the Match Awards



Most Player of the Match Awards in International Cricket

Player	Span	Matches	Awards	Tests	ODIs	T20Is
Sachin Tendulkar (IND)	1989–2013	664	76	14	62	0
Virat Kohli (IND)	2008–2026	557	71	10	45	16
Sanath Jayasuriya (SL)	1989–2011	586	58	4	48	6
Jacques Kallis (SA)	1995–2014	519	57	23	32	2
Kumar Sangakkara (SL)	2000–2015	594	50	16	31	3
Ricky Ponting (AUS)	1995–2012	560	49	16	32	1
Shakib Al Hasan (BAN)	2006–2024	447	45	6	27	12
Rohit Sharma (IND)	2007–2026	506	45	4	27	14
Shahid Afridi (PAK)	1996–2018	524	43	0	32	11
Brian Lara (WI)	1990–2007	430	42	12	30	0

Virat Kohli’s recent surge in form has reaffirmed his dominance in the ODI format, where centuries and half-centuries continue to flow off his bat at a remarkable pace. After returning to international cricket following a seven-month break and enduring successive ducks in his first two matches in Australia, the former India captain

appeared primed for a struggle. Yet, true to his reputation, Kohli bounced back emphatically, delivering match-winning performances and collecting Player of the Match awards along the way. On Sunday, the 37-year-old achieved a milestone, earning the 71st Player of the Match award of his 558-match international career spanning 18 years.

Kohli’s ODI exploits have been particularly outstanding, contributing to over half of his total awards. In the series opener against New Zealand in Vadodara, he registered a brilliant 93, securing his 45th ODI Man of the Match award in 309 appearances—placing him second only to the legendary Sachin Tendulkar. Tendulkar leads

with 76 awards, 62 of which came in ODIs, while Sri Lanka’s Sanath Jayasuriya ranks second in ODIs with 48, just three ahead of Kohli. Kohli shared a personal insight, revealing that he sends most of his awards home to his mother in Gurugram. Player of the Match awards have been officially recorded in interna-

tional cricket since the 1980s, leaving out performances from nearly a century of matches prior. Nonetheless, Kohli’s tally places him firmly among the sport’s all-time greats. Kohli’s relentless consistency and match-winning prowess continue to cement his place among cricket’s elite, and his record suggests that the best may yet be ahead.

Virat Kohli: “Living My Dream” as India Star Reaches 28,000 International Runs



India batting stalwart Virat Kohli on Sunday described his cricketing journey as “nothing short of a dream come true,” saying he feels blessed to bring happiness to fans through the sport he loves. The 37-year-old reached another milestone in the first ODI against New Zealand, becoming the fastest player to 28,000 international runs and the second-highest run-scorer in the world, behind Sachin Tendulkar. Kohli achieved the feat in his 624th innings, hitting a four off New Zealand leg-spinner Adithya Ashok. Tendulkar had crossed 28,000 runs in 644 innings, while Sri Lankan great Kumar Sangakkara did so in 666 innings. Reflecting on his career, Kohli said, “Honestly, if I look back at my journey, it’s nothing short of a dream come true. God has blessed me with way too much. I feel nothing but gratitude. I feel proud and grateful that I can give so much happiness to so many people by just playing the sport I’ve always loved as a child.” Kohli’s 91-ball 93 in Vadodara guided India to victory and earned

him the Player of the Match award for the 45th time in his career. On his approach to batting, he explained, “I wasn’t thinking about milestones. I had to play according to the situation. When you come in at number three, you back yourself to counter-attack, put the opposition under pressure, but still play to your strengths. That strategy ended up being the difference today.” He also shared a personal note about his trophies, saying he sends them to his mother in Gurugram, who enjoys keeping them. Kohli reflected on the crowd’s excitement as he came to bat after Rohit Sharma’s dismissal, noting the challenge for the outgoing batter. “It’s part of the game. I try to focus on what I need to do and stay in the present,” he said. India captain Shubman Gill praised Kohli’s effortless batting, saying, “It’s tough to start on these pitches. What he does is hard to replicate. Hope he keeps piling on runs.” Kohli’s blend of skill, composure, and situational awareness continues to make him one of the most dependable players in world cricket.

ICC Set to Respond to Bangladesh’s Request to Shift T20 World Cup 2026 Matches from India

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is expected to respond to the Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) request to move their T20 World Cup 2026 matches from India between Monday and Tuesday this week. The BCB cited “security concerns” in its official plea, requesting that the games be shifted to Sri Lanka. The request followed the release of Bangladesh fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders, reportedly on the suggestion of the BCCI. However, sources indicate that the ICC is unlikely to approve a move out of India. Instead, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram have been suggested as alternative venues. Bangladesh is currently scheduled to



play their group stage games in Kolkata and Mumbai. Earlier, BCB president Aminul Islam stated that while Chennai had been proposed as an option, the board would need govern-

ment approval before making any decision. “Since you know that we are not taking decisions alone regarding this World Cup, we will discuss it with the government and we are still

where we stood,” he said in Sylhet. The Bangladesh government also expects direct communication from the Indian authorities regarding the security concerns. Bangladesh umpire

Sharfuddoula Saikat officiated in the first ODI between India and New Zealand in Vadodara on Sunday. Both Saikat and fellow Bangladeshi umpire Gazi Sohel are expected to feature as match officials during the T20 World Cup, a point the ICC may cite when responding to the board’s security concerns. With less than four weeks remaining until the tournament begins and teams scheduled to arrive in India in the first week of February for practice, the ICC is keen to resolve the venue issue promptly. The governing body is expected to provide clarity on the matter this week, bringing an end to the uncertainty that has dominated headlines over the past few days.

KL Rahul’s Role at No. 5/6 Continues to Pay Dividends for India in ODIs



Questions about whether KL Rahul is batting too low in India’s ODI order have surfaced frequently since head coach Gautam Gambhir took charge in mid-2024. Yet the Karnataka wicket-keeper-batter remains unfazed, consistently delivering match-winning performances from the crucial No. 5/6 spot. Rahul has been entrusted with this “floating” role because of his proven ability to handle the pressure of death overs. Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan praised Rahul’s composure, especially under the new ODI rules that allow only one new ball after the 34th over, which has challenged many batters.

In India’s 301-run chase against New Zealand in Vadodara on Sunday, Rahul took his time to settle but eventually guided the team to a four-wicket victory. He finished the game in style with a winning six—only the sixth time in his career—joining MS Dhoni, who has achieved it nine times in ODIs for India. “When KL Rahul bats, people often ask why he is batting so low. But with the new rule, the ball behaves differently after the 34th over. Other batters struggled, but Rahul stayed in control. A technically correct batter at this stage can make a huge difference,” Pathan said on his YouTube channel. Rahul has excelled in

this role ever since taking it up during the previous ODI World Cup year in 2023, maintaining an average close to 60 in the positions. His reliability is evident in India’s record—every time Rahul has remained unbeaten in a chase, India have won, a streak that now stands at 13 victories. Pathan also highlighted Rahul’s strategic approach, noting how he rotated the strike early, paced the innings perfectly, and targeted the final overs to finish the game with two boundaries followed by a six. Rahul’s blend of patience, timing, and power continues to make him one of the most dependable finishers in world cricket today.

Michael Carrick Emerges as Favourite for Manchester United Interim Manager Role, Wins Ronaldo’s Backing



Michael Carrick has emerged as the leading candidate for Manchester United’s interim managerial position, reportedly winning the endorsement of club legend Cristiano Ronaldo. The Red Devils are currently without a head coach following a 1-2 FA Cup defeat to Brighton, which added pressure after the club recently parted ways with Ruben Amorim. Carrick, a former United midfielder, has overtaken Ole Gunnar Solskjaer in the race for the role. He brings experience at Old Trafford, having served as assistant coach between 2018 and 2021, and is now considered the frontrunner to steady the club during this transitional period. The Englishman also enjoys the backing of Ronaldo, who played alongside him during the late 2000s. In 2021, the five-time Bal-

lon d’Or winner praised Carrick on X (formerly Twitter), writing: “Michael Carrick was a class act as a player and he can become a great coach as well. Nothing is impossible for this guy. Personally, I’m proud to have played with him by my side as well as with him as a manager on our bench.” Carrick’s appointment would mark a return to Old Trafford after being replaced by Ralf Rangnick, whose brief stint as caretaker manager ended after just three games. Meanwhile, Darren Fletcher has been temporarily overseeing first-team duties. According to reports, Carrick was interviewed on Thursday and is expected to take over soon, giving Manchester United a familiar and steady presence as they navigate a turbulent period on and off the pitch.

Washington Sundar Ruled Out of ODI Series Against New Zealand; Ayush Badoni Earns Maiden Call-Up



India’s spin-bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar has been ruled out of the remainder of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand due to a rib injury, confirmed the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on January 12. Sundar sustained the injury during the series opener in Vadodara, where he displayed signs of discomfort while batting, walking cautiously between the wickets during India’s run chase. “India all-rounder Washington Sundar reported an acute onset of discomfort in his left lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at the BCA Stadium, Vadodara, on Sunday. He will undergo further scans, following which the BCCI Medical Team will seek expert opinion,” the BCCI said in an official statement. With Sundar unavailable, the selection committee led by Ajit Agarkar has handed Delhi all-rounder Ayush Badoni his maiden call-up to the Indian ODI squad. Badoni, 26, will join the team in Rajkot ahead of the second ODI. The all-rounder, who plays for Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), has previously worked with India head coach Gautam Gambhir, who was a mentor at LSG. Badoni has showcased consistent

performances in domestic cricket and the IPL. In 27 List A games, he has scored 693 runs from 22 innings at an average of 36.47, including a century and five fifties. With the ball, the off-spinner has claimed 18 wickets at an average of 29.72, maintaining an economy rate of 4.54 runs per over. His balanced skill set as a batting and bowling all-rounder makes him a versatile option for India in the middle overs. The Indian ODI squad for the remainder of the New Zealand series has now been updated as follows: Shubman Gill (c), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (wk), Shreyas Iyer (vc), Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit Rana, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Arshdeep Singh, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel (wk), and Ayush Badoni. Sundar’s absence will be a significant blow to India, particularly in the spin department, given his ability to provide crucial breakthroughs and stabilize the middle order with the bat. Badoni, on the other hand, brings fresh energy and an aggressive approach that could prove valuable in the high-pressure ODI encounters. As India prepare to face New Zealand in the second ODI in Rajkot, attention will now be on Badoni to make a strong impression in his maiden international outing.

'Anaganaga Oka Raju' Releases Energetic 'Andhra to Telangana' Song Ahead of Sankranthi Premiere



Tollywood's much-anticipated Sankranthi entertainer Anaganaga Oka Raju has released a special song titled "Andhra to Telangana," creating fresh excitement among audiences just days before the film's theatrical debut. The track adds to the promotional buzz for the family comedy starring Naveen Polishetty and Meenakshi Chaudhary, who have been generating strong interest with their on-screen chemistry.

Produced by Srikara Studios in association with Sithara Entertainment and Fortune Four Cinemas, and directed by debutant Maari, Anaganaga Oka Raju is scheduled for release on January 14, 2026, aligning with the festive Sankranthi holidays. The makers have been strategically releasing teasers, trailers, and musical singles to build anticipation among fans across all demographics.

"Andhra to Telangana" is a vibrant and upbeat number celebrating the culture and unity of Telugu states. Composed by Mickey J. Meyer with lyrics by Chandrabose, the song features energetic vocals by Dhanunjay and Sameera Bhadraraj, while a special dance performance by Shanvi Meghana adds a visual highlight. The track blends traditional elements with contemporary rhythms, making it an instant crowd-puller.

This release follows the earlier single "Bhimavaram Balma," which showcased Naveen Polishetty's debut as a playback singer and received wide acclaim for its catchy, festive vibe. Another musical highlight, the wedding-themed anthem "Raju Gaari Pelli Ro," has also garnered attention for its colorful choreography and lively presentation.

Set against a rural backdrop with comic

twists and family-centered storytelling, Anaganaga Oka Raju promises to be a feel-good entertainer. Naveen Polishetty's signature comic timing and relatable performance anchor the narrative, while Meenakshi Chaudhary brings charm and vibrancy to the film. The ensemble cast contributes to the film's engaging and light-hearted appeal, making it ideal for festive audiences.

Industry observers are predicting strong box office numbers, thanks to the film's combination of humor, music, and cultural celebration. With Sankranthi around the corner, the makers and cast are confident that Anaganaga Oka Raju will bring laughter, joy, and entertainment to movie-goers when it releases on January 14, 2026, setting the tone for a memorable festival season in Tollywood.

Megastar Chiranjeevi Congratulates Director Anil Ravipudi on Film's Success and Special Bond

Tollywood icon Megastar Chiranjeevi has extended heartfelt congratulations to director Anil Ravipudi, celebrating the filmmaker's creative vision and their successful collaboration on the highly anticipated family entertainer Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu. The actor's warm tribute to Ravipudi captures not just professional respect but a personal bond that has grown stronger through their work together.

The congratulatory moment comes as Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu continues its rollout during the Sankranthi festival season, generating positive response from audiences and fans. Chiranjeevi, known for his charismatic screen presence and status as one of Telugu cinema's most revered stars, openly praised Ravipudi's direction, acknowledging his knack for crafting entertainment that resonates with family audiences and mass viewers alike.

In a touching gesture that further highlighted their mutual appreciation, Chiranjeevi surprised Anil Ravipudi with a thoughtful gift on the director's birthday — a symbol of gratitude for his contributions and creative leadership. This act of generosity reflects Chiranjeevi's reputation for being both humble and supportive of the artists and technicians who bring cinema to life.

Their collaboration on Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu marks a significant moment in both their careers, blending



Chiranjeevi's legendary status with Ravipudi's contemporary commercial sensibilities. The film, touted as a full-fledged entertainer, combines humor, drama, and emotion, embracing the festive spirit and serving up a cinematic experience tailored for families celebrating Sankranthi together.

The camaraderie between actor and director has become a talking point among fans and industry circles, especially as the film garners encouraging early audience reactions. Chiranjeevi's public acknowledgment of Ravipudi has been interpreted by many as a blessing for the director's creative journey, while also underscoring the veteran actor's supportive nature toward collaborators who contribute

meaningfully to Telugu cinema.

Anil Ravipudi, for his part, has expressed that working with Chiranjeevi was a cherished milestone, one that offered both professional fulfillment and personal joy. He has spoken about how the experience has enriched his perspective as a director and strengthened his commitment to delivering engaging stories that entertain and uplift audiences.

As Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu continues to play in theaters and attract viewers during the holiday period, the bond between Chiranjeevi and Anil Ravipudi stands as a heartwarming testament to mutual respect, creative partnership, and the shared joy of storytelling.

Prime Video Unveils the Gripping Trailer of its Latest Telugu Crime Thriller Movie Cheekatilo

A Prime Original movie, Cheekatilo is an edge-of-the-seat crime thriller, directed by Sharan Kopishetty, produced by D. Suresh Babu under the banner of Suresh Production Pvt Ltd, and written by Chandra Pemmaraju and Sharan Kopishetty

Prime Video, India's most-loved entertainment destination, today unveiled a riveting trailer of Cheekatilo, an emotionally-charged Telugu crime suspense drama. Against the backdrop of a dynamic, fast-growing Hyderabad, the narrative follows Sandhya, a true crime podcaster portrayed by SOBHITA Dhulipala as she uses her podcast to uncover the two-decade-old secrets of a long-dormant serial killer. Directed by Sharan Kopishetty and produced by D Suresh Babu under the banner of Suresh Productions Pvt Ltd., the thrilling narrative is written by Chandra Pemmaraju and Sharan Kopishetty. The movie stars Sobhita Dhulipala and viswadev Rachakonda ,in lead roles, alongside Chaitanya visalakshmi, Esha Chawla, Jhansi,Aamani and Vadlamani Srinivas in pivotal roles. The Telugu movie will premiere exclusively on



Prime Video across India and in over 240 countries and territories worldwide, on January 23.

The trailer for Cheekatilo offers a gripping glimpse into Hyderabad's underbelly, where Sandhya—a criminology graduate and true crime podcaster—is drawn into a dangerous game of cat and mouse. The shocking murder exposes a trail of past crimes, setting off a tense pursuit of truth and justice. Using her podcast as an investigative tool, Sandhya attempts to challenge and draw out a cold-blooded killer. As the tension escalates, the narrative builds toward

a chilling revelation. But will the truth come to light, or will Sandhya become the killer's next victim? Packed with suspense and emotion, the trailer sets the stage for a nerve-racking hunt that begins January 23, only on Prime Video.

Sharan Kopishetty, director and co-writer of Cheekatilo, shared, "Directing Cheekatilo has been a deeply rewarding journey—one that pushed me to explore the darker, more human layers beneath a seemingly straightforward crime story. At its heart, this movie is more than a crime suspense—it is a reflection on resilience, the fight against silence and power, and

the courage it takes to bring justice to the front. With the trailer now out, audiences can glimpse the tense, suspenseful world we have created. Partnering with Prime Video has been immensely rewarding, allowing us to bring this vision to a global audience, united by our commitment to bold, authentic, and relatable storytelling. The film's talented cast, with their exceptional performances, has been central in shaping this vision. I can't wait for viewers to experience it when it premieres exclusively on Prime Video on January 23."

Sobhita Dhulipala, who plays the lead character of Sandhya in

Cheekatilo, shared, "Playing 'Sandhya' has been a superb experience - she's a front-footed young woman who is an independent thinker, deeply committed to standing by her belief system no matter the resistance. Her choices are shaped by a unique stubbornness that has a history of its own. Playing a character rooted in the by-lanes of Hyderabad and other Telugu localities and coming from a cultural background as my real self, the integration between the character and my own expression was seamless and utterly enjoyable. Grateful for this wonderful experience and our exceptional cast and crew - everyone brought their heart to the set every single day. Being part of a Prime Original project is special in many ways. From Made in Heaven to now Cheekatilo, it has been an intentional and inspiring journey—our shared growth, commitment towards entertaining storytelling as well as the keenness to push the envelope each time is a rare joy. Looking forward for the audiences to see a different side of me as Sandhya when the movie premieres exclusively on Prime Video on January 23"

Prabhas' The Raja Saab Soars Past ₹183 Crore Worldwide in Just Three Days



Hyderabad, 12 January 2026 (TPN Bureau) – Rebel Star Prabhas' much-awaited film The Raja

Saab continues its unstoppable run at the box office, crossing a remarkable ₹183+ crore in world-

wide gross collections within just three days of release. The film's Day 3 collections even sur-

passed Day 2, highlighting extraordinary audience response and engagement.

Directed by Maruthi, The Raja Saab has already carved a niche for itself as the highest-grossing film in the horror-fantasy genre, setting a new benchmark for commercial and critical success. The film's grand storytelling, innovative visuals, and engaging narrative have resonated with audiences across all age groups and demographics.

Produced on a global scale by T. G. Vishwa Prasad and Krithi Prasad under the People Media Factory banner, the film's production values have

been widely appreciated. Actresses Malavika Mohanan, Nidhi Agerwal, and Riddhi Kumar have received praise for their performances, adding depth and charm to the film's ensemble cast.

With the festive Sankranthi holiday season underway, industry insiders predict that The Raja Saab will continue to dominate theatres, posting even bigger numbers in its first week and solidifying its blockbuster status.

The film's success not only reinforces Prabhas' Pan-Indian appeal but also strengthens the momentum for high-scale, genre-defining cinema in the country.

Celebrity Cricket League 2026 Schedule Announced — Stars Gear Up for Cricket Showdown

The Celebrity Cricket League (CCL) 2026 is set to return with a star-studded edition, bringing India's top film personalities to the cricket field once again. The official schedule has been announced, generating excitement among fans who are eager to witness their favorite actors compete in this unique blend of sports and entertainment. The tournament is slated to kick off on January 16, 2026, promising three weekends of high-octane cricket action.

The CCL, which unites actors from multiple regional film industries, will feature eight teams battling for supremacy. This year's teams include fan favorites such as the Telugu Warriors, Bengal Tigers, Mumbai Heroes, Chennai Kings, Kerala Strikers, Punjab De Sher, Bhojpuri Dabangs, and Karnataka Bulldozers. Each match is expected to be filled with energy, camaraderie, and the friendly competitive spirit that has made CCL a much-loved event.

The opening weekend will be hosted in Madurai, featuring double-header matches across three days. Highlights include matchups like Mumbai Heroes vs Ben-

CCL 2026 SCHEDULE									
DATE	TEAM 1	VS	TEAM 2	TIME	VENUE	DATE	TEAM 1	VS	TEAM 2
16TH JAN	PUNJAB DE SHER	VS	KARNATAKA BULLDOZERS	2:00 PM to 6:00 PM	VIZAG	16TH JAN	TELUGU WARRIORS	VS	BHARAT DABANGS
	TELUGU WARRIORS	VS	BHARAT DABANGS	6:30 PM to 10:30 PM		17TH JAN	PUNJAB DE SHER	VS	TELUGU WARRIORS
17TH JAN	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS	2:00 PM to 6:00 PM			CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS
	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS	6:30 PM to 10:30 PM		18TH JAN	PUNJAB DE SHER	VS	TELUGU WARRIORS
18TH JAN	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS	2:00 PM to 6:00 PM	MADURAI	23RD JAN	KARNATAKA BULLDOZERS	VS	TELUGU WARRIORS
	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS	6:30 PM to 10:30 PM		24TH JAN	PUNJAB DE SHER	VS	ANUPURU DHABANGS
24TH JAN	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS	2:00 PM to 6:00 PM			CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS
	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS	6:30 PM to 10:30 PM		25TH JAN	KARNATAKA BULLDOZERS	VS	ANUPURU DHABANGS
25TH JAN	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KERALA STRIKERS	2:00 PM to 6:00 PM	HYDERABAD		CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KARNATAKA BULLDOZERS
	CHENNAI KINGS	VS	KARNATAKA BULLDOZERS	6:30 PM to 10:30 PM		31ST JAN	TELUGU WARRIORS	VS	ANUPURU DHABANGS
31ST JAN	TELUGU WARRIORS	VS	ANUPURU DHABANGS	2:00 PM to 6:00 PM			TELUGU WARRIORS	VS	ANUPURU DHABANGS
	TELUGU WARRIORS	VS	ANUPURU DHABANGS	6:30 PM to 10:30 PM			TELUGU WARRIORS	VS	ANUPURU DHABANGS

gal Tigers and Chennai Kings vs Kerala Strikers, offering fans a full day of entertainment. The festival-like atmosphere, combined with the players' on-field antics, ensures a fun experience for spectators of all ages.

The league then moves to Mysuru on January 23, where all eight teams will continue their battle. Matches scheduled include exciting face-offs such as Bengal Tigers vs

Kerala Strikers, Telugu Warriors vs Bhojpuri Dabangs, and Punjab De Sher vs Karnataka Bulldozers, keeping audiences glued to the action and cheering for their favorite stars.

The tournament's climax will take place in Hyderabad on January 31 and February 1, featuring the semi-finals and the grand finale. The four top-performing teams from the group

CELEBRITY CRICKET LEAGUE 2026 FIXTURES									
VS	FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 6:30 PM	VS	FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 6:30 PM	VS	FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 6:30 PM	VS	FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 6:30 PM	VS	FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 6:30 PM
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stage will compete in knockout matches, culminating in the championship match on February 1, 2026, to crown the CCL champions.

This year's edition of CCL promises a perfect mix of glamour and sport. With its dynamic tournament structure and star-studded line-up, the league continues to attract both cricket enthusiasts and movie fans alike. The combination

of celebrity presence, team spirit, and competitive gameplay makes the CCL a must-watch event.

As the countdown to January 16 begins, fans across India are eagerly preparing to see their favorite film stars swap the red carpet for the cricket pitch, delivering athleticism, entertainment, and unforgettable moments in one of the most anticipated events of the season.