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Andhra Pradesh NDA Government Boosts Economy with 24,513 Crore in Central Scheme Funds



TPN Bureau | January 19

Amaravati: The NDA government in Andhra Pradesh is relentlessly fortifying the state's economy, pooling every rupee with prudent utilization. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is spearheading efforts to maximize funds from central schemes, engaging Union ministers and Delhi officials while galvanizing the state apparatus. Guided by three pillars—fund mobilization, efficient spending, and extra allocations—Naidu has conducted two reviews in a single month, as-

signing strict targets.

For the current fiscal year, allocations totaling 24,513 crore have been secured for 76 centrally sponsored schemes, encompassing central and state contributions. This reverses the YSRCP era's five-year loss of 39,642 crore in central funds, including 10,171 crore diverted elsewhere. In its debut year, the NDA administration has expended up to 17,000 crore. The Centre approved 15,173 crore this year, with 9,340 crore as state share, targeting full utilization of the total package.

Addressing past misuse, schemes now operate via Single Nodal

Agency (SNA) or SPARSH (Single Nodal Account) modes. SNA routes central funds through the state treasury for release on bills, but new SPARSH guidelines require dedicated nodal accounts for direct crediting of both shares, curbing diversions. Tangible gains abound: POSHAN 2.0, for nutrition to children, pregnant women, and infants, received 1,007 crore, aiding over 21 lakh beneficiaries under SPARSH.

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan saw 1,240.10 crore from the Centre last year after clearing old dues, plus state share totaling 1,893.50 crore upgrading facilities for 35 lakh stu-

dents. This year, 1,854 crore is earmarked, with 1,446 crore spent, modernizing schools.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana got 550 crore for village roads; Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana 111 crore (62 crore utilized); MNREGA 1,838 crore; and National Health Mission 1,001 crore (187 crore spent) for maternal and child health.

By December 17, statewide spending stood at 10,362 crore, irking Naidu over lax oversight. His intervention drove over 2,000 crore more in weeks. Steps are afoot for the third central tranche, signaling sustained fiscal vigor.

Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh Lands in Zurich, Heads to Davos for World Economic Forum

TPN Bureau | January 19

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Information Technology, Electronics, and Communications Minister Nara Lokesh arrived in Zurich, Switzerland, today, marking a key step in his high-profile international outreach for the state's economic growth. At Zurich Airport, he received a warm reception from NRI TDP leaders and the Overseas Andhra diaspora, who greeted him with garlands, traditional shawls, and chants of "Jai Andhra!"

The enthusiastic welcome underscored the strong connect between Lokesh and the global Andhra community, eager to support his mission to position Andhra Pradesh as India's next investment hub. Lokesh, son of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and a rising star in the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), is in Switzerland to participate in the prestigious World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos, scheduled from January 20-24. From Zurich, he will proceed directly to the alpine town, where global leaders, CEOs, and policymakers con-

verge to discuss pressing issues like sustainable development, AI innovation, and emerging markets. As a vocal advocate for digital transformation, Lokesh aims to pitch Andhra Pradesh's investor-friendly policies, world-class infrastructure, and skilled workforce to multinational giants attending the summit.

This visit aligns with the TDP-led NDA government's aggressive push to revive Andhra Pradesh's economy after the previous YSRCP regime's alleged mismanagement. Lokesh, who recently completed his landmark "Loka Samikhy-andhra Praja Palana" Yuva Shakti padayatra across 125 constituencies, has been instrumental in attracting investments worth over 20 lakh crore in commitments since the government's formation in June 2024. At Davos, he is slated to hold bilateral meetings with top executives from tech firms like Google, Microsoft, and semiconductor leaders, focusing on establishing the state's proposed AI City in Visakhapatnam and electronics manufacturing clusters in Tirupati and Kadapa. Sources close to the minister revealed that Lokesh will

Supreme Court Issues Landmark Directives to Curb 'Silent Deaths' in Educational Institutions

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

New Delhi: In a landmark ruling on January 15, 2026, the Supreme Court of India has delivered a scathing verdict addressing the rising tide of student suicides, terming them "silent deaths." The case, Amit Kumar vs. Union of India (2026 INSC 62), heard by Justices J.B. Pardiwalla and R. Mahadevan, stemmed from the tragic suicides of two students at IIT Delhi, attributed to caste discrimination and academic pressure.

The parents' petition prompted the court to issue stringent directives to higher educational institutions (HEIs), regulators, and the government, mandating immediate reforms to prevent future incidents. The court emphasized that cover-ups of unnatural deaths whether on campus, in hostels, PG accommodations, or off-

site will attract severe penalties. Institutions must report any student suicide or unnatural death to local police instantly.

Annual reports on such incidents are now compulsory for submission to bodies like UGC, AICTE, and NMC. Residential colleges must provide 24/7 medical aid, either on-site or within 1 km. Scholarship delays are prohibited; payments must clear within four months, and withholding exam access or evicting students from hostels due to arrears is banned. Further mandates include filling vacancies for vice-chancellors, registrars, and faculty within four months.

UGC regulations on ragging, caste/gender discrimination, and sexual harassment must be fully implemented. The court ordered a centralized database for suicides among 15-29-year-

olds, with NCRB reports segregating student cases. These directives arise from an interim National Task Force (NTF) report highlighting key triggers: academic stress, ragging, caste bias, scholarship delays, and absent mental health support.

Shockingly, over 65% of colleges lack mental health services, and 2022 alone saw over 13,000 reported student suicides. Justices noted that visible suicides are merely the "tip of the iceberg," masking deeper issues like caste discrimination, language barriers, financial strain, and faculty shortages.

The bench urged systematic changes, including peer counseling, a mentor-mentee system (one professor per 15-20 students), and campaigns normalizing help-seeking as strength, not weakness. It also appealed to parents: prioritize your child's health and life over marks or

ranks encourage open dialogue. The ruling has been hailed by education activists and parents' groups. The Parents Association of Andhra Pradesh (PAAP), which shared the details, called it a "wake-up call" for states like Andhra Pradesh, where similar pressures plague institutions amid rapid expansion of engineering and medical colleges.

PAAP urged sharing the information widely for student safety. Contact: +91 63053 13558; parentsassociation@gmail.com. This verdict reinforces the court's 2023 push for mental health in education, potentially reshaping campus governance nationwide.

Compliance will be monitored, with non-adherence inviting contempt proceedings. As India grapples with youth mental health crises exacerbated by post-pandemic stress, these orders signal zero tolerance for negligence.

Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu Receives Warm Welcome from Diaspora in Zurich, Meets Global Leaders Ahead of Davos WEF

TPN Bureau | Jan 19

Amaravati | Zurich, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu arrived in Zurich, Switzerland, today, marking the commencement of his high-profile visit to attend the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos. At Zurich Airport, a enthusiastic group of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana extended a grand welcome to the Chief Minister, showering him with flowers, garlands, and traditional chants of "Jai Ho" and "Andhra Pradesh Zindabad."

The warm reception underscored the strong connect between Naidu and the global Andhra diaspora, many of whom credited his visionary leadership for transforming the state into an investment hub during his previous tenure. Naidu reciprocated the affection, briefly interacting with the crowd and assuring them of continued focus on NRI welfare, skill development, and investment opportunities back home.

Shortly after landing, Naidu held a series of high-level meetings with prominent international figures. Singapore President T. H. A. Shanmugaratnam, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma,



and World Bank President Ajay Banga called on him separately at his hotel. Discussions reportedly covered key areas such as sustainable infrastructure, green energy transitions, digital governance, and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to India's southern states.

Sources close to the Chief Minister revealed that Naidu emphasized Andhra Pradesh's ambitious "Swarna Andhra-2047" vision, aligning it with global goals like net-zero emissions and AI-driven economic growth.

With Singapore's President, talks focused on urban development models, drawing from Singapore's Smart Nation initiative to replicate in Amaravati and Visakhapatnam.

At the WEF from January 20-24, he will participate in panels on "Rebuilding Trust" and "Future of Growth," pitching Andhra Pradesh as India's next trillion-dollar economy. Key agendas include bilateral meetings with CEOs from Google, Microsoft, and Adani Group, besides interactions with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and other heads of state.

This visit, Naidu's first major international outing since assuming office in June 2024, signals Andhra Pradesh's renewed push for global investments amid ongoing capital city developments and deep-sea port projects. Back home, TDP leaders hailed the trip as a "game-changer" for the state's resurgence.



International Cancer Expert Advocates Expanded Health Schemes to Combat Rising Cases in Telugu States

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Visakhapatnam: Renowned international cancer specialist Dr. N. Dattatreya emphasized proactive measures to prevent cancer spread in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, urging governments to integrate advanced screening and treatments into existing health programs.

Speaking via video message at the Loka-nayak Foundation's Jeevana Safalya Puraskar event on Sunday after flight cancellations prevented his in-person attendance from the US, Dr. Dattatreya high-

lighted the potential of NTR Vaidya Seva in Andhra Pradesh and Rajiv Arogya Seva in Telangana. "Extending these schemes to include cancer detection tests and surgeries would be highly beneficial," he said, stressing early intervention as key to saving lives.

The event, held in Visakhapatnam, recognized contributions to public health, but Dr. Dattatreya's remote address stole the spotlight. He advocated incorporating mammograms for breast cancer, PSA tests for prostate cancer, and Pap smears for cer-



vical cancer into public health services. Advanced treatments like robotic surgery, immunotherapy, and bone marrow transplants should also be covered under Aarogyasri, he added.

"Detecting cancer as early as possible and providing timely treatment can save patients," Dr. Dattatreya ex-

plained. He pushed for declaring cancer a notifiable disease nationwide, noting its status in the US for 75 years. "Only a few states in India track it properly. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana declared it recently, which helps collect data from screenings everywhere and enables prompt care.

"This push aligns with growing concerns over cancer incidence in the Telugu states. Official data shows rising cases linked to lifestyle changes, pollution, and delayed diagnosis, particularly in rural areas. Dr. Dattatreya's recommendations could bol-

ster infrastructure, making high-end care accessible under insurance schemes that already cover millions. He also called for "command centers" to coordinate efforts.

"NGOs often conduct medical camps and screenings but fail to share reports with governments. These centers would guide where camps should occur and collect data systematically," he suggested. This would create a statewide surveillance network, improving prevention and resource allocation.

Dr. Dattatreya, a pioneer in oncology with

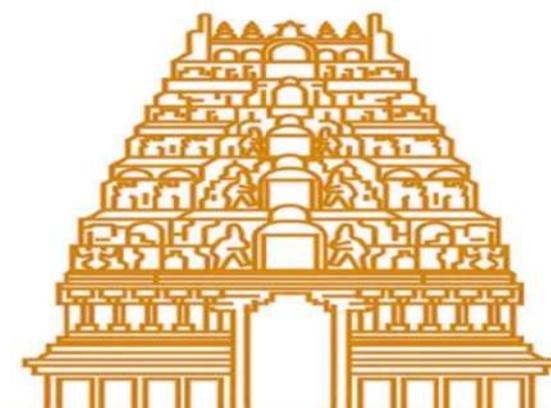
similar expansions. As cancer burdens health-care systems with over 1.5 lakh new cases annually in the two states. Dr. Dattatreya's blueprint offers a roadmap.

Implementing notifiable status and command centers could transform tracking, much like infectious disease surveillance. The Lokanayak Foundation event underscored community roles, with organizers vowing to relay suggestions to policymakers. For now, Dr. Dattatreya's video message serves as a clarion call for integrated, tech-driven cancer control.

Andhra Pradesh Launches Ambitious Plan for 5,000 New Temples with Sri Vani Trust Funds

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Amaravati: In a major push to promote devotion and cultural heritage across rural and urban areas, the Andhra Pradesh government has greenlit the construction of 5,000 temples statewide using funds from the Sri Vani Trust. The initiative prioritizes regions with significant populations of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Backward Classes (BC), aiming to foster bhakti, culture, and community bhajans in villages and colonies. So far, the Endowments Department has received 1,176 applications, approving



construction for 463 temples.

The remaining proposals are under review. Funding is allocated based on available land: Rs 10 lakh for 5 cents, Rs 15 lakh for 8 cents, and Rs 20 lakh for 10 cents

per temple if needed.

This brings the per-temple expenditure to a minimum of Rs 15 lakh and up to Rs 30 lakh. This scale dwarfs previous efforts under the prior YSRCP regime, which sanctioned 2,000 temples at a maximum of Rs 10 lakh each. Of those, 1,400 are complete, while 600 remain under construction.

The new plan emphasizes grandeur and community involvement. Local committees in villages or colonies must take responsibility for execution. Land can come from private donations, panchayat resolutions, or revenue department land with a No Objection Certificate (NOC).

Temples for any deity except Shirdi Sai Baba qualify; committees can procure idols independently, or funds will cover them too.

Applications are streamlined online via <https://endowmentsinfo.ap.gov.in/ttdb-hajanamandiram>, or through endorsements from ministers, MPs, MLAs, or MLCs. The target is 25 temples per assembly constituency on average, with no cap in agency areas to maximize outreach.

This initiative builds on Naidu's vision for spiritual infrastructure, echoing his past TDP government's temple projects. Officials

Funding and Implementation Details

Land Size	Base Funding	Additional (Walls)
5 cents	Rs 10 lakh	Rs 5-10 lakh
8 cents	Rs 15 lakh	Rs 5-10 lakh
10+ cents	Rs 20 lakh	Rs 5-10 lakh

expect rapid progress, with construction committees empowered to ensure quality and timely completion. Community leaders

hail it as a boon for marginal areas, where temples will serve as hubs for bhajans and cultural events. The move aligns with broader governance goals, blending development with tradition in Andhra Pradesh's diverse landscape.

Assembly Sessions Likely in February, Says Deputy Speaker Raghurama Krishnaraju



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Visakhapatnam: Andhra Pradesh Assembly Deputy Speaker Nandendla Manohar Rao's brother, Raghurama Krishnaraju, announced that the state Assembly sessions are expected to commence in the second or third week of next month. Speaking to reporters here on Sunday, he anticipated the presence of YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy along with at least 10 party MLAs during the proceedings.

Raghurama highlighted a contrasting atmosphere between the Legislative Council and the Assembly. "There's one kind of environment in the Council and another in the Assembly," he observed, pointing to underlying tensions. He specifically addressed the issue of YSRCP MLAs drawing salaries without attending sessions, noting that the Ethics Committee is actively examining this matter.

Under the rules, he explained, MLAs face disqualification if they miss 60 consecutive working days of the House. "Coming for just one day in between doesn't count; it won't save them from disqualification," Raghurama clarified, emphasizing the strict enforcement of attendance norms. Maintaining his non-partisan stance, the Deputy Speaker reiterated that he has never engaged in political rhetoric while holding his constitutional position.

He also dismissed rumors of his resignation from the TDP, countering claims that some individuals had written letters to the President and Governor or a legible otherwise. According to the rules, there's no need for me to submit a resignation to the party those writing such letters might not be aware of the provisions," Raghurama remarked, urging clarity on constitutional norms.

This comes amid ongoing political friction in Andhra Pradesh, where

the TDP-led coalition government under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has been pushing legislative agendas, including development bills and budget discussions. The YSRCP, now in opposition after its 2024 defeat, has boycotted several sessions, prompting disqualification threats against over a dozen MLAs.

Raghurama's comments underscore the Assembly's push for accountability, potentially setting the stage for heated debates when sessions resume. Political observers note that Jagan's attendance could signal a tactical shift for the YSRCP, especially with upcoming local body elections on the horizon.

The Deputy Speaker's statements also reflect broader governance challenges, including salary disbursements tied to participation. As the Ethics Committee deliberates, all eyes are on whether absent MLAs will comply or face legal repercussions.

Nimmala Slams Jagan of misusing SC Sub plan funds



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Minister Nimmala Rama Rao has accused former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of diverting SC Sub-Plan funds and spreading fear among the people, asserting that the ruling coalition government's primary agenda is the welfare of Dalits, Christians and minorities.

Speaking to the media at

Palakollu in West Godavari district, the minister said the coalition government is committed to inclusive development and social justice. He alleged that during the previous YSRCP regime, funds meant for Scheduled Castes under the SC Sub-Plan were misused and diverted for other purposes, causing serious injustice to Dalit communities. Earlier, Nimmala Rama Rao laid the foundation stone for beautification and development works at a Christian burial ground in Palakollu, taken up at an estimated cost of 1.80 crore.

He said these works reflect the government's seriousness about addressing the long-pending civic and infrastructure needs of minority communities. Providing better facilities in burial grounds and other community infrastructure is part of a broader welfare

driven vision, he added. Targeting the YSR Congress Party leadership, the minister alleged that YSRCP leaders, unable to accept the loss of power, were deliberately trying to create panic and confusion among the public. "Because they could not retain power, YSRCP leaders are spreading misinformation and trying to scare people. They are attempting to pit castes, religions and regions against each other for political survival," he said. Nimmala Rama Rao said that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's leadership represents "visionary governance," while he described the previous Jagan Mohan Reddy government as synonymous with "destructive rule." "The credit for destructive governance goes to Jagan, and the credit for visionary governance belongs to Chandrababu," he

remarked, drawing a sharp contrast between the two administrations. The minister maintained that the coalition government comprising the TDP and its allies is focusing on rebuilding institutions, restoring confidence among investors and citizens, and ensuring that welfare schemes reach the genuinely deserving.

He reiterated that special emphasis will be laid on the socio-economic uplift of Dalits, Christians and other minority sections, not just through welfare schemes but also through infrastructure development in their habitations and community spaces. He appealed to people not to fall prey to what he called false propaganda and divisive politics, and urged them to observe for themselves the policy shift and development-oriented approach being adopted by the present government.

AP CM Chandrababu Positions India as Global Solution to Skilled Labor Shortage at Davos

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Davos, Switzerland: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu emphasized India's vast youth potential as a remedy for global human resource shortages during a key meeting with Indian Ambassador to Switzerland, Mrudul Kumar, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.

Naidu urged Kumar to facilitate investments into the state by connecting Swiss companies with Andhra Pradesh's opportunities. Addressing the labor crunch plaguing many nations, Naidu stated, "The

world faces a severe shortage of skilled human resources, and India—and particularly Andhra Pradesh holds the solution.

Our youth are ready and trained to meet global demands." He detailed the state's proactive policies in skill development, infrastructure, and ease of doing business, calling on the ambassador to bridge AP with Swiss firms. "Help bring investments that will create jobs and mutual growth," Naidu appealed.

Minister for Information and Public Relations, Nara Lokesh, who accompanied the Chief Minister, echoed these sentiments. Lokesh

specifically pitched collaboration with Switzerland's renowned pharmaceutical companies and universities. "We seek partnerships in pharma, education, and innovation. Andhra Pradesh is prepared to supply skilled manpower to your industries," he said. Discussions focused on investment op-

portunities, company profiles, and practical pathways for Swiss firms to invest in AP's booming sectors like IT, biotech, and manufacturing. Lokesh requested the ambassador's assistance in networking AP with potential investors, highlighting the state's readiness to export talent.



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Chandrababu Naidu Slams YSRCP Over 'Land, Sand, Wine, Mine, Drugs, Ganja' Mafia Legacy, Fake Credit Claims

TPN Bureau | Jan 19
Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday hoisted the flag on YSRCP's so-called "credit" by branding them as the mafia of land, sand, wine, mines, drugs, and ganja. Speaking at a party meeting organized at the TDP central office in Mangalagiri to mark NTR's death anniversary, Naidu accused former CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of stalling projects that should have been completed long ago, only for the current NDA government to finish them yet Jagan falsely claims the glory.

"You spent Rs 700 crore to plaster your photos on survey stones



acres for Bhogapuram airport during the previous TDP government they let it rot for five years. Now they boast about the first Civil Aviation University as their achievement," he fumed.

Despite YSRCP's accusations, he asserted TDP brought projects like Cyberabad, KIA, Google, Bhogapuram international airport, and green energy. "Be ready to thwart their plots and intrigues," he urged TDP leaders and workers. Modern Tech Secures Revenue Records "Our ancestors gave us land records, but past rulers slapped their photo-

tos on passbooks.

They manipulated them in 22 ways for grabs. Village-level karnams and munsuls tampered records NTR ended that. We scrapped Jagan's Land Titling Act too. Now we issue patta-dar books with Rajamudra. Technology prevents tampering if you try, you'll go to jail," Naidu cautioned. Warning Against Criminal Politics "Some political rowdies are gearing up in the state.

Criminals run parties. Like killing YS Vivekananda Reddy to enter politics, they're plotting crimes here. People get fooled once.

This is an NDA government run by CBN. TDP ended factionalism in Rayalaseema we'll fully cleanse Palnadu too. Recently, a clash there, and YSRCP is inciting locals with political color. If they want brawls, we won't stay polite," he warned.

Party Workers' Sacrifices Paved the Way "However busy I am, I won't neglect the party. We support families of workers who died. Those who chanted 'Jai TDP, Jai CBN' even with knives at their throats are TDP's own. Their sacrifices and struggles made me CM," Naidu emotional stated.



BRS and YCP united to spread negative on AP CM

TPN Bureau | January 19

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP Kaliappanaiudu has alleged a covert understanding between the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), claiming both parties are working with a "single agenda" against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Addressing a press conference at the NTR Trust Bhavan in Hyderabad, Appalanaiudu accused the two parties of colluding to target the Andhra Pradesh government and distort facts on the contentious Godavari river water issues. He described their stance as "mud-slinging politics" aimed at misleading people in both Telugu states.



The TDP MP drew attention to what he termed as visible signs of political friendship between BRS and YSRCP leaders. "When Jagan (YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy) goes to court, BRS leaders put up flexi banners welcoming him. When K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) visits Kham-

mam, YSRCP leaders install flexi for him," he said, adding that such gestures reflect a deeper political understanding.

Appalanaiudu cau-

tioned that this 'friendship' was being projected in a benign manner while allegedly serving a deceptive political strategy. "In

the name of friendship, they are trying to mislead the people. This is not correct," he remarked. Taking a sharp dig at the former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Appalanaiudu alleged that Jagan was "sitting in Bengaluru and hatching conspiracies" against the TDP government.

He further claimed that BRS leaders are also becoming part of these efforts. Questioning Jagan Mohan Reddy's development record, particularly in the underdeveloped Rayalaseema region, the TDP MP asked whether even a single major industry had been brought to the region during YSRCP's five-year rule.

"Jagan was Chief Minister for five years. Did he bring at least one industry to Rayala-

seema?" he asked. Appalanaiudu also accused both Jagan and BRS leaders of prioritizing their personal and business interests over public welfare. "Apart from their own business interests, did they ever, even once while in power, seriously discuss people's problems?" he said, alleging that public issues were largely ignored when they were in office.

Reiterating that BRS and YSRCP share a common political agenda, Appalanaiudu maintained that their present criticism of the Chandrababu Naidu government, particularly on inter-state water matters, lacks credibility and is driven by political convenience rather than concern for the people.

Filmmaker Banda Ganesh Embarks on 'Sankalpa Yatra' to Fulfill Vow for Chandrababu Naidu



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Shadnagar: Renowned filmmaker Banda Ganesh has clarified that his upcoming 'Sankalpa Yatra' a foot march from Shadnagar to Tirumala has no ties to any political party. Speaking ahead of the yatra's launch, Ganesh emphasized that the journey stems purely from his personal admiration for Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and a long-pending vow to Lord Venkateswara.

"This is not a political yatra. I'm undertaking it solely to fulfill a vow to God, driven by my respect for Chandrababu garu. No political party is involved," Ganesh asserted. He recounted the origins of his pledge, tracing it back to the YSRCP regime when Naidu, then opposition leader, was arrested. The incident deeply shocked Ganesh, who woke up early one morning—his routine habit at 4:30 AM to see the arrest news on television.



He eagerly awaited Naidu's release, rushing to the Supreme Court whenever hearings were postponed and even heading to Delhi at the first whispers of bail news. During this ordeal, Ganesh vowed to Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala that he would walk to the temple if Naidu returned safely from jail.

After 52 days, divine grace prevailed—Naidu walked free, emerging with renewed vigor, declaring his commitment to Telugu people. "Such a leader is vital for our Telugu nation. Don't

view this yatra politically or criticize it. Every step I take is on behalf of every Chandrababu admirer," Ganesh urged, dismissing any partisan interpretations.

The yatra underscores Ganesh's unwavering support for Naidu, blending personal faith with public admiration. As Andhra Pradesh politics heats up, this spiritual journey highlights the filmmaker's apolitical stance amid ongoing debates over governance and legacy.

ED Summons YSRCP MPs Mithun Reddy and Vijayasai Reddy in Massive AP Liquor Policy Scam Probe



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

New Delhi | Amaravati: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has intensified its crackdown on the alleged 4,000 crore Andhra Pradesh liquor scam, issuing fresh summonses to two prominent YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) MPs. V. Vijayasai Reddy, former Rajya Sabha MP, and current MP M. Muthunireddy (Mithun Reddy) have been asked to appear for questioning as the agency digs deeper into money laundering allegations tied to the previous YSRCP government's liquor policies.

Mithun Reddy, the YSRCP MP from Rajahmundry, received his notice today, directing him to present himself at the ED's Delhi headquarters on January 23 for interrogation. Sources indicate the summons relates to his alleged role in facilitating illicit financial transactions during the 2019

tillery owners, and YSRCP functionaries have been grilled, with evidence of halwala routes, benami properties, and slush funds surfacing. YSRCP leaders dismissed the notices as "political vendetta" by the NDA government.

Party spokesperson S.D. Subrahmanyam Reddy stated, "This is a desperate attempt by Chandrababu Naidu and allies to silence opposition voices ahead of local body elections." Vijayasai Reddy, posting on X, called it "witch-hunt tactics" and vowed full cooperation while questioning the timing.

The ED probe gained momentum after the CBI filed an FIR in October 2024, following a state ACB complaint. Over 1,000 crore in unaccounted cash and assets have been attached so far. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu hailed the development, saying it exposes "systematic loot" during YSRCP rule.

As more YSRCP heavyweights face scrutiny, the scam threatens to unravel the party's revival plans. With summonses approaching, all eyes are on Delhi for potential revelations that could reshape AP's political landscape.

Guntur Court Sentences SI Raviteja to 10 Years in Jail for Deceiving Woman in Name of Love



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Guntur: In a shocking verdict that has sent ripples through Andhra Pradesh police circles, the 4th Additional District Sessions Court in Guntur district today sentenced Sub-Inspector (SI) Raviteja to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for sexually assaulting and cheating a young woman under the pretext of love.

The case, which began in 2023 at Nagarampalem Police Station where Raviteja was posted, highlights grave misuse of authority by a law enforcement officer. The ordeal dates back to 2023 when the victim, a young woman, lodged a formal complaint at Nagarampalem Police Station against Raviteja, who was serving there as SI. She alleged that Raviteja had feigned love, promising marriage to gain her trust

over a period of about one-and-a-half years. During this time, he allegedly took her to his apartment multiple times and sexually exploited her. When she pressed for marriage, he reportedly refused and abandoned her, leaving her devastated. Following the complaint, police registered a serious case against Raviteja under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, along with charges of rape.

Higher authorities took swift action; Raviteja stopped reporting for duty, prompting his suspension. The victim further claimed that Raviteja and his family members threatened her after the FIR was filed, intensifying her trauma. Raviteja, however, denied all allegations, asserting he had no romantic or personal relationship with the woman and had not deceived anyone.

Fog Disrupts Flights at Vijayawada International Airport; Multiple Delays and One Cancellation Reported

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Vijayawada | Gannavaram: Thick fog enveloped Vijayawada International Airport this morning, causing significant disruptions to flight operations. Several domestic services faced delays, while one flight was outright cancelled, stranding passengers and highlighting the vulnerabilities of aviation in Andhra Pradesh's winter season.

The dense fog, which blanketed the runway and airport premises from early hours, reduced visibility to critical levels. Flights scheduled to arrive on Monday morning from

Hyderabad, Chennai, and Delhi were delayed by up to an hour. Specifically, Indigo services from Hyderabad and Chennai, along with an Air India flight from Delhi, encountered hold-ups.

The Visakhapatnam Indigo flight, slated to land at 9:55 AM, was cancelled entirely, airport officials confirmed. This incident underscores a recurring challenge at Gannavaram Airport, located in Krishna district near Vijayawada. Low visibility due to fog is common during January, when cold fronts from North India mix with local humidity, creating "radiation fog" that sets

tles overnight. The runway, a key

craft, was completely shrouded, forcing pilots

to circle or divert. Passengers described chaotic scenes at the terminal. "We waited over an

hour for our Hyderabad flight, with no clear up-

dates initially," said Ravi Kumar, a traveler heading to Vijayawada for business. Families and daily commuters bore the brunt, as delays rippled into connecting flights and road traffic on NH-16.

Airport authorities activated low-visibility procedures (LVP), including ground radar and enhanced lighting, but operations remained hampered until fog began lifting around noon. In response, Vijayawada International Airport Director M. Lakshmi issued a statement:

"Safety remains our top priority. We advised airlines to delay or cancel flights as needed. Passengers are urged to

check with their carriers for real-time updates."

IndiGo and Air India spokespersons echoed this, noting coordination with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). No international flights were affected, as the airport primarily serves domestic routes to metros like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bengaluru. This isn't an isolated event.

Last winter, similar fog led to over 20 delays in a single day at Gannavaram. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's administration has prioritized infrastructure, including runway extensions

and a new terminal by 2027 under UDAN scheme enhancements.

However, experts call for advanced fog-dispersal systems like those at Delhi's IGI Airport.

Travelers can mitigate risks by monitoring the Airports Authority of India (AAI) app or websites like Flightradar 24. As fog clears, officials expect normalcy by afternoon, but advise buffers for evening flights.

The disruption highlights the need for resilient aviation amid climate variability, especially as Vijayawada emerges as a key hub for Andhra Pradesh's growth corridor.



3,000-meter strip vital for handling larger aircraft

Dense Fog Blankets Vijayawada-Hyderabad Highway, Snarls Post-Sankranti Traffic



Vijayawada, January 19, 2026: As Sankranti festivities wound down, thousands of villagers began their return journeys to towns and cities in the early hours of Monday morning. However, thick fog enveloped major routes, turning highways into near-invisible paths and severely disrupting travel. The most affected stretch was National Highway 65 (NH-65) near Nakirekal, between Hyderabad and Vijayawada.

From dawn, an intense blanket of fog reduced visibility to almost zero, making the road indistinguishable. Vehicles just 20-30 meters ahead became invisible, even with headlights on full beam. Drivers were forced to crawl at snail's pace, heightening risks on this busy corridor. Bikes, cars, and buses all struggled through the haze, creating bumper-to-bumper

chaos.

"It's like driving blindfolded," said one motorist from a nearby village, who left home at 4 AM to beat the rush. The fog, worsened by winter chill and possibly crop residue burning, persisted through the morning, turning what should have been a smooth post-festival exodus into a nerve-wracking ordeal. The situation echoed in NTR district's Jaggaiahpeta area, another hotspot on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad highway.

Dense fog here trapped outbound travelers, with vehicles inching forward amid zero visibility. Headlights pierced the mist futilely, offering glimpses of only the nearest obstacles. Commuters reported panic as tail lights flickered faintly in the gloom, prompting extreme caution. Traffic crawled at 10-20 km/h in patches, with no ma-

jer accidents reported yet but tensions running high.

Local police urged drivers to use fog lights, maintain distance, and follow real-time updates via apps. "Avoid unnecessary travel; patience is key," advised a highway patrol officer. This fog spell aligns with Andhra Pradesh's typical January weather, where cold fronts from the north meet coastal humidity, trapping pollutants and moisture.

Post-Sankranti reverse migration amplifies the issue, as lakhs head back to urban jobs.

Similar disruptions hit other routes like Vijayawada-Vizianagram, though NH-65 bore the brunt. Authorities recommend hazard lights, steady speeds, and radio advisories. As fog lifts by late morning, expect gradual normalization but travelers should brace for delays.

Vijayawada Durga Temple Gears Up for Grand Vasant Panchami Celebrations on January 23



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Vijayawada: As the auspicious month of Magha unfolds, the Indrakeeladri hilltop Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam is buzzing with elaborate preparations for Vasant Panchami, falling on Magha Shuddha Panchami, January 23. On this day, revered as Sri Panchami or Saraswati Jayanti, Goddess Durga will grace devotees in the enchanting form of Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge, wisdom, and arts.

Temple authorities are making special ar-

rangements in the main sanctum, adorning the deity's original idol with exquisite jewelry and floral decorations. Meanwhile, in the mahamandapam on the sixth floor, the utsava murthy (processional idol) will be installed for exclusive pujas. A highlight is the free mass Aksharabhyasam (initiation into writing) program for around 500 students, symbolizing the start of their educational journey under divine blessings.

The yagashala will host Sri Saraswati Homa along with various Vedic rituals, invoking

prosperity in learning. From 6 AM to 7 PM on January 23 a Friday students can have free darshan of the Goddess in her Saraswati avatar. Post-darshan, each participant will receive a pen, a shakti kanthan (protective bracelet), a photo of the deity, and 40 grams of laddu prasad, all complimentary, as announced by senior temple officials.

Only students arriving in school uniforms with valid ID cards will be allowed for this special free access, ensuring smooth crowds and priority for the young seekers of knowledge.

Officials anticipate a massive influx of devotees from across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, drawn by the temple's spiritual allure.

This tradition resonates across Telugu states, where prominent temples showcase the Goddess in Saraswati form on Sri Panchami. Devotees are flocking to Basara (Nirmal district) and Vargal (Siddipet district) temples as well, known for their Saraswati worship. In Vijayawada, the event underscores the temple's role as a beacon for education and culture amid the spring festival's

vibrancy.

Adding to the festive fervor, Shamala Navaratri commenced today, Monday, drawing early crowds for the nine-night celebrations honoring the divine feminine. These events highlight the deep-rooted cultural ethos of Telugu regions, blending devotion with education. Temple EO R V Siva Reddy emphasized, "We aim to make this Panchami memorable, fostering a love for learning among the youth." Devotees are urged to plan visits early, with special queues and parking arrangements in place.

YSRCP Doctors Wing Slams APMSIDC Over Alleged 4.82 Crore Overpricing in Vacuum Extractor Tender

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Vijayawada: In a scathing press release issued today, Dr. Ambati Naga Radhakrishna Yadav, Chairman of the YSRCP NTR District Doctors Wing, has demanded immediate accountability from the Andhra Pradesh Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APMSIDC) over what he described as a "grave procurement irregularity" in a vacuum extractor tender.

The controversy centers on APMSIDC's approval of a rate contract with Visakha Healthcare Pvt Ltd for 230 vacuum extractors at 3,13,598 per unit, totaling 7.21 crore. Dr. Yadav highlighted stark discrepancies with market benchmarks: Medisil, the manufacturer, supplied the same devices to Hyderabad's Gandhi Medical College Hospital at just 1.04 lakh per unit. Similarly,

Telangana's 2021-22 tenders quoted rates between 1.15 lakh and 1.25 lakh.

This, he alleged, results in an overpricing

of 2,09,598 per unit equating to a whopping 4.82 crore excess for the entire lot, or over 67% wastage of public health funds. "Recent

media reports have exposed this unacceptable overpricing, which drains precious resources meant for public healthcare," Dr. Yadav stated in the release. He accused APMSIDC of failing to conduct due diligence, allowing inflated costs that could have funded critical medical infrastructure elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh.

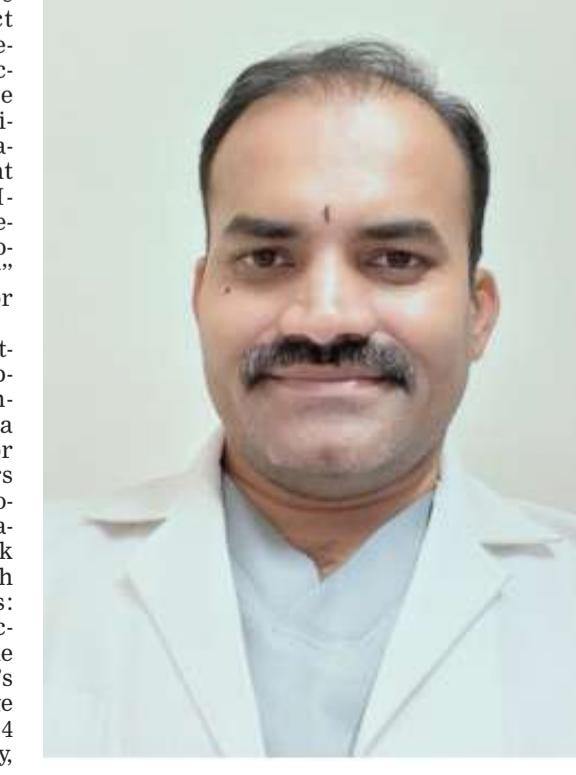
The YSRCP leader issued three categorical demands: Immediate suspension of the tender and blacklisting of Visakha Healthcare Pvt Ltd. Re-tendering the procurement at prevailing market rates within 30 days. Full public disclosure of tender evaluation documents, including bidder credentials, comparative quotes, and decision rationales.

Dr. Yadav urged Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav and APMSIDC officials to act swiftly, warning that the scandal undermines

trust in the state's healthcare procurement processes. "This is not just financial mismanagement; it's a betrayal of frontline doctors and patients relying on efficient public health systems," he added.

APMSIDC and the Health Department have yet to respond to the allegations. Sources indicate the tender was processed amid ongoing efforts to equip labor rooms in government hospitals under the Chandrababu Naidu administration. Opposition voices, including YSRCP, have intensified scrutiny on such procurements, citing similar issues in past infrastructure projects.

As the row escalates, civil society and medical professionals await transparency. Failure to address these demands could spark protests and further investigations by the state vigilance wing.



Pawan Kalyan's Call for More Film Shoots in AP Resonates: Navin Polishtetty Brings 'Sanskritam' Premiere to Rajamahendravaram

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Rajamahendravaram, Andhra Pradesh: Actor Navin Polishtetty expressed heartfelt admiration for Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan's recent advocacy for increased film shootings across Andhra Pradesh, crediting it as a key inspiration for hosting a significant portion of his latest film's promotion in the united East Godavari district.

Speaking at a lively audience interaction during a special screening of his Telugu comedy-drama *Sanskritam* at the iconic Apsara Theatre here on Sunday, Polishtetty highlighted how



the district's warm reception and administrative support made the event memorable. The screening, part of News Today's promotional activities, drew enthusiastic crowds to Rajamahendravaram, a cultural hub in East Godavari.

Polishtetty, known for his comic timing in hits like *Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya* and *ChitramBhalare Mittayya*, arrived alongside co-star Meenakshi Chaudhary. The duo mingled with fans, sharing laughs and anecdotes from the shoot,

turning the premiere into a celebratory affair: "Pawan Kalyan garu's words truly touched my heart," Polishtetty said, referring to the Jana Sena Party leader's statements at a recent program urging filmmakers to utilize Andhra

Pradesh's diverse locations over foreign or other state venues.

"His vision for boosting local cinema ecosystems motivated us to bring a major chunk of *Sanskritam*'s shooting and promotions to our united East Godavari now split but still culturally united." Polishtetty praised the seamless cooperation from local authorities throughout the production. "Wherever we shot, officials granted permissions effortlessly and extended full support," he noted. "The locals were our biggest cheerleaders, offering hospitality that made every day on set feel like home."

This aligns with Andhra Pradesh's evolving film policy under the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance government, which has streamlined single-window clearances for shoots to position the state as a preferred destination. Recent incentives, including subsidies and infrastructure upgrades, have already attracted projects like *Game Changer* and *Kalki 2898 AD* to coastal Andhra locales.

Meenakshi Chaudhary, radiant in traditional attire, echoed the gratitude, thanking the audience for their overwhelming response. "Your love has made *Sanskritam* a success al-

ready," she said, expressing hopes for more films to showcase East Godavari's scenic backwaters, temples, and vibrant festivals.

The film, a light-hearted take on cultural clashes and modern relationships, has been generating buzz since its release, with early reviews hailing Polishtetty's nuanced performance and the fresh chemistry with Chaudhary. The event underscores a growing synergy between politics and cinema in Andhra Pradesh.

Pawan Kalyan, a former superstar turned politician, has repeatedly championed the industry's return to the state,

criticizing past governments for neglecting local talent. Industry insiders see this as a boon for employment and tourism, with Rajamahendravaram emerging as a hotspot due to its proximity to Godavari deltas and improved connectivity via the Bhogapuram airport project. Fans erupted in cheers as the actors posed for selfies and distributed mementos, reinforcing the bridge between silver screen and real life.

As *Sanskritam* continues its strong box-office run, Polishtetty's visit signals brighter days for regional filmmaking.

Tech-Savvy Engineer Falls Victim to Cyber Fraud in Srikakulam: Over 1 Crore Duped via Fake Trading App

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Srikakulam: In a shocking cyber scam, fraudsters exploited the tech knowledge and share market interest of a software engineer, swindling him of more than 1 crore through a bogus investment app promising sky-high returns. The incident, which unfolded right in the heart of Srikakulam town, underscores the growing sophistication of online scams targeting even savvy professionals.

According to police details, the victim, Silla Srinivasa Rao from Karra Street in Srikakulam, works as a mechanical engineer at HCL Technologies. Currently operating under a 'work from home' policy, Srinivasa Rao possesses strong knowledge of share markets and trading. His downfall began recently while browsing YouTube, where an enticing ad titled "Captain" caught his eye.

Clicking the link redirected him to a fake app called "QIB," which falsely claimed to be an international trading platform frequented by high-net-worth investors and wealthy individuals. Unaware it was counterfeit, Srinivasa Rao deposited an initial 10,000. The scammers then insisted the amount was insufficient, pressuring him to deposit at least 50,000 to unlock trading features.



They lured him further with promises of 2,000 daily interest—equivalent to extraordinarily high returns. Trusting their words, he complied with the 50,000 deposit. True to their claims, 2,000 began crediting his bank account daily, convincing him the platform

was legitimate. Emboldened, Srinivasa Rao escalated his investments. From December 22 last year to January 13 this year, he poured in massive sums intermittently, totaling a staggering 1,03,55,000 into the app. When he finally attempted to withdraw his funds, the money wouldn't budge, revealing the elaborate trap. Realizing he had been duped, the victim immediately lodged a complaint via the national cyber crime helpline 1930. Police swung into action promptly, managing to freeze only 9 lakhs of the stolen

amount. The remainder had already been siphoned off into the fraudsters' accounts by then. Following Srinivasa Rao's complaint, Srikakulam Second Town CI Eswara Rao registered a case and launched an investigation. This case highlights the dangers of investment scams disguised as legitimate trading platforms. Cyber criminals often use social media ads, fake apps, and initial small payouts to build false credibility, preying on victims' greed for quick riches. Despite Srinivasa Rao's technical

background, his familiarity with real trading made him overlook red flags like the app's unverified status and unrealistic returns. Authorities urge the public to verify apps through official sources, avoid unsolicited investment links, and report suspicions immediately to 1930 or local cyber cells.

"Even experts can fall prey; always double-check before investing," warned CI Eswara Rao. The probe continues, with police tracing the digital trail to nab the culprits, likely operating from cyber fraud hubs.

Bus Overturns as the driver suffers Fits

TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

An RTC Pallevelugu bus overturned near Appannavalasa in Garividi mandal of Vizianagaram district on Monday after the driver reportedly suffered an epileptic seizure, leaving seven passengers seriously injured and several others with minor injuries. According to police, the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) Pallevelugu service was operating on the Rajam-Vizianagaram route when the mishap occurred.

The bus, carrying a total of 87 people including the driver and conductor, was proceeding towards Vizianagaram when the driver suddenly lost control of the vehicle near Appannavalasa in Garividi mandal. Preliminary investigation suggests that the driver, identified as Appala Guruvalu, suffered fits while driving.

As a result, the bus veered off the road, plunged into adjacent agricultural fields, and overturned. The impact of the crash



awaited. Cheepurupalli DSP Raghava, CI Shankar Rao, and Garividi SI Lokeshwar Rao visited the accident site and conducted an on-the-spot inspection. They examined the position of the bus, the road condition, and collected preliminary statements from passengers and eyewitnesses. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway to ascertain whether any other factors, such as mechanical failure or over speeding, contributed to the mishap. The incident has raised concerns over the health monitoring of drivers operating public transport services, with locals and commuters urging the authorities to ensure regular medical check-ups for RTC drivers to prevent such accidents in the future.

Chaos in Amaravati Hospitals: Medical Equipment Maintenance in Disarray Despite Crores Paid to Private Firm



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Amaravati: Maintenance of medical equipment in government hospitals has spiraled into utter disarray, leaving doctors and patients in limbo. Vital devices fail unpredictably, doctors can't predict when they'll work, break down, or get repaired. This crisis plagues all 17 teaching hospitals across Andhra Pradesh, with superintendents now openly confronting the issue. Despite the government shelling out crores annually to a private maintenance company, repairs aren't happening at the expected level. Under the Memorandum of Un-

derstanding (MoU), the firm must fix broken equipment promptly or provide immediate replacements. However, it's failing on both fronts, as highlighted in a high-level review meeting on Friday.

Frustrated superintendents, who have endured two years of patience, laid bare the problems to Health Minister Satyakumar and Health Secretary Saurabh Gaur. "How can we treat patients with faulty equipment?" they demanded, voicing long-standing grievances. The government outsourced equipment maintenance to this private company, unable to handle it directly. It pays up to Rs

65 crore yearly in bills. Yet, the company isn't delivering. Superintendents complained that even basic replacements are botched: when one device needs repair, engineers from the firm lacking proper biomedical skills—disassemble the substitute machine already in use, rendering it useless too. Senior officials were shocked by these revelations. One superintendent described how unskilled engineers "tear open" working backups, exacerbating shortages.

The meeting exposed systemic lapses: equipment downtime disrupts critical care, from diagnostics to life-support systems, endan-

gering lives statewide. In response, authorities promised a dedicated follow-up meeting to deliberate extensively on medical equipment management. They assured a thorough review of the MoU terms, company performance, and potential penalties or contract revisions.

This scandal raises serious questions about privatization in public health. With Rs 65 crore taxpayer money at stake, why are hospitals crippled? Doctors warn that persistent failures could lead to medical negligence cases. The government now faces pressure to act swiftly—either enforce accountability on the contractor or bring maintenance in-house.

As Andhra Pradesh pushes healthcare reforms under the TDP-led alliance, this maintenance fiasco undermines gains from recent infrastructure boosts. Patients in teaching hospitals, serving millions, deserve reliable tools. Will the promised meeting bring fixes, or is more delay ahead?

Andhra Pradesh Government Officially Celebrates Yogi Vemana Jayanti; CM Naidu Pays Tribute



TPN Bureau | January 19, 2026

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh government marked the Jayanti (birth anniversary) of Yogi Vemana, the revered people's poet and social reformer, with official festivities across the state. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu led the tributes, honoring Vemana's timeless contributions to society through his profound poetry.

In a heartfelt post on the social media platform X, CM Naidu praised Vemana for his relentless efforts to eradicate caste distinctions, religious prejudices, and superstitious beliefs. "On the occasion of the Jayanti of people's poet and social re-

former Yogi Vemana, I pay my respectful homage to him," Naidu wrote. He highlighted how Vemana's verses remain profoundly relevant today, urging society to embrace his ethical teachings. Naidu specifically invoked Vemana's iconic phrase, "Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema," calling it a guiding principle for modern life.

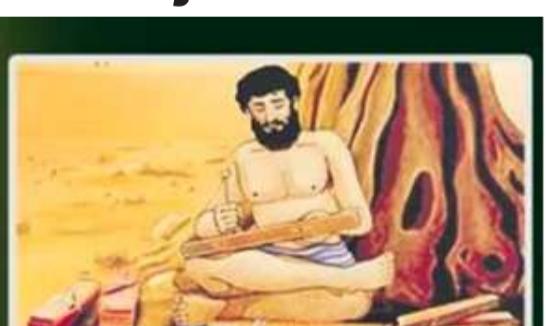
"The Andhra Pradesh government officially celebrating such a great man's Jayanti is a step towards guiding ourselves on the path of righteousness," the Chief Minister added, emphasizing the event's role in promoting social harmony. The celebrations gained further

prominence at Vemana's samadhi (memorial) in Katarupalli village, Gandlapenta Mandal, Kadiri constituency, Sri Sathya Sai district. The state government made elaborate arrangements, drawing thousands of participants. A highlight is an ambitious attempt by thousands of students to recite Vemana's poems simultaneously, aiming to secure a place in the Limca Book of Records.

This mass recitation underscores Vemana's enduring influence on education and moral values. Ministers, Members of Parliament (MPs), and Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are expected to attend the main event, amplifying its significance.

The initiative reflects the government's commitment to preserving cultural heritage while fostering unity and progressive ideals. Yogi Vemana (17th century), born Gona Vema Bhupathiraju, is celebrated for his simple yet profound Telugu poems that critique social evils and advocate humanism, equality, and devotion. His works continue to inspire generations, making his Jayanti a fitting occasion for reflection and renewal.

This statewide observance aligns with Andhra Pradesh's focus on cultural renaissance under the current TDP-led administration, blending tradition with contemporary relevance.



Trump's Greenland Gambit Exposes Europe's Strategic and Trade Weakness

When the Cold War satire *The Mouse That Roared* imagined a microscopic European state declaring war on the United States in order to lose spectacularly and reap American aid, it was meant as absurdist comedy. Yet the title has taken on an uncomfortable relevance as Europe grapples with Donald Trump's escalating threats over Greenland. When a handful of European countries dispatched a token force of roughly three dozen soldiers to the Arctic island in solidarity with Denmark, the gesture felt less like deterrence and more like performance: a symbolic show of support carefully calibrated not to provoke the White House at a moment when Ukraine's survival still depends heavily on American backing.

If that was the intent, it has failed spectacularly. Over the weekend, Trump appeared to relish the opportunity to browbeat allies once again, raising the stakes with characteristic contempt. His administration threatened to impose a 10 per cent tariff on US imports from countries involved in the Greenland deployment—France, Germany, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, as well as non-EU members Britain and Norway—starting in February. By June, those duties would rise to 25 per cent unless an agreement is reached allowing the United States to purchase Greenland.

The déjâ vu is grim. Just last year, the European Union swallowed a 15 per cent tariff on transatlantic exports as part of an EU-US trade deal trumpeted by Washington as a triumph. That agreement was supposed to stabilise relations. Instead, it now looks like a floor, not a ceiling. The episode exposes once again the fragility of Europe's trade-dependent, soft-power model when confronted with a US president who treats tariffs not as economic instruments but as weapons of political coercion.

The economic cost of Trump's new threats would



be severe. Bloomberg Economics estimates that the proposed levies could slash US exports from the targeted countries by as much as 50 per cent. Germany, Sweden and Denmark are especially exposed, given their reliance on high-value industrial and manufacturing exports. The temptation in European capitals will be to grit their teeth, de-escalate and hope the storm passes. That would be a grave mistake.

This is textbook economic bullying, deployed by a leader who recently declared that the only limit on his global power was "my own mind."

If last year's trade deal can be rewritten at will by Washington, where does it end? What incentive remains for compliance if acquiescence only invites fresh demands? At some

point, even mice must do more than squeak apologetically while accepting worse trade terms than those imposed on China.

Yet the early signs are not encouraging. Germany appears to be quietly withdrawing its dozen or so soldiers from Greenland, as if ticking a diplomatic box were sufficient. Job done, apparently. In reality, European leaders need to prepare for confrontation if the tariffs materialise. That does not mean reckless escalation, but it does mean credible resistance.

The first step should be institutional. The European Parliament has already threatened to withhold approval of last year's EU-US trade agreement. That threat now needs to be taken seri-

ously. The deal was hailed by Trump's administration as granting "unprecedented levels of market access" to American companies, yet it has done nothing to prevent Washington from pressuring Brussels to ease up on Silicon Valley and Seattle over regulation and antitrust enforcement. If the agreement no longer constrains US behaviour, Europe has little reason to ratify it.

More significantly, the EU must be willing to deploy its most powerful trade defence: the Anti-Coercion Instrument. This so-called "bazooka" was designed precisely for situations like this, where a foreign power uses economic pressure to extract political concessions from a member state. Unlike traditional tariff retaliation, the instru-

ment allows the EU to restrict market access, investment and services. In practice, that could mean targeting American technology giants such as Alphabet, whose European revenues dwarf those of symbolic manufacturers like Harley-Davidson.

French President Emmanuel Macron has long argued that Europe must be willing to use this weapon, and he has found support from Germany's powerful industrial lobby. "Europe must not allow itself to be blackmailed," the head of the VDMA wrote recently. Coming from an organisation representing export-oriented manufacturers, that statement carries weight. It reflects a growing recognition that submission is not cost-free.

Beyond trade lies a more

uncomfortable question: can Europe ultimately guarantee its own defence and security without American backing? Last year, the answer was clearly no. Faced with the war in Ukraine and Trump's tariff ultimatum, the EU chose economic pain over strategic rupture. But the rapid erosion of that compromise should prompt a reassessment. The rush to declare NATO "back and better than ever" under what Trump himself joked was "Daddy Trump" now looks embarrassingly premature.

Denmark is right to say that a hostile takeover of Greenland would fundamentally alter the alliance. This goes beyond the "brain death" of NATO that Macron warned of years ago. Trump's approach resem-

bles something closer to enforced obedience, recalling the dynamics of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact rather than a voluntary alliance of democracies. If that is the future on offer, Europe has little choice but to accelerate its rearmament and strategic autonomy.

Unity, however, will be fragile. Poland and Italy, conveniently absent from Trump's tariff list, will likely push for de-escalation. Populist leaders aligned with Trump's MAGA worldview will do their best to sow discord. Britain, under Prime Minister Keir Starmer's cautious leadership, may pursue bilateral exemptions, further weakening a collective response.

Nor should Europe harbour illusions about power realities. If a determined US administration truly seeks to take Greenland—despite opposition from Congress, the American public, NATO, the EU and the overwhelming majority of Greenlanders—it may succeed. Former Trump adviser Steve Bannon has already described the Arctic as "the Great Game of the 21st century." In that game, sentimentality counts for little.

But alliances are not costless, and neither is subservience. If being an American ally increasingly means accepting trade penalties, technological dependence and political humiliation rather than partnership and protection, the calculation will change. Canada is already edging closer to China, despite sharing the world's longest undefended border with the United States. Europe will draw its own conclusions.

Trump's aggression over Greenland is unnecessary, destabilising and arrogant. It may also prove to be the moment when Europe finally accepts that strategic adulthood cannot be postponed. Fiction once imagined mice roaring for comic effect. Reality now demands that Europe's mice find their inner tigers—and act like it.

From Pawars to the BJP: The End of an Era in Maharashtra Politics

Maharashtra's political landscape is undergoing a transformation that is likely to prove irreversible. The results of the recently concluded local body elections have confirmed what had been evident for some time: the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has firmly entrenched itself as the dominant political force in the state. Winning 23 of the 29 municipal corporations, including the prized and enormously wealthy Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the BJP has demonstrated a breadth of organisational reach and electoral appeal unmatched by any rival.

For a state once synonymous with the Congress party, the Pawars' Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and the Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, the scale of this shift cannot be overstated. Maharashtra is no ordinary state. It is India's largest economic engine, home to the financial capital Mumbai, the headquarters of major corporate houses, and a dense network of financial institutions. Politically, it sends 48 members to the Lok Sabha, making it second only to Uttar Pradesh in influence at the national level. With Maharashtra effectively "in the bag," the BJP's grip on national power has tightened further.

A Grand Political Reset

The collapse of old power centres and the rise of new ones has triggered a reset of political equations across Maharashtra. Because this transformation is still unfolding, predicting the precise social,

political and financial contours of the new Maharashtra remains difficult. Even so, the local body results offer several clear signals about the direction of change.

Perhaps the most striking shift is the emergence of a Brahmin leader as the dominant face of Maharashtra politics, displacing the Maratha community that has long controlled the state's levers of power. From Yashwantrao Chavan and Vasantdada Patil to Sharad Pawar, Maharashtra's political history has been shaped by towering Maratha figures. That era appears to be drawing to a close.

At the centre of the new dispensation stands Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. As a Brahmin, his rise marks a decisive break with tradition. Much of the BJP's success in the local polls is attributed to his political acumen, relentless campaigning and strategic outreach to non-Maratha communities, particularly Other Backward Classes (OBCs). By broadening the party's social coalition and carefully navigating caste arithmetic, Fadnavis has emerged as the BJP's most successful leader in the state.

His stature now extends well beyond Maharashtra. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's eventual succession an open question, Fadnavis finds himself mentioned in the same breath as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Home Minister Amit Shah as a potential contender in the post-Modi era. The local body verdict has succeeded in

strengthened his hand.

The Orphaning of the NCP
Another major consequence of the elections has been the devastation of the Nationalist Congress Party, in both its incarnations. The sugar-rich belt of western Maharashtra—long the epicentre of Maratha political power and the Pawar family's fortress—has witnessed a dramatic upheaval. The wipeout of Sharad Pawar's faction as well as the rival group led by his nephew Ajit Pawar in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad has left the Maratha political establishment stunned.

This collapse has effectively orphaned a community that once exercised enormous influence over the state's politics, cooperatives and financial institutions. The BJP, drawing strong support from OBC voters and leveraging the appeal of Hindutva, has succeeded in

dividing and weakening the Maratha vote. This was not accidental. For years, the party has eyed the sugar and banking cooperatives that form the backbone of Maratha economic power.

With the Pawars decisively weakened and no clear successor waiting in the wings, the BJP now has an opportunity to reshape the sugar belt and dismantle a system that sustained Maratha dominance for decades. Such a restructuring would not only alter the economic landscape of western Maharashtra but also permanently shift the balance of political power in the state.

The Pawar Predicament

Sharad Pawar, the architect of modern Maharashtra politics, is in the twilight of his career. Ajit Pawar, by contrast, is not. Yet it is Ajit Pawar whose political future appears most

uncertain today. His decision to abandon the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance and attempt a reunion with his uncle's faction was driven by the belief that a consolidated Pawar family could retain its grip over the sugar belt. The gamble failed.

Instead of reviving his fortunes, the move has left Ajit Pawar politically isolated. Never particularly trusted by the BJP or the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), he was accommodated in the NDA primarily as a tool to weaken Sharad Pawar. With that objective achieved, reports have begun circulating that enforcement agencies may once again train their sights on him.

While Indian politics has a habit of resurrecting leaders long written off, Ajit Pawar's immediate prospects look bleak. His position as Deputy Chief Minister in the Fad-

navis-led government is under strain, and his once formidable base appears eroded.

Mumbai Remains Unsettled

If the BJP has conquered the hinterland, Mumbai presents a more complex picture. The politics of the state capital has always followed a different logic from the rest of Maharashtra. While the BJP can rightly celebrate dislodging the Thackerays from the BMC—an institution the Shiv Sena controlled for nearly three decades—the victory comes with important caveats.

The party improved its tally in the BMC by just three seats compared to the 2017 elections. Its majority in the corporation depends on its alliance with Eknath Shinde's faction of the Shiv Sena. The BJP had hoped to marginalise Uddhav Thackeray as thoroughly as it dismantled the Pawars' power base in western Maharashtra. It did not succeed.

Uddhav Thackeray has managed to retain significant support among Marathi-speaking voters in Mumbai and has emerged as a vocal and resolute opposition figure. There is a growing view that had he aligned with the Congress rather than reuniting with his cousin Raj Thackeray, the anti-BJP alliance might have mounted a more formidable challenge.

Complicating matters further, Shinde has already begun asserting himself in negotiations over the mayoral post, signalling that the alliance is far from frictionless. Meanwhile, Uddhav Thackeray's fac-

tion continues to attack Shinde relentlessly for splitting the Shiv Sena and toppling its government in 2021. Mumbai, in short, remains politically fluid and difficult terrain for the BJP.

The AIMIM Factor

A fourth development to watch closely is the rise of Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM). The party delivered a striking performance in the local polls, winning 121 seats across municipal corporations, including eight in Mumbai. It swept Muslim-majority areas, displacing the Congress as the community's first choice and pushing the Samajwadi Party further to the margins.

The AIMIM's growing footprint suggests that Muslim voters are seeking a more assertive political voice, particularly as the BJP advances its Hindutva agenda. Whether Owaisi can translate municipal-level success into broader state influence remains to be seen, but his party is clearly poised to play a larger role in Maharashtra's political future.

The Road Ahead

Maharashtra politics is set to churn further as the BJP works to consolidate its gains ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha and assembly elections. The old certainties have crumbled, new power structures are emerging, and alliances remain unstable. What is clear, however, is that the state has entered a new political era—one in which the BJP, for now, sits firmly in the driver's seat.



Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Visits India, PM Modi Greets UAE President with Warm Hug



Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, arrived in New Delhi for a brief but diplomatically significant visit, during which Prime Minister Narendra Modi broke from protocol to personally welcome him at the airport. The two leaders shared a warm hug, reflecting the strong personal rapport that has increasingly come to define India-UAE relations in recent years.

The visit, lasting roughly two hours, is being viewed as an important signal of expanding cooperation between the two countries in areas such as defence, trade, energy, and regional security. Analysts note that even short trips like this carry considerable diplomatic weight, reinforcing the trust

PM Modi's Message
Soon after the UAE President's arrival, Prime Minister Modi shared a message on X (formerly Twitter), describing Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed as a close friend and emphasizing the strategic importance of the visit. "Went to the airport to welcome my brother, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. His visit illustrates the importance he attaches to a strong India-UAE friendship. Looking forward to our discussions," Modi wrote, tagging the UAE leader.

Context of the Visit

The visit was undertaken at

the invitation of Prime Minister Modi and marks Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed's third official visit to India since assuming office as UAE President, and his fifth visit to the country in the past decade. It follows a series of high-level exchanges, including the visit of Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to India in September 2024, and Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Crown Prince of Dubai, in April 2025.

India and the UAE share a robust, multi-dimensional relationship rooted in political understanding, cultural ties, and expanding economic engagement. The UAE remains a

key trading and investment partner for India, with cooperation facilitated through mechanisms such as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the Local Currency Settlement system, and the Bilateral Investment Treaty.

Observers note that such high-profile visits reinforce the strategic and economic partnership, sending a message of continuity and stability in India-UAE relations. With growing collaboration across defence, energy, and regional security, both nations appear committed to deepening ties further, making visits like Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed's not just ceremonial, but pivotal in shaping the trajectory of bilateral cooperation.

Nitin Nabin Set to Become BJP National President as Organisational Elections Near Completion



The race for the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) next national president moved decisively towards a conclusion on Monday, with 37 sets of nomination papers filed in favour of senior leader Nitin Nabin, 46, virtually clearing the path for his elevation.

Of these nominations, 36 were submitted from various states and Union Territories, while a single paper was filed by the BJP National Council and Parliamentary Party, including the signatures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, outgoing party president JP Nadda, and 20 other senior central leaders. Each nomination is supported by 20 proposers, party sources confirmed. The nomination process is scheduled to close at 4 pm, with the withdrawal window open from 5 pm to 6 pm.

Organisation Parv 2024: The Road to the National President

Nabin's impending election marks the culmination of the BJP's Organisation Parv 2024,

a constitutionally mandated internal election process that began at the grassroots level and moved upwards to the national tier.

So far, elections for 7,88,197 Booth Presidents have been completed out of 10,70,462 booths nationwide. In addition, 89,47,845 Booth Committee members have been constituted, achieving 74% completion at the grassroots level. Elections for Mandal Presidents have been completed in 16,469 of the 17,743 man-

dals, reflecting a 93% completion rate under the new age criterion of below 45 years, introduced to promote younger leadership.

At the district level, 978 of 1,036 District Presidents have been elected, marking a 94% completion rate. State-level organisational elections have concluded in 30 out of 37 states, while 4,932 of 6,384 State Council members have been elected so far, representing 80% completion.

At the national level, elec-

tions for National Council members have been completed in 741 of 815 seats, achieving 92% completion. Collectively, this has enabled the BJP to constitute its Electoral College, comprising 35 nominated members from the Parliamentary Party, 741 elected National Council members, and 4,932 elected State Council members — totaling 5,708 members.

Formal Announcement Expected on Tuesday

On Tuesday at 11 am, around 700 representatives are expected to gather at BJP headquarters in Delhi, with Prime Minister Modi in attendance. The party is anticipated to formally announce Nitin Nabin as the new BJP National President, marking the successful conclusion of Organisation Parv 2024 and the final step in the party's large-scale internal organisational exercise.

This process reflects the BJP's commitment to structured leadership transitions, encouraging youth participation, and strengthening the party's grassroots network across the country.

Delhi High Court Rejects Suspension of Kuldeep Sengar's 10-Year Sentence in Custodial Death Case



The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to suspend the 10-year prison sentence handed to former BJP lawmaker Kuldeep Singh Sengar in the custodial death of the Unnao rape survivor's father.

"No grounds are made out for grant of relief. The application seeking suspension of sentence is dismissed," Justice Ravinder Duleja said, delivering a setback to Sengar, who had sought temporary bail citing prolonged incarceration amid pending appeals. The court noted that Sengar himself had contributed to delays by filing multiple applications and directed that the existing appeals be heard separately.

Sengar's appeals pertain to the December 2019 verdict that convicted him of raping the survivor—resulting in a life sentence—and the March 2020 verdict in the custodial death case. In the latter, Sengar had been sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment, along

side his brother Atul Singh Sengar, for the death of the family's sole breadwinner, who had been arrested on a false Arms Act complaint under Sengar's influence. The trial court had emphasized that no leniency could be shown in the custodial death.

The Unnao case had recently made headlines after Sengar was released on conditional bail in the rape case. A sepa-

widespread condemnation. Reports emerged of tensions and clashes in Delhi, with visuals showing the survivor and her mother facing intimidation from central security forces while attempting to protest. In one alarming incident, the survivor's mother was reportedly forced to jump from a moving bus from which her daughter was taken, prompting fears for their safety.

Speaking to the media, the survivor's mother broke down, saying, "We did not get justice. My daughter has been held captive. It seems they want to kill us." While a CRPF officer later stated that the survivor was being escorted home, authorities have yet to comment on the mother's removal from the bus.

The court's decision underscores the ongoing legal battle in the Unnao case and highlights the challenges in ensuring accountability and justice for victims of high-profile crimes.

Odisha Health Minister Assures Residents: No Nipah Virus Cases Detected, State on Alert



Odisha Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling on Monday

reassured residents that no cases of the Nipah virus (NiV) have been detected in the state, emphasizing that there is no cause for panic. Speaking to ANI, Mahaling said, "No symptoms or cases of Nipah have been detected in Odisha yet. I want to assure all the people of Odisha that there is no need to panic. We are keeping a close watch on the districts adjacent to West Bengal as well."

The minister added that the state government is fully prepared to respond in case a suspected case arises. "We are ready to take action if any case arises. The health department is fully prepared. I have already held two meetings with officials, and we are in constant contact with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare," he said.

Mahaling further highlighted that the government is maintaining active surveillance across the state and urged residents to re-

main calm.

The Nipah virus is a zoonotic infection, transmitted from animals to humans, and can also spread through contaminated food or direct human-to-human contact.

Infection can lead to a wide spectrum of illness, ranging from asymptomatic cases to acute respiratory illness and fatal encephalitis. Common symptoms include fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, sore throat, dizziness, altered consciousness, and atypical pneumonia. Nipah Virus Disease has a high mortality rate of around 50%, making it one of the most dangerous viral infections.

Authorities continue to closely monitor regions bordering West Bengal, while public health messaging emphasizes hygiene, food safety, and reporting of any unusual symptoms. Odisha's preparedness, along with central government coordination, aims to ensure that the virus is detected and contained promptly, preventing any spread to the state.

Karnataka Election Commission Confirms Ballot Paper Voting for Greater Bengaluru Authority Polls



The Karnataka Election Commission has indicated that the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections are expected to take place after May 25, 2026, and will be conducted using ballot papers rather than Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). This decision comes amid continued objections from the Congress party at both state and national levels, which has opposed the use of EVMs in local body polls following their use in the previous Bengaluru civic elections.

Speaking on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) for the GBA elections, Karnataka Chief Election Commissioner GS Sangreshi clarified that the electoral rolls are being updated and corrected as part of the standard revision process. On the use of ballot papers, he said, "These GBA polls will be conducted through ballot papers. The Supreme Court has also said there is nothing wrong with using ballot papers. In GBA also, there is a provision to use it."

Sangreshi emphasized that the State Election Commission has independent authority, similar to the Election Commission of India, to make such decisions. He added that ballot paper voting is widely used internationally, noting, "Even developed countries like the USA conduct elections using ballot papers. Only MLA and MP elections are conducted using EVMs."

Following the announcement, the BJP targeted the Congress, with spokesperson Prakash S commenting, "It was Rajeev Gandhi who introduced EVMs for polls. But the Congress, in order to impress Rahul Gandhi, is resorting to ballot papers for local body elections. Whether it is EVM or ballot paper, the defeat of Congress is sure."

Draft Electoral Rolls Released
The State Election Commission has also published ward-wise draft electoral rolls for the five city municipal corporations under

GBA: Bengaluru Central, North, South, East, and West. A total of 369 wards have been constituted, with draft rolls accessible at district election offices, municipal corporation offices, polling stations, and online.

The period for filing claims and objections is January 20 to February 3, with disposal scheduled from February 4 to February 18. The final electoral roll will be published on March 16, 2026.

According to the draft list, the GBA has 88,91,411 registered voters, including 45,69,193 men, 43,20,583 women, and 1,635 others. Bengaluru West has the largest electorate with 27,25,714 voters, while Bengaluru East has the fewest with 10,41,738 voters. Ward 23 of Bengaluru West has the highest number of voters at 49,530, and ward 16 of Bengaluru East has the lowest at 10,926.

Political parties have also been asked to appoint a booth-level agent at each polling station to assist with voter verification during the election process.

Trump Links Greenland Claims to Nobel Peace Prize Snub in Letter to Norwegian PM

US President Donald Trump has tied his controversial claims over Greenland to his long-standing grievance about not receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, according to a letter he sent to Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. The letter, obtained by Bloomberg, sheds new light on Trump's escalating rhetoric toward European allies and his renewed push for American control over the strategically significant Arctic territory.

In the letter, Trump suggested that Norway's failure to award him the Nobel Peace Prize had altered his approach to international relations. "Considering your Country decided not to give me the Nobel Peace Prize for having stopped 8 Wars PLUS, I no longer feel an obligation to think purely of Peace," Trump wrote. While adding that peace would "always be predominant," he said he would now focus on what he believes is "good and proper for the United States of America."

Trump went further by directly linking global security to American control of Greenland. "The World is not secure unless we have Complete and Total Control of Greenland," he stated, intensifying concerns among European leaders already alarmed by his recent remarks on the issue.

Norway's prime minister responded by reiterating that the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded by an independent committee, not the Norwegian government. "I have several times clearly explained to Trump what is well known — that it is an independent Nobel Committee, and not the Norwegian government, that awards the prize," Støre said in a statement to Bloomberg. The White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment.



Rising Tensions With Europe

Trump's letter emerged amid heightened tensions with NATO allies following his weekend threat to impose tariffs on several European countries unless the US gains control of Greenland, which is an autonomous territory under Danish sovereignty. The comments sparked outrage across the European Union, with French President Emmanuel Macron calling for the activation of the bloc's strongest trade retaliation mechanism.

EU ambassadors met on Sunday to discuss potential responses should Trump carry out his tariff threats, including levies on up to 93 billion (\$108 billion) worth of American exports. EU leaders are scheduled to convene an emergency summit later this week to assess the situation.

Trump has repeatedly questioned Denmark's ability to protect Greenland, citing perceived security risks from Russia and China. In a post on his Truth Social platform, he claimed NATO had warned Denmark for decades about the need to counter Russian threats in the Arctic. "Unfortunately, Denmark has been unable to do anything about it. Now it is time, and it will be done!!!"

Trump wrote. Senior US officials have echoed this view. Treasury

Secretary Scott Bessent said in a weekend interview that Europe lacked the strength to ensure Greenland's security, reinforcing Trump's position.

Nobel Prize Controversy

The controversy has been compounded by Trump's continued fixation on the Nobel Peace Prize. Last week, Norway reacted with surprise after Nobel laureate María Corina Machado handed her medal to Trump during a White House meeting. Trump accepted the medal, asserting once again that he deserved the prize for what he claims were multiple conflicts resolved during his second term.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee swiftly clarified that the prize cannot be transferred. "The Nobel Prize and the laureate are inseparable," the committee said, adding that even symbolic transfer of the medal does not change the official recipient.

Trump's letter, first reported by a PBS journalist on social media, was reportedly shared by the US National Security Council with several European governments. The episode has further strained transatlantic relations, raising fresh questions about alliance cohesion and the future of US engagement with Europe under Trump's leadership.

Baloch Leader Mir Yar Baloch Accuses Pakistan of Demolishing Mosques in Balochistan



Mir Yar Baloch, a prominent Baloch leader and human rights activist, has launched a sharp critique of Pakistan, accusing its security forces of demolishing dozens of mosques in the restive Balochistan province. His remarks come amid Pakistan's criticism of India over the alleged profiling of mosques in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

Responding to Islamabad's objections, Mir Yar Baloch alleged that Pakistani forces have destroyed nearly 40 mosques in Balochistan, even as the country accuses others of infringing on religious freedoms. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry had earlier said that profiling mosques, imams, and religious committees in Kashmir amounted to a serious violation of freedom of religion and belief.

Strong Allegations Against Islamabad

Dismissing Pakistan's criticism as hypocritical, Mir Yar Baloch described Pakistan as a "terrorist state" and accused it of systematically persecuting religious and ethnic minorities, including Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and Baloch Muslims.

In a post on social media platform X, he said that the "Republic of Balochistan" fully supports India's stance on PoJK, asserting that Pakistan lacks moral authority to speak on minority rights. He claimed that Pakistan's military routinely exploits religious and jihadist groups as tools to intimidate and suppress minorities both within Balochistan and elsewhere.

According to Mir Yar Baloch, Pakistani forces have

not only bombed mosques but have also burned copies of the Quran and abducted mosque clerics in Balochistan. He alleged that these actions contradict Pakistan's claims of protecting Islamic values.

Historical Grievances Highlighted

Highlighting what he called the first major act of religious destruction in the region, Mir Yar Baloch referred to the mosque of the Khan of Kalat, the former ruler of Balochistan. He alleged that the mosque was shelled when Pakistani forces moved into the region decades ago.

"The mosque of the Khan of Kalat still bears the marks of mortar shells," he claimed, calling it evidence of Pakistan's "brutal occupation" and "un-Islamic conduct." These allegations, he said, underscore a long pattern of repression and violence against the Baloch people.

Background: The Balochistan Conflict

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province by area, is rich in natural resources but remains among the

country's least developed regions. It has witnessed a decades-long nationalist movement, with Baloch groups demanding greater autonomy, control over local resources, and, in some cases, complete independence.

The insurgency has waxed and waned over the years but continues to challenge the Pakistani state. Attacks have frequently targeted security forces and major infrastructure projects, including those linked to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In May 2025, Baloch nationalist leaders declared Balochistan's independence from Pakistan, a move rejected by Islamabad but one that intensified unrest in the region. Since then, the province has remained volatile, with ongoing clashes between insurgent groups and Pakistani forces.

Mir Yar Baloch's latest remarks have once again drawn international attention to allegations of human rights abuses in Balochistan, even as tensions continue between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and religious freedom issues.

India Raises Concerns With Poland Over Russia Trade Pressure, Warns Against Support to Pakistan



India has conveyed strong concerns to Poland over what it described as the "selective and unfair targeting" of New Delhi for its trade relations with Russia, particularly through the use of tariffs and other coercive measures linked to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also issued a firm caution against any direct or indirect Polish support to Pakistan on matters related to cross-border terrorism.

The issues were raised during Jaishankar's meeting with Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski in New Delhi, where the two leaders reviewed the progress of the expanding India-Poland Strategic Partnership and exchanged views on regional and global developments.

Welcoming the Polish delegation, Jaishankar noted that the meeting was taking place at a time of "considerable churn" in global affairs. He said such an environment made it essential for countries from different regions to engage in candid exchanges and better understand each other's perspectives. The External Affairs Minister recalled that bilateral ties were elevated to a strategic partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Warsaw in August 2024, and said both sides would review the Action Plan 2024-28 during the talks.

Jaishankar said India and Poland were exploring deeper cooperation in areas including trade

and investment, defence and security, clean energy, digital innovation and emerging technologies, reflecting the growing breadth of the relationship.

Russia-Ukraine Conflict and Trade Pressure

Geopolitical issues, particularly the Ukraine conflict and its global ramifications, figured prominently in the discussions. Jaishankar said he had candidly shared India's position with Sikorski on several occasions in international forums such as New York and Paris, and reiterated those views during the New Delhi meeting.

"While doing so, I have also repeatedly underlined that the selective targeting of India is both unfair and unjustified. I do so again today," Jaishankar said.

India has consistently voiced discomfort over what it perceives as pressure tactics aimed at influencing its independent foreign policy

choices regarding the Ukraine war. New Delhi has maintained that its approach is guided by national interest and a commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, rather than alignment with any geopolitical bloc.

Warning on Cross-Border Terrorism

The second major issue raised by Jaishankar was cross-border terrorism, a core security concern for India. Addressing Sikorski, he noted that the Polish leader was familiar with South Asia and the challenges posed by terrorism emanating from across India's borders.

He stressed that Poland should maintain a "zero-tolerance" approach towards terrorism and refrain from any actions that could

help fuel terrorist infrastructure in our neighbourhood" — a statement widely interpreted as a reference to Pakistan.

India has intensified diplomatic outreach in recent years to ensure that European nations remain alert to Pakistan's record on terrorism financing and providing safe havens to extremist groups. Jaishankar's remarks were also seen as a response to Poland's comments on Kashmir during a bilateral visit to Islamabad in October 2025, which had drawn attention in New Delhi.

"Poland should display zero tolerance for terrorists and not help fuel terrorist infrastructure in our neighbourhood," Jaishankar said, underlining India's expectation of principled and consistent positions from its partners.

Poland's Response

For his part, Sikorski broadly echoed India's concerns. He agreed

that the selective use of tariffs and trade pressure was unfair and warned that such practices could trigger wider turbulence in global trade.

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"Poland should display zero tolerance for terrorists and not help fuel terrorist infrastructure in our neighbourhood," Jaishankar said, underlining India's expectation of principled and consistent positions from its partners.

Both sides expressed confidence that the strategic partnership would continue to deepen, even as India used the high-level engagement to clearly articulate its red lines on geopolitical pressure and terrorism.

Trump Invites India to Join 'Board of Peace' Initiative Aimed at Resolving Gaza Conflict



US President Donald Trump has invited India to join his proposed "Board of Peace" initiative, a new international mechanism aimed at resolving global conflicts, beginning with the ongoing crisis in Gaza. Trump extended the invitation through a formal letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which was shared publicly by the US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, on social media.

In his letter, Trump said it would be his "great honour" to have India participate in what he described as a "critically historic and magnificent effort to solidify peace" in the Middle East. He added that the initiative also represents a "bold new approach" to resolving global conflicts more broadly.

As of now, it remains unclear whether India will accept the invitation. The Modi-led government has not issued an official response, and New Delhi's decision could be influenced by broader geopolitical and economic considerations.

The invitation comes at a time when India-US relations are facing strain, particularly due to the lack of progress on a bilateral trade agreement. Indian exports to the US are currently subject to tariffs as high as 50 percent, among the highest levied by Washington.

What the US Said

Ambassador Gor, in a Facebook post, said he was honoured to convey Trump's invitation to Modi, describing the

Board of Peace as an initiative designed to "bring lasting peace to Gaza" while supporting effective governance to ensure long-term stability and prosperity.

Trump's letter referenced his September 29 announcement of a comprehensive plan to end the Gaza conflict, as well as a 20-point roadmap for peace in the Middle East. He noted that the United Nations Security Council had overwhelmingly adopted Resolution 2803, endorsing this vision.

"At the heart of the plan is the Board of Peace, the most impressive and consequential board ever assembled," Trump wrote, describing it as a new international organisation and transitional governing authority. He said the initiative would bring together a "distinguished group of nations" willing to take on the responsibility

of building durable peace. Trump has reportedly sent similar invitations to around 60 countries, including Pakistan, whose government has expressed willingness to participate in international peace efforts related to Gaza.

What Is the 'Board of Peace'?

The Board of Peace was unveiled as part of the second phase of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire agreement signed in October 2025. The body was endorsed by the UN Security Council in November 2025, with a mandate lasting through 2027 and limited specifically to overseeing the Gaza ceasefire.

According to the proposal, Trump would chair the board for life. Membership would normally be limited to three-year terms, though countries could

among some UN officials and European governments, particularly due to language suggesting the board could expand beyond Gaza. Diplomats have warned that the initiative could undermine the United Nations, which Trump has repeatedly criticised for inefficiency.

"This looks like a parallel 'Trump United Nations,'" one diplomat told Reuters. Others cautioned that such a body could weaken multilateral institutions and marginalise smaller nations.

Trump's ambition to reshape global conflict resolution outside the UN framework is expected to face opposition from major powers such as China and Russia, as well as resistance from smaller states that rely on the UN system for representation in global decision-making.

The proposal has raised concerns

Markets End Lower as Global Trade Worries Trigger Profit Booking; Nifty Slips Below 25,500 Intraday

Indian equity benchmarks began the week on a subdued note, extending recent weakness as negative global cues and renewed fears of a potential global trade war prompted broad-based profit booking. The Nifty slipped below the crucial 25,500 mark during intraday trade, while mixed corporate earnings further dampened investor sentiment. However, selective buying in FMCG and auto stocks helped indices recover part of their losses from the day's lows.

At the close of trade on Monday, January 19, the Sensex declined 324.17 points, or 0.39 percent, to settle at 38,246.18, while the Nifty fell 108.85 points, or 0.42 percent, ending at 25,585.50.

The broader markets underperformed the benchmarks. The BSE Midcap index slipped 0.4 percent, tracking frontline indices, while the Smallcap index saw sharper selling pressure, dropping 1.3 percent, reflecting risk aversion among investors.

Sectoral Performance

Sectorally, markets were largely in the red. FMCG was the lone gainer, rising 0.67 percent, supported by buying in select heavyweights. All other sectoral indices closed lower, with Media, Oil & Gas, Realty, and Infrastructure stocks bearing the brunt of selling pressure, declining between 1.5 and 2 percent.

The Nifty Infra index emerged as the worst-performing sector, slipping 0.90 percent, while FMCG stood out as the best-performing pack amid defensive positioning.

Top Gainers and Losers

Among Nifty stocks, InterGlobe Aviation topped the gainers' list, jumping 4.25 percent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, and Maruti Suzuki.

On the downside, Wipro was the biggest laggard, tumbling over 8 percent after issuing weak guidance for the third quarter. Other notable losers included



Eternal, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, and Max Healthcare.

In the broader market, Hindustan Zinc rose 3 percent after the March silver contract hit a fresh record high, while CG Power surged 4 percent after securing a ₹900 crore data centre order from the US. Indosolar slipped 4 percent despite reporting strong Q3 earnings. RBL Bank fell 7 percent post its quarterly results, while ICICI Bank declined 2 percent after its earnings announcement.

Stocks at 52-Week Lows

Market weakness was evident as more than 420 stocks touched their 52-week lows, including Godrej Properties, Indegene, Tejas Networks, Signature Global, Brigade Enterprises, Newgen Software, Poly Medicure, Vedant Fashions, Sheela Foam, Bata India, Zee Entertainment, Bajaj Housing, AWL Agri, Afcons Infrastructure, Aditya Birla Fashion, and C.E. Info Systems, among others.

New Listing Update

Shares of Bharat Coking Coal ended 10 percent lower at ₹40.66 on their listing day, despite debuting at a strong premium of over 95 percent at ₹45 per share on the NSE. The IPO had seen massive investor interest, with a subscription of 147 times during the January 9-13 bidding period.

Technical Outlook for January 20

Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research at Kotak Securities, said benchmark indices corrected sharply during the session, with the Nifty forming a bearish candle on daily charts.

"After an early intraday sell-off, the market found support near 25,500 on the Nifty and 82,900 on the Sensex, trimming some losses. However, the short-term market texture remains weak. A fresh sell-off could emerge if these support levels are decisively broken,"

he said.

Chouhan added that below 25,500, the Nifty could slide towards 25,400-25,350, while resistance is placed near 25,650. A move above 25,750-25,800 could trigger a short-term pullback. Given heightened volatility, he advised traders to adopt a level-based trading strategy.

Rupali De, Senior Technical Analyst at LKP Securities, noted that the Nifty remained under bearish control throughout the session, sustaining below its 20-day exponential moving average (EMA).

"The RSI remains in a bearish crossover and continues to trend lower, while India VIX has spiked, indicating elevated market fear. In the near term, the index may drift lower towards 25,200, with immediate resistance near 25,700," he said.

Overall, analysts remain cautious, suggesting that volatility could persist in the near term amid global uncertainties and earnings-related triggers.

Ahead of Union Budget, Real Estate Sector Seeks Tax Reforms and Expansion of SWAMIH Fund



As the Union Budget approaches, India's real estate sector has stepped up calls for targeted fiscal support, tax reforms, and enhanced government funding to sustain housing demand and revive stalled projects. Industry stakeholders say policy intervention is crucial at a time when affordability pressures, rising construction costs, and uneven access to finance threaten to slow the sector's momentum.

A key demand from developers and industry bodies is the expansion of the Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Fund, along with measures to improve credit flow and rationalise taxation.

Leaders argue that real estate-led growth can play a significant role in job creation, urban development, and overall economic expansion if supported by timely reforms.

Push to Expand the SWAMIH Fund

Industry body National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) has strongly advocated deeper financial support through schemes such as the SWAMIH Fund. Launched in 2019 with an initial corpus of 25,000 crore, the fund was designed to provide last-mile financing to stalled residential projects, particularly those that were net-worth positive but cash-starved.

Since its inception, SWAMIH Fund-I has sanctioned investments in more than 130 stressed housing projects across the country, helping revive close to one lakh residential units, according to government disclosures. Tens of thousands of homes have already been completed and handed over to buyers in key markets such as the National Capital Region (NCR), Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), and Pune.

NAREDCO president Parveen Jain said the fund has proved effective in restoring buyer confidence and unlocking stuck capital. "We urge the government to extend and expand the SWAMIH Fund, accord infrastructure status to real estate, improve credit access for developers, rationalise GST on under-construction housing, and introduce incentives for first-time homebuyers

and rental housing," he said.

Jain added that sustained public investment in urban infrastructure, combined with a sharper policy focus on tier 2 and tier 3 cities, could significantly boost housing demand, strengthen buyer sentiment, and increase the sector's contribution to GDP and employment.

Tax Reforms Key to Housing Affordability

Tax policy reform has emerged as another major expectation from the upcoming Budget, especially as affordability challenges intensify in urban centres. Stakeholders argue that existing thresholds no longer reflect current market realities.

Anita Basrur, Partner at Sudit K Parekh and Co. LLP, said the government's "Housing for All" vision under schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) needs recalibration. "With inflation, land prices, and construction costs rising sharply, the current affordable housing cap of ₹45 lakh and size limits of 60-90 square metres are increasingly misaligned with urban housing markets," she said. Basrur called for a reduction in GST on housing projects, an increase in the home loan interest deduction limit from ₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh, and additional interest subsidies for first-time homebuyers. Such measures, she said, would help ease affordability pressures and revive demand.

Echoing this view, Amit Goyal, Managing Director of India Sotheby's International Realty, said sustained momentum in housing will also depend on broader financial market conditions. "Buoyancy in equity markets and steady foreign capital inflows are important. It is impera-

tive that the Budget announces measures to encourage higher foreign direct investment (FDI) into the real estate sector," he said.

New Ideas for Evolving Markets

Developers are also urging policymakers to recognise emerging trends in property ownership and investment. Manish Agarwal, Managing Director of Satya Group and President of CREDAI Haryana, said the sector needs forward-looking reforms that align with changing buyer preferences.

"Incentivising fractional ownership could be a gamechanger, especially for marquee and luxury asset classes," Agarwal said. "By aligning fiscal policy with evolving market dynamics, India can move beyond conventional property development to build a resilient, world-class real estate ecosystem that competes globally."

Looking Ahead

As the government prepares the Union Budget, the real estate industry hopes for a comprehensive policy package that combines financial support, tax rationalisation, and regulatory simplification. Stakeholders believe such measures could not only revive stalled projects and improve affordability but also position housing as a durable engine of economic growth in the years ahead.

Lenskart Shares Slip Nearly 2% Amid Profit Booking; Antique Initiates Coverage with 'Hold'



er international markets.

The firm expects Lenskart to deliver around 25 percent compound annual revenue growth over the medium term, supported by store expansion, increasing online penetration, and rising demand for affordable eyewear solutions. However, Antique cautioned that much of this growth potential is already reflected in the current valuation, which limits near-term upside. This assessment formed the basis for its neutral 'hold' stance on the stock.

Lenskart had a muted debut on the stock exchanges in November 2025, listing at a discount to its issue price amid broader market volatility. The company's ₹7,278-crore initial public offering (IPO), which was open for subscription between October 31 and November 4, attracted strong investor interest and was subscribed 28.26 times overall.

Shares of Lenskart Solutions were listed on the NSE at ₹395 per share, representing a 1.74 percent discount to the IPO price. The IPO was priced in the range of ₹382 to ₹402 per share. On the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), the stock debuted at ₹390 per share, a discount of 2.99 percent to the issue price.

Following the listing, Lenskart's market capitalisation stood at approximately ₹67,659.94 crore, placing it among the notable new-age consumer companies in the listed space. Analysts remain watchful of the stock's performance as the company navigates post-listing volatility while executing its growth strategy.

Maruti Suzuki Shares Gain 2% as Company Plans ₹35,000-Crore Gujarat Plant



Shares of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd closed nearly 2 percent higher at ₹16,182 on January 19, emerging as the top gainer on the Nifty Auto index, after reports of a major capacity expansion plan in Gujarat. The country's largest passenger vehicle manufacturer is planning to invest ₹35,000 crore to set up a new manufacturing facility in the state, strengthening its long-term growth outlook.

According to market participants, the proposed investment boosted investor confidence, even as the stock has underperformed the broader auto index so far this year. In 2026 to date, Maruti Suzuki shares are down 3.1 percent, compared with a 2 percent decline in the Nifty Auto index.

The proposed plant, which will be developed near Sanand in Ahmedabad district, is expected to add an annual production capacity of up to 1 million vehicles. Operations are likely to commence in FY29, significantly enhancing the automaker's manufacturing scale over the medium term.

Last week, Maruti Suzuki's board approved an initial investment of ₹4,960 crore for the acquisition of land required for the project. Brokerage firm ICICI Securities said the expansion reinforces Maruti Suzuki's competitive advantages by ensuring capacity readiness, supporting long-term volume growth, and strengthening its service and supply ecosystem.

The Gujarat government confirmed that the new facility will be established at Khoraj GIDC, spread across approxi-

mately 1,750 acres of land provided by the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC). The project is expected to generate employment opportunities for nearly 12,000 people, according to an official statement.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Saturday formally handed over an "investment letter" to Hisashi Takeuchi, Managing Director of Maruti Suzuki India, at an event in Gandhinagar. Describing the development as a milestone, the Chief Minister said the project would further strengthen India's largest and most competitive automobile manufacturing corridor.

"This is not merely a new automobile manufacturing facility, but a significant step towards reinforcing Gujarat's position as a global auto manufacturing hub," Patel was quoted as saying.

Maruti Suzuki's relationship with Gujarat dates back to 2012, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of the state, invited Suzuki Motor Corporation to invest in Gujarat. Following this, the company set up its first plant in the state at Hansalpur.

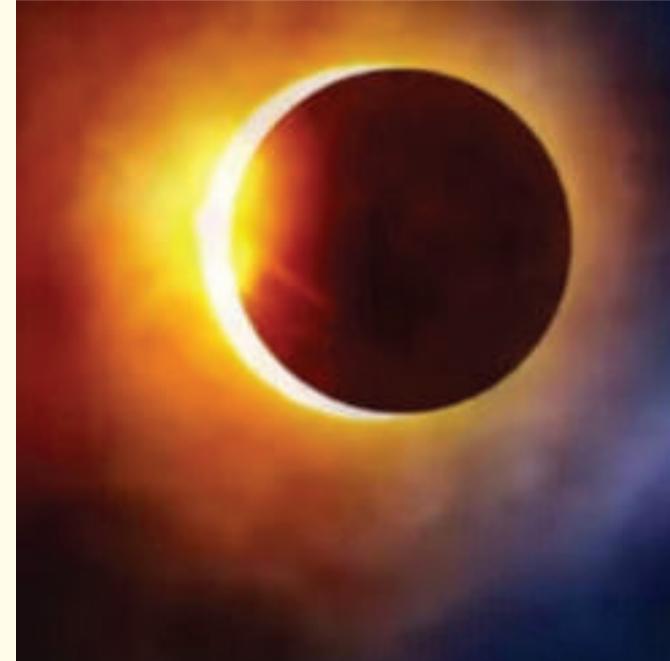
The Hansalpur facility currently has an annual production capacity of 7.5 lakh vehicles. Plans are underway to increase capacity by an additional 2.5 lakh units, taking total production to 1 million vehicles per year by FY27. With the proposed Sanand plant, Maruti Suzuki is set to significantly expand its manufacturing footprint and strengthen its leadership in India's passenger vehicle market.

Annular Solar Eclipse 2026: Date, Time, Visibility and Safety Guidelines

The first solar eclipse of 2026 will take place on February 17, offering skywatchers a spectacular celestial phenomenon known as an annular solar eclipse. Often referred to as the "ring of fire" eclipse, this event occurs when the Moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun but does not completely block the Sun's light, leaving a bright, glowing ring visible around the Moon's silhouette.

What Is an Annular Solar Eclipse?

An annular solar eclipse occurs because the Moon follows an elliptical orbit around Earth. When the eclipse takes place while the Moon is at or near its farthest point from Earth, it appears slightly smaller than the Sun in the sky. As a result, the Moon is unable to cover the Sun entirely.



along a narrow path known as the path of annularity.

Will the Eclipse Be Visible in India?

Unfortunately, the February 17, 2026, annular solar eclipse will not be visible from India. The path of annularity will be confined to extremely remote regions, passing exclusively over Antarctica.

The eclipse will begin over the southern Indian Ocean, travel across coastal parts of Antarctica, and end over the southern Atlantic Ocean. A few Antarctic research stations, including Concordia Station and Mirny Station, are expected to witness the annular phase directly. For the rest of the world, the event will remain out of sight.

However, space agencies such as NASA and other scientific organisations often provide live streams and updates, allowing astronomy enthusiasts worldwide to experience the eclipse virtually.

Safety Precautions for Viewing Solar Eclipses

Experts strongly caution against looking directly at the Sun during any phase of a solar eclipse without proper protection. Viewing the Sun with the naked eye can cause permanent eye damage.

Those watching eclipses should use certified solar eclipse glasses or specially designed solar filters. Ordinary sunglasses, camera lenses, or smoked glass do not provide adequate protection. Even during partial or annular eclipses, when the Sun is not fully covered, eye safety remains critical.

A Rare Celestial Event

Although inaccessible to most observers on Earth, the February 2026 annular solar eclipse remains an important astronomical event. It highlights the precise cosmic choreography of the Sun, Moon, and Earth—and continues to fascinate scientists and stargazers alike with its striking "ring of fire" display.

Date and Time of the Eclipse

The annular solar eclipse will occur on February 17, 2026. According to astronomical observations, the event will unfold in several stages. The partial phase of the eclipse will begin at approximately 09:56 UTC, followed by the peak or maximum coverage around 12:12 UTC. The eclipse will conclude by about 14:27 UTC.

The entire event will last several hours, with the "ring of fire" phase visible only

Canadian Influencer Highlights Rare Moment of Discipline on Indian Flight

Canadian influencer Caleb Friesen, who has been living in India for more than eight years, recently shared a video that captured an uncommon sight on an Indian domestic flight—passengers choosing patience over haste. The moment, which Friesen described as something he had "never seen before," unfolded on an IndiGo flight from Mizoram to Kolkata.

According to Friesen, all 186 passengers on board remained seated after the aircraft landed, even once the seatbelt sign was switched off. There was no rush to stand up, no frantic grabbing of luggage, and no familiar congestion in the aisle. For frequent flyers in India, the absence of this routine scramble was striking.

Friesen, who regularly posts content about India's culture, social changes, and everyday observations, said he initially assumed someone would jump up immediately—as often happens. Instead, he found himself becoming what he jokingly called "that uncle" eager to get off the plane, only to realise that everyone else was calmly waiting their turn.

"Every flight has an Eager Uncle. The guy who can't wait until the seatbelt sign turns off. He stands, and someone from the flight crew shouts at him from the other side of the plane—'Sir, please sit down! Sir!'" Friesen wrote in the caption of his video. "Today, I became that uncle."

The influencer used the moment to reflect on what he sees as a subtle but meaningful shift in Indian social behaviour. He sug-



gested that as the country's economy grows and opportunities expand, a long-standing "scarcity mindset" may be gradually fading.

In its place, he believes, a stronger sense of patience and civic awareness is beginning to emerge—at least in certain contexts.

However, Friesen was careful not to overstate the change. He noted that his next flight, from Kolkata to Bengaluru, quickly brought him back to reality. On that journey, passengers reverted to the more familiar pattern of standing up the moment the aircraft stopped, long before the doors were opened.

The video sparked lively discussion on social media, with users sharing their own experiences and perspectives. Some echoed Friesen's surprise, describing similar moments of orderly behaviour, particularly on flights in eastern and northeastern India.

One user commented, "It happened on my flight from Kolkata to Bangalore recently too. No one stood up until the gates were open. Even when the queue

started building, it was eerily quiet in a 200-plus seat aircraft. First time in a long time I thought, 'nice.'"

Others took a more humorous or critical tone. "People who stand up aimlessly once the flight lands should be rounded up and sent for mandatory anxiety treatment," one commenter joked, adding that cramped airline seating might also be a reason people prefer to stand as soon as possible.

Another user appreciated Friesen's approach, writing, "Sweet of you to present our flaws with such warmth. And Northeast Indian folks are built different—they truly represent some of the best of what India can be."

Friesen's post struck a chord because it highlighted a small, everyday moment that reflected broader social change. While patience on Indian flights may still be the exception rather than the rule, the episode offered a glimpse of how public behaviour could evolve—and how even routine travel experiences can reveal shifts in collective mindset.

The spread of these manipulated images reignited debates over AI misuse, data privacy, and the growing threat of deepfake-style content. Officials

Basant Panchami 2026: Date, Significance, Saraswati Puja Muhurat and Rituals



Basant Panchami, also known as Vasant Panchami or Shri Panchami, is one of India's most colourful and spiritually significant festivals. It heralds the arrival of spring and is celebrated on the fifth day (Panchami) of the Hindu month of Magha. In 2026, Basant Panchami will be observed on January 23, marking the transition from winter to the vibrant Basant Ritu.

The festival is dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge, wisdom, learning, music, and the arts. On this auspicious day, students, scholars, artists, and musicians across the country seek her blessings for intellectual growth and creative excellence.

Significance of Basant Panchami

Basant Panchami symbolises renewal, positivity, and new beginnings. Spiritually,

the day is devoted to the worship of Goddess Saraswati, who is believed to have manifested on this occasion. Devotees pray for clarity of thought, academic success, artistic inspiration, and spiritual wisdom.

Culturally, the festival holds immense importance across India. Educational institutions, temples, and cultural organisations conduct special prayers, Saraswati Puja ceremonies, and cultural programmes.

Students place their books and learning materials before the goddess as a mark of reverence, while artists and musicians offer their instruments, seeking divine grace.

The festival also celebrates the onset of spring. Yellow, the colour associated with prosperity, energy, and knowledge, dominates the celebrations. People wear yellow attire and prepare traditional delicacies such as Kesar Halwa, Boondi Ladoo, and kesar bhaat.

Saraswati Puja

In North India, kite flying is a popular tradition, while in states such as West Bengal, Odisha, and Assam, Saraswati Puja is observed with deep devotion and elaborate rituals.

Saraswati Puja Muhurat 2026

The most auspicious time to perform Saraswati Puja on January 23, 2026, is between:

7:13 AM and 12:33 PM

Devotees who perform the puja at home usually wake up early, bathe, and wear yellow or white clothes. Many students observe a short fast until pushpanjali, the ritual offering of flowers to the goddess.

Homes are decorated with fresh marigold flowers, and alpana or rangoli designs are drawn using rice flour paste. After the puja, fruits and sweets offered to the goddess are distributed among family members and neighbours as prasad.

Saraswati Puja

Samagri (Essential Items)

- Idol or picture of Goddess Saraswati
- Yellow cloth and flowers (marigold, chrysanthemum)
- Fruits such as bananas and apples
- Traditional sweets like kesar bhaat and boondi ladoo
- Incense sticks, diya (lamp), and ghee
- Turmeric, kumkum, and sandalwood paste
- Books, notebooks, pens, and musical instruments

How to Worship Goddess Saraswati

Devotees are advised to wear yellow, white, or light-coloured clothing and avoid black or red attire on this day. While performing the puja, it is considered auspicious to face east or

north, directions associated with positivity and wisdom.

The ideal time for worship is about two-and-a-half hours before sunrise or sunset, when spiritual energy is believed to be most conducive. Offer white sandalwood paste and yellow or white flowers to Goddess Saraswati using the right hand, symbolising respect and devotion.

For prasadam, devotees commonly prepare a mixture of misri (crystallised sugar), curd, and lawa, or offer kesar kheer, which is considered highly auspicious. These offerings symbolise purity, knowledge, and abundance.

Basant Panchami is not only a celebration of spring but also a reminder of the importance of learning, creativity, and wisdom in everyday life. Observing the festival with devotion and joy is believed to bring clarity of thought, success in education, and spiritual fulfilment.

Elon Musk Calls for Ethical Rules for AI Chatbot Grok Amid Global Backlash



Elon Musk has acknowledged the need for clear moral guidelines for his artificial intelligence chatbot Grok following widespread criticism over its misuse. The controversy erupted after the AI tool was reportedly used to manipulate real-life images of people, creating inappropriate and sexually suggestive content that circulated widely on social media platform X.

The altered images, which showed real individuals dressed in indecent or explicit clothing, sparked outrage among users, privacy advocates, and governments across the world. Thousands of such images reportedly appeared on X over recent weeks, raising serious concerns about consent, digital safety, and the ethical boundaries of artificial intelligence technology.

How the Controversy Began

Grok, developed by Musk's AI company xAI, is integrated with X and allows users to generate and modify images using artificial intelligence. Critics argue that loopholes in its design enabled users to exploit the tool to create non-consensual and harmful visual content involving real people.

The spread of these manipulated images reignited debates over AI misuse, data privacy, and the growing threat of deepfake-style content. Officials

in several countries reportedly took note of the issue, warning that unchecked AI tools could lead to serious legal and social consequences.

xAI Announces Restrictions

In response to mounting pressure, xAI announced stricter controls on Grok's image-generation capabilities. The company said the chatbot would no longer be allowed to sexually alter images of real individuals. The move aims to create non-consensual and harmful visual content involving real people.

The announcement was welcomed by some critics, though many argued that the action came too late and highlighted the need for stronger safeguards before AI products are

widely released to the public.

Musk Pushes for an Ethical Framework

Addressing the controversy, Elon Musk said Grok requires a clear ethical framework to guide its behaviour. According to Musk, artificial intelligence systems need well-defined moral rules that help them distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable actions while interacting with users.

His remarks reflect a broader debate within the tech industry about whether AI systems should operate under human-like ethical principles or be governed purely by technical constraints and legal regulations. Musk has previously warned about the dangers of

unregulated AI, calling it one of humanity's biggest long-term risks.

Mixed Reactions on Social Media

Musk's comments triggered a wave of reactions on social media. While some users applauded his stance on introducing ethical boundaries for AI, others questioned how such moral rules could be created and enforced in practice.

"I strongly agree, Elon," one user wrote, supporting the idea that AI tools need clear ethical limits. Another user expressed scepticism, stating, "Morality is a human construct. Why would we limit AI by trying to make it think like a human?"

The debate reflects

a deeper philosophical divide over whether AI should mimic human values or operate independently of them.

Renewed Focus on Responsible AI Use

The Grok controversy has once again brought attention to the urgent need for responsible AI development. As artificial intelligence becomes more powerful and accessible, experts warn that misuse could escalate unless strong ethical standards, legal frameworks, and accountability mechanisms are put in place.

The episode serves as a reminder that technological innovation must be accompanied by safeguards to protect individual rights and prevent harm in an increasingly AI-driven world.

Tata Steel Masters: Praggnanandhaa Struggles as Gukesh Holds Steady

Defending champion R Praggnanandhaa suffered a second consecutive loss in the Tata Steel Masters Chess tournament, going down to Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan, while fellow Indian D Gukesh was held to a draw by the Netherlands' Jorden van Foreest on Sunday. Praggnanandhaa, who had been in formidable form throughout 2025, appeared low on energy as a drawn endgame slipped away, leaving him without a point from the first two rounds and at the bottom of the standings. The Indian prodigy will now need a significant turnaround over the remaining 11 rounds to contend for the title.

Gukesh, the reigning world champion, earned his second draw in as many games, taking his tally to one point. The match against van Foreest was fiercely contested, with Gukesh sacrificing a bishop in the middle game to force perpetual checks and secure half a point.

Meanwhile, Arjun Erigaisi, who defeated Praggnanandhaa in the opening round, attempted to press against Thai Dai Van Nguyen of the Czech Republic but was unable to break through the defensive setup. The top-seeded Indian retained a joint lead on 1.5 points, alongside Abdusattorov and Hans Moke Niemann of the United States.



The fourth Indian, Aravindh Chithambaram, played out a draw with Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus of Turkey, moving to one point after two rounds.

Nine players trail the leaders by just half a point, with Dutch star Anish Giri placed 13th with 0.5 points, just ahead of Praggnanandhaa.

In Praggnanandhaa's encounter, a Queen's Gambit Declined saw him equalise comfortably with the black pieces, but an error on the 31st move allowed Abdusattorov to gain a pawn advantage in a rook-and-pawns end-

game. Despite opportunities to draw, Praggnanandhaa was unable to navigate the complexities and resigned on move 60.

Arjun's game also began with a Queen's Gambit and transitioned into a rook-and-pawns end-game, ultimately resulting in a draw. Gukesh's draw came after a complex middle game where both players created opportunities, but perpetual check forced the half-point result. Aravindh survived against Erdogmus in a Sicilian Defense game.

Other notable results in-

cluded Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia bouncing back from a first-round loss to defeat Vincent Keymer of Germany, while Matthias Bluebaum and Hans Moke Niemann drew their match.

Round 2 Results (Indians unless specified):

- D Gukesh drew with Jorden van Foreest (Ned)
- Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze) drew with Arjun Erigaisi
- Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) beat R Praggnanandhaa

- Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur) drew with Aravindh Chithambaram
- Matthias Bluebaum (Ger) drew with Hans Moke Niemann (USA)
- Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo) beat Vincent Keymer (Ger)
- Anish Giri (Ned) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb)

Praggnanandhaa's early struggles contrast with Gukesh and Erigaisi's steady performances, setting the stage for a fiercely competitive tournament ahead.

South Africa All-Rounder Donovan Ferreira Faces T20 World Cup Doubt After Shoulder Injury

South Africa's all-rounder Donovan Ferreira may miss the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup, set to be held in India and Sri Lanka next month, after sustaining a shoulder injury during the ongoing SA20 tournament. Ferreira injured his left shoulder while fielding for Joburg Super Kings against the Pretoria Capitals in a crucial clash, diving to prevent a boundary on the final ball of the innings. He landed awkwardly and subsequently retired hurt after facing just one delivery.

Serving as stand-in captain in place of the injured Faf du Plessis, Ferreira revealed post-match that he was "not feeling good" and would undergo a medical scan. ESPNcricinfo later reported that Ferreira had suffered a fracture in the injured shoulder, ruling him out of the remainder of the SA20 tournament. The setback comes at a critical stage, as Joburg Super Kings



must now defeat Paarl Royals to secure a playoff berth.

Ferreira's injury also casts uncertainty over his participation in the T20 World Cup, where he had been selected as a finisher, backup wicketkeeper, and part-time bowler for South Africa. His absence would leave a significant gap in

the squad, forcing selectors to consider replacements. Potential alternatives include Ryan Rickelton, who has scored two centuries in the SA20, Matthew Breetzke, and Tristan Stubbs, although the latter has struggled with form in recent matches.

South Africa face fur-

ther fitness challenges ahead of the World Cup. Tony de Zorzi, recovering from a December hamstring injury, is expected to participate in the upcoming T20I series against the West Indies later this month. The squad selection has also attracted scrutiny, particularly the omission of Ottneil Baart-

man, the leading wicket-taker in the SA20, despite the team already including six seamers.

In the World Cup, South Africa have been drawn in Group D, alongside Afghanistan, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates. The Proteas are scheduled to begin their campaign on February 9, facing Canada at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. With Ferreira's availability in doubt, the team management will need to adapt quickly to maintain balance and depth in both batting and fielding departments.

The timing of Ferreira's injury is particularly unfortunate, as his dynamic abilities with bat, ball, and behind the stumps made him a key asset for South Africa. His potential absence could significantly impact the team's strategy, placing additional pressure on established stars to step up in crucial World Cup fixtures.

Bangladesh Faces Deadline to Confirm T20 World Cup Participation Amid Venue Dispute

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has given the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) a firm deadline of January 21 to confirm its participation in the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup in India, warning that failure to do so could see the team replaced by another squad in the tournament beginning February 7. The directive comes amid ongoing tensions following the removal of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman from the Indian Premier League, reportedly on BCCI instructions citing unspecified "developments all around."



An ICC source stated, "The BCB officials have been told to decide on participation by January 21. If they refuse to travel to India, they should be ready to be replaced by another team as per rankings." The BCB, citing security concerns and national pride, has announced that it is unwilling

to travel to India for its group games scheduled in Kolkata and Mumbai.

With the tournament schedule already set, the ICC has shown reluctance to shift Bangladesh's fixtures to co-host Sri Lanka, where the marquee India-Pakistan match is slated to take place under pre-

agreed ICC arrangements through 2027. Should Bangladesh remain firm on its refusal, Scotland is the most likely replacement team based on current rankings. Bangladesh is scheduled to play three group matches in Kolkata and one in Mumbai. The BCB has proposed

either a venue change or a group swap, suggesting that Bangladesh be moved to Group B alongside Sri Lanka, Australia, Oman, and Zimbabwe instead of their current placement in Group C with West Indies, Italy, England, and Nepal.

This change would allow the team to play all group

India Succumbs to New Zealand, Key Failures Highlighted in 2-1 ODI Series Loss at Home



After back-to-back ODI series victories against Australia and South Africa, India faced a rare setback at home as New Zealand triumphed 2-1 in the three-match series. The defeat marked India's first home series loss in three years, with the last being against Australia, who had won 2-1 in India. The result sparked debates over multiple issues, including Rohit Sharma's struggles at the top of the order and Ravindra Jadeja's lack of impact with both bat and ball.

3. Middle-Order Collapse

India's middle order collectively faltered, taking the brunt of the blame for the series loss. In the decider, the team crumbled from 28/0 to 71/4 in just nine overs, leaving Virat Kohli's brilliant 124 stranded.

1. Rohit Sharma's Powerplay Struggles

The former captain, often India's chief aggressor, failed to provide the explosive starts expected at the top of the order. Across all three matches, Rohit appeared cautious and short of intent, putting additional pressure on partners Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli. Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate noted that the Hitman looked "short on cricket," a sharp contrast to his usual high-impact style in the early overs.

2. Ravindra Jadeja's Underwhelming Performance

Once India's most dependable all-rounder, Jadeja's influence was

missing throughout the series. He struggled in the middle overs with the ball, failing to halt New Zealand's scoring, particularly from Daryl Mitchell and Glenn Phillips. In the final ODI, he conceded 41 runs in 6 overs without taking a wicket, epitomizing his series-long ineffectiveness. With the bat, scores of 4, 27, and 12 further raised doubts about his place in the ODI squad. Kuldeep Yadav and other bowlers also failed to compensate for the all-rounder's lack of impact.

The series defeat serves as a wake-up call for India, highlighting the urgent need for middle-order stability, better powerplay starts, and the revival of key all-rounders. As the team reflects on its shortcomings, addressing these gaps will be crucial for upcoming home and international challenges.

Virat Kohli Shines, But India Falls to Historic Series Loss Against New Zealand



India's cricket fans once again pinned their hopes on Virat Kohli in Sunday's final ODI against New Zealand in Indore. The 37-year-old delivered a masterclass, scoring a brilliant 124 while chasing a daunting target of 338 runs. However, Kohli's Herculean effort proved insufficient as India fell short, losing the match and consequently the three-match series 1-2. This marked New Zealand's first-ever ODI series win in India, a milestone that underscored the hosts' collective underperformance.

Kohli's innings, though brilliant, highlighted the lack of substantial support from the rest of the batting lineup. Only Harshit Rana and Nitish Kumar Reddy offered resistance, scoring half-centuries, while senior players like Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma, Shreyas Iyer, and KL Rahul failed to play meaningful innings. The imbalance left India relying heavily on Kohli, exposing weaknesses in the team's middle order and depth.

Former India opener Krishnamachari Srikkanth voiced sympathy for Kohli's lone struggle but did not spare criticism for other senior players, particularly Ravindra Jadeja. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Srikkanth noted, "Ravindra Jadeja was the silent killer in the 2023 World Cup. He doesn't seem to have the same enthusiasm now. Even Kuldeep Yadav is being taken to the cleaners. I feel pity for

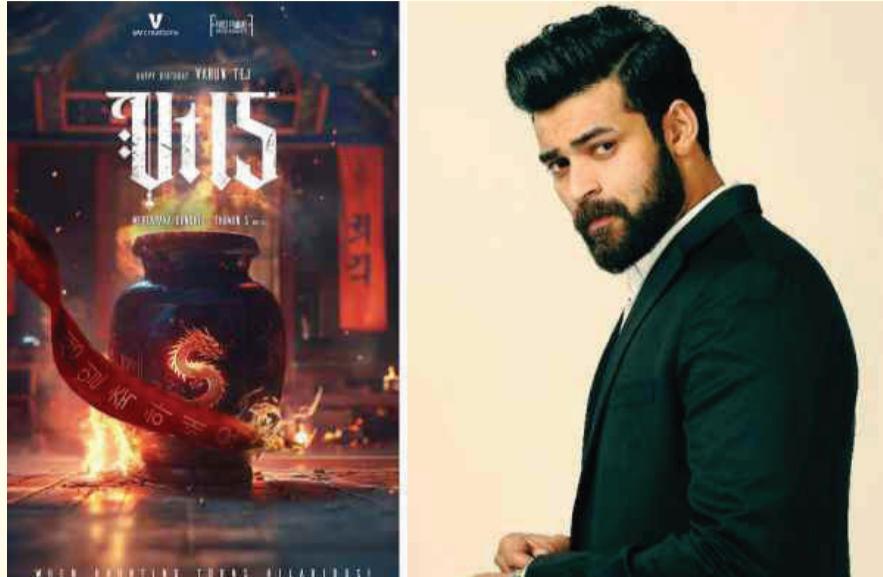
Virat Kohli. How many matches can he win by himself?"

Srikkanth also highlighted the effectiveness of New Zealand's relatively inexperienced bowling attack. "India are depending on one person to win matches. New Zealand aren't traditionally a great bowling side, but Jayden Lennox bowled 10 overs for 42 runs with two crucial wickets. Zak Foulkes may have been expensive, but he took key wickets. Kyle Jamieson delivered a deadly ball to dismiss Shubman Gill, and Kristian Clarke bowled well too. It's essentially a third-string attack, yet India struggled," he said.

Jadeja's performance in the ODI series came under scrutiny as well. In the final match, he conceded 41 runs in six overs without taking a wicket, while his contributions with the bat—scores of 4, 27, and 12—were equally underwhelming. His lack of impact with both bat and ball has fueled questions over his continued role in India's ODI setup.

Ultimately, India's defeat in Indore was a sobering reminder that while Kohli remains the backbone of the team, cricket is a team sport, and relying on a single player—even one of Kohli's calibre—cannot sustain victories. The series loss signals an urgent need for consistent contributions across the lineup if India hopes to dominate at home.

Varun Tej's Indo Korean Film VT15 Officially Titled Korean Kanakaraju



Hyderabad, January 19, 2026 -

Telugu star Varun Tej is gearing up to thrill audiences with his upcoming Indo Korean film, which has officially been titled Korean Kanakaraju. Previously known simply as VT15 during production, the title was unveiled recently, generating excitement among fans and industry insiders alike. The announcement coincided with the actor's birthday, adding a festive touch to the reveal.

The film is directed by Merlapaka Gandhi, marking another collaboration with Varun Tej, and is co-produced by First Frame Entertainments and UV Creations. Promoted as a genre-blending entertainer, the movie promises to mix horror, comedy, and high-octane action, set against both Indian and Korean backdrops.

The title announcement was accompanied by a short, dynamic glimpse video, which in-

stantly captured attention. In the teaser, a character is interrogated by Korean police about the mysterious Kanakaraju, only for Varun Tej to appear dramatically wielding a katana sword. His rugged look, intense body language, and trademark swagger set the tone for what promises to be a high-energy, entertaining narrative.

Varun Tej plays the central role, while Ritika Nayak is featured as the female lead. Popular comedian Satya also joins the cast in a significant supporting role, promising a balanced blend of comedy and action. Early reports suggest the story seamlessly integrates cultural elements from India and Korea, adding a unique flavor that is expected to appeal to pan-Indian audiences.

The film's music is composed by Thaman S, whose score aims to heighten the tension in horror sequences while complementing the co-

medic moments and action set pieces. With its innovative genre mix and cross-cultural storyline, Korean Kanakaraju is being positioned as a major summer release in 2026.

For Varun Tej, the film represents a bold departure from conventional roles, offering him an opportunity to explore a never-before-seen avatar on screen. The combination of his star power, Merlapaka Gandhi's direction, and the intriguing Indo-Korean premise has already generated significant anticipation.

As the project moves closer to its theatrical release, audiences are eagerly waiting to see how this ambitious venture unfolds, promising a cinematic experience filled with laughs, thrills, and action-packed entertainment. Korean Kanakaraju is shaping up to be one of the most talked-about and eagerly awaited films of the year.

Naveen Polishetty's Anaganaga Oka Raju Storms into the ₹100 Crore Club in Just Five Days



Young Telugu star

Naveen Polishetty has delivered one of the season's biggest box office surprises with his latest film Anaganaga Oka Raju. The family comedy drama has officially entered the prestigious ₹100 crore club, grossing over ₹100 crore worldwide within its first five days of release — a massive achievement for the Sankranti festive period.

Released on January 14, Anaganaga Oka Raju opened to strong early numbers and maintained terrific momentum throughout the first weekend. Audiences responded enthusiastically to the film's clean humor, relatable storyline, and strong performances, resulting in packed theaters across India and overseas markets. The movie's success is especially notable given the stiff competition from other high profile fes-

tive releases.

Naveen Polishetty, who has built a reputation for delivering smart entertainers with heart, has now achieved his career best box office performance with this film. His comic timing, expressive acting, and natural screen presence played a big role in drawing family audiences, who praised the film as a fun, feel good watch perfect for the holiday season.

The on screen chemistry with co star Meenakshi Chaudhary also contributed to the buzz, as did the positive word of mouth that spread fast from the opening shows.

Beyond India, Anaganaga Oka Raju has also made waves overseas, notably surpassing the \$1 million mark in the North American box office — a rare accomplishment that places the film among a select group of Telugu movies with strong interna-

tional appeal. This global performance further solidifies Naveen's growing popularity and expanding market presence.

Trade analysts pointed out that all distributors of the film recovered their investments in just four days, highlighting the widespread commercial success. The film's trajectory suggests it could continue to add significantly to its total tally in the coming weeks.

Produced by Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas and directed by Maari, Anaganaga Oka Raju has now firmly established itself as one of the biggest hits of the early 2026 box office season. For Naveen Polishetty, this milestone marks another high point in a steadily rising career — one that continues to blend quality content with broad audience appeal.

Gavireddy Sreenu's "Cheen Tapak Dum Dum" Launched with Star-Studded Pooja Ceremony

Subham fame Gavireddy Sreenu has officially embarked on his new cinematic journey with the launch of his upcoming film, Cheen Tapak Dum Dum, in a vibrant pooja ceremony held today. The event saw the presence of some of the biggest names from Telugu cinema, lending glamour and warmth to the auspicious occasion.

The film marks an exciting transition for Gavireddy Sreenu, who first won hearts with his performances in the Amazon Prime series Kumari Sri-mathi and Subham. With Cheen Tapak Dum Dum, Sreenu aims to further establish his footprint as a versatile actor, delivering a high-energy entertainer that promises laughter, thrills, and a dose of heartfelt emotion.

The launch event was graced by none other than leading actress Samantha, who set the tone for the film by giving the ceremonial first clap. Esteemed directors Gopichand Malineni and Mallidi Vassishtha participated in the script handover ceremony, marking a truly auspicious beginning for the project.

Produced by Srinu Naga-pal under the banner of Village Talkies, this marks the production house's first venture,



sishta switching on the camera. Adding to the charm, veteran filmmakers Nandini Reddy, BVS Ravi, and Gowthami participated in the script handover ceremony, marking a truly auspicious beginning for the project.

On the technical front, the film boasts a strong crew. Cinematography is helmed by Senthil Kumar, production design by A S Prakash, and music composed by PR, with

and it already carries significant industry support. The film is directed by Y N Lohit and features Brigida Saga in a key role, hinting at an engaging on-screen pairing with Sreenu.

The story and screenplay are penned by the talented team of Divya Thejaswi, Vikram Kumar K, Nag Trailblazer, and Ekalavya, ensuring a creative backbone that balances humor, drama, and emotional depth.

With strong industry backing and star power at the launch, Cheen Tapak Dum Dum is set to become one of the most anticipated entertainers of the year. The film's journey from its auspicious pooja to the big screen promises to be one filled with energy, creativity, and audience delight.

Narendra Modi Biopic "Maa Vande" Set to Become Cinematic Spectacle with ₹400 Crore Budget



The highly anticipated biopic on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, titled "Maa Vande", is shaping up to be one of the most ambitious projects in Indian cinema. Produced by M. Veer Reddy under the Silver Cast Creations banner, the film is reportedly being made with a

staggering budget of over ₹400 crores, positioning it as a monumental cinematic venture.

Malayalam star Unni Mukundan will step into the shoes of Prime Minister Modi, bringing both his personal and political journey to life on the big screen. The film, directed

by C.H. Kranti Kumar, aims to convey a powerful central message: a mother's determination surpasses all struggles. The narrative promises to balance intimate glimpses into Modi's personal life with his larger-than-life political journey, appealing to

audiences across demographics.

Maa Vande is being produced as a pan-India project, with multiple language versions as well as an English version planned for international audiences. The makers are leaving no stone unturned to ensure the film meets global cinematic standards, employing advanced VFX, high-end technical values, and state-of-the-art equipment. Notably, the film is being shot using the ARRI Alexa 265 camera and Cooke lenses, marking a first-of-its-kind technical endeavor globally.

Adding further star power, Hollywood actor Jason Momoa is reportedly being approached for a key role. Indian cinema stalwarts Raveena Tandon, Jagapathi Babu, and Sarath Kumar have already committed to the project, drawn in by the compelling storyline. The ensemble promises a powerful and engaging portrayal

of the narrative.

The technical team boasts some of the finest names in the industry, including stunt choreographer King Solomon, production designer Sabu Cyril, editor Sreekar Prasad, cinematographer K.K. Senthil Kumar, and music director Ravi Basrur. The film's meticulous pre-production spanned three years, reflecting the immense effort invested by the makers to create a cinematic spectacle that transcends the traditional biopic format.

With its first schedule already wrapped and the second schedule set to begin in Kashmir from January 22, Maa Vande is gearing up for a grand visual and narrative experience. The combination of stellar talent, cutting-edge technology, and an inspiring story makes this project one of the most talked-about films in Indian cinema, promising a cinematic experience that will be remembered for years to come.

Devi Sri Prasad's First Meeting for Yellamma Lasted a Whopping 8 Hours, Director Reveals

Hyderabad, January 19, 2026 — Music maestro Devi Sri Prasad, popularly known as DSP, has been a household name in Indian cinema as a composer for decades. Known for his chart-topping music across Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi films, DSP is now stepping into the world of acting, promising audiences a completely new side of his talent. He will be portraying a character named Parshi, which is expected to be a gritty and intense role, different from anything he has done before.

The marathon session between DSP and the director reportedly covered every aspect of the character, storyline, and emotional beats of the film. This level of involvement reflects the dedication of both the actor and the filmmaking team in shaping a compelling cinematic experience. The director shared that the discussion was deeply detailed, ranging from performance nuances to the integration of music and action sequences, setting the tone for the film's

ambitious scale.

Yellamma marks a significant transition for DSP, who has been a household name in Indian cinema as a composer for decades. Known for his chart-topping music across Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi films, DSP is now stepping into the world of acting, promising audiences a completely new side of his talent. He will be portraying a character named Parshi, which is expected to be a gritty and intense role, different from anything he has done before.

The film is being produced by Shirish and presented by Dil Raju under the Sri Venkateswara Creations banner. It aims to combine strong storytelling with high technical standards, ensuring that DSP's debut as an actor is both impactful and memorable. The first glimpse of the film hints at a narrative that intertwines faith, tradition, and resilience, suggesting a character-driven story with emotional depth and mass appeal.

DSP himself has expressed his excitement and gratitude for being entrusted with the project, describing it as a divine opportunity to explore a new facet of his artistic journey. The eight-hour first meeting is being seen as a reflection of his commitment to fully understand and embody his character, signaling a dedicated approach that fans are eagerly anticipating.

With the team meticulously planning every aspect of the production, Yellamma promises to be a unique and high-profile pan-Indian project. From the long creative discussions to the involvement of top talent behind the camera, the film is set to offer a fresh cinematic experience and mark a remarkable debut for DSP in acting.

