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# TRUE POINT

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## Chandrababu Naidu Criticises Previous Government in Nagari Speech

Hyderabad, January 24, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu addressed a large gathering in Nagari, Chittoor district, sharply criticising the previous state government while outlining his administration's development and cleanliness initiatives. During the public meeting, Naidu contrasted the current administration's proactive governance and environmental focus with what he described as the negligence and poor performance of the former regime, particularly regarding urban sanitation and waste management.

Speaking at the event, Naidu highlighted the state government's ongoing Swachh Andhra mission, aimed at instilling cleanliness as a way of life. He emphasized that this initiative is not limited to superficial campaigns but represents a structured programme to improve public hygiene, solid waste management, and environmental protection. According to the



Chief Minister, when his government assumed office, large amounts of accumulated waste burdened the state, reflecting years of administrative neglect. His government is now addressing these challenges through comprehensive cleanup drives, expansion of waste-to-energy plants, and deployment of modern waste management infrastructure across towns and villages.

Naidu pointed out that while the previous govern-

ment failed to prioritise sanitation and urban management, his administration is ensuring a sustainable approach to cleanliness. He stressed that citizens' active participation is essential and encouraged responsible waste disposal, segregation at source, and community-led initiatives. He also highlighted the contributions of sanitation workers, describing them as the backbone of the Swachh Andhra mission, and called for broader public

support to maintain hygienic and environmentally safe surroundings. The Chief Minister further stressed the decentralised approach of his government's development agenda. He mentioned that the administration is committed to extending growth opportunities, infrastructure development, and welfare measures to all regions of Andhra Pradesh. By highlighting the contrast with past governments, Naidu reinforced that his admin-

istration is focused on tangible outcomes rather than mere promises, aiming to improve both quality of life and environmental standards in urban and rural areas.

Naidu also outlined the importance of community awareness and participation, stating that public engagement is critical to sustaining cleanliness and achieving long-term development goals. He urged residents to actively support state initiatives, noting that joint efforts between the government and citizens are crucial for the success of the Swachh Andhra mission.

Concluding his remarks, Chandrababu Naidu reiterated that his government's focus is on practical governance, environmental sustainability, and citizen-centric development. By addressing both past administrative failures and current initiatives, he aimed to assure the public that Andhra Pradesh is on a clear path toward cleanliness, improved infrastructure, and inclusive growth, with the active involvement of all stakeholders.



**Nara Lokesh Extends National Girl Child Day Greetings**

Hyderabad, January 24, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh on Saturday extended his greetings to the people of the state on the occasion of National Girl Child Day, emphasizing the importance of empowering girls and ensuring their holistic development. Speaking on the significance of the day, Minister Lokesh highlighted that girls are a vital force in building a progressive and equitable society, and their education, safety, and equal opportunities must be a top priority. Minister Lokesh described the girl child as the beacon of the future, stating that with proper guidance, education, and skill development, girls can achieve excellence in every field. He emphasized that gender equality is not only a matter of rights but also a prerequisite for the overall growth of society. The minister stressed that safe environments, access to quality education, and encouragement at home and in the community are essential for girls to realize their potential.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the Andhra Pradesh government to create policies and programmes that support the welfare of girls across the state. These initiatives include providing inclusive educational opportunities, skill-building programmes, and safe public spaces. The minister noted that the government is actively working to ensure that girls from both urban and rural areas have equal access to resources, opportunities, and protection from discrimination or violence.

Minister Lokesh urged citizens, community leaders, educators, and families to work together to create an environment where girls feel empowered to pursue their dreams. He called for collective action to eliminate gender bias, ensure safety, and provide support systems that allow every girl to thrive. He emphasized that the progress of society is directly linked to how well it nurtures its daughters. Highlighting the broader objectives of National Girl Child Day, the minister stated that the day serves as a reminder of the importance of gender equity and the critical role that girls play in the nation's development. He underscored the need for long-term initiatives to improve educational access, skill development, and employment opportunities for girls, enabling them to break traditional barriers and achieve leadership positions across sectors. Concluding his message, Minister Nara Lokesh wished all girls and their families on the occasion and encouraged everyone to reaffirm their commitment to protecting, empowering, and uplifting the girl child. He stated that only through sustained effort from both the government and society can Andhra Pradesh become a state where girls feel valued, safe, and capable of realizing their full potential.

This message reinforces the state's focus on inclusive development, aiming to ensure that every girl has the opportunity to grow, learn, and contribute meaningfully to the social and economic progress of Andhra Pradesh.

## Roja Slams Chandrababu's Nagari Visit as Empty Gesture

Hyderabad, January 24, 2026 | TPN Bureau

YSRCP leader and former minister R.K. Roja sharply criticized Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu following his visit to Nagari as part of the Swarnandhra-Swachh Andhra programme. Roja accused the Chief Minister of using the visit for political publicity while failing to deliver any tangible development or benefits to the local residents.

Speaking to the media, Roja stated that Chandrababu's tour was a mere photo opportunity and lacked substance. She highlighted that key infrastructure developments, including



community halls, polytechnic colleges, parks, and other public facilities, were implemented under the previous YSRCP government, not by the current administration. Roja also pointed out that welfare measures such as housing allotments, ration card distribution, and social support programs had benefited the marginalized sections of society under YSRCP rule.

Roja further criticized Chandrababu for not allocating any funds for Nagari's development during his visit. She claimed that the Swarnandhra-Swachh Andhra initiative had focused more on publicity than actual development,

leaving local communities without necessary support. She stressed that despite multiple terms as Chief Minister, Chandrababu had not delivered significant improvements to Nagari, and achievements of previous governments were being overlooked or disregarded.

The leader also condemned the Chief Minister for criticizing welfare programs introduced by the YSRCP government, calling such attacks an attempt to undermine past achievements rather than provide a credible roadmap for the future. She emphasized that infrastructure growth, employment generation, and public services, including electricity supply improvements, had been more effectively managed under the previous

administration.

Roja challenged the notion that Chandrababu's visit would bring meaningful development, noting that local residents felt disappointed by grand speeches without real action. She urged that governance should prioritize social welfare and practical solutions over political showmanship. Her remarks reflect the ongoing political tensions in Andhra Pradesh as parties debate development records, welfare initiatives, and the actual impact of government programs, highlighting the growing scrutiny of leaders' actions ahead of upcoming elections.

## Minister Anitha Calls for Public Participation in Swachh Andhra Drive

Hyderabad, January 24, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha participated in the Swarnandhra-Swachh Andhra cleanliness programme, underlining the government's commitment to environmental protection, public health, and community engagement. The initiative focuses on creating cleaner cities and towns, reducing waste, and mobilising citizens to join hands with government efforts for sanitation and sustainable living.

Speaking at the event, Minister Anitha encouraged people from all walks of life to actively join in the cleanliness movement, stressing that Swarnandhra-Swachh Andhra is not just a government campaign but a collective responsibility of every individual. She highlighted that maintaining cleanliness in homes, streets,



public spaces and natural surroundings must become a routine practice to improve overall quality of life and safeguard public health.

Anitha pointed out that government programmes related to Swarnandhra-Swachh Andhra are designed to involve citizens, local bodies, civic volunteers and organisations in regular sanitation drives and awareness activities. She reiterated that community participation is crucial for the success of these initiatives, emphasising that environmental protection and waste management should be em-

braced at the grassroots level.

The Home Minister also discussed the need to reduce plastic waste and adopt better waste disposal practices. She urged citizens to minimise the use of single-use plastics and support alternatives such as reusable bags and eco-friendly materials, which help protect the environment and reduce pollution. By advocating these changes, she said, Andhra Pradesh can make significant strides toward becoming cleaner and greener.

Anitha acknowledged the contributions of sanitation workers and volunteers who work tirelessly to maintain cleanliness throughout the state. She praised their efforts and called for greater recognition of their role in the Swarnandhra-Swachh Andhra mission. Their dedication, she noted, inspires broader segments of society to take ownership

Hyderabad, January 24, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government has taken decisive steps to provide relief and compensation to residents affected by the gas blowout incident at the ONGC Moris oil well in Irusumanda village, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district. The blowout, which occurred on January 5, caused a massive release of gas and fire during repair operations, prompting the evacuation of hundreds of villagers and the implementation of extensive safety measures. Authorities worked closely with ONGC crisis management teams to control the fire and cap the well, ensuring the safety of the local population.

Following containment of the blowout, district officials have begun evaluating the extent of damage to agricultural crops, livestock, and property in the affected villages, including Irusumanda, Lakkavaram,



Gubbalavaripalem, and Chintapalli. A Crisis Management Committee has been formed to assess the losses and recommend appropriate compensation. This assessment includes damage to coconut trees, paddy fields, and other crops, with plans to provide ex-gratia payments and insurance coverage to the affected families.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu reviewed the situation and directed officials to ensure that affected farmers and residents receive compensation without delay. He stressed the need for transparent communication with villagers and instructed authorities to prioritise their welfare until normalcy is fully restored. The Chief Minister also emphasised that those displaced by the blowout should not face hardship and should receive support for their livelihoods and daily needs. Local leaders, including Members of Parliament and the state legislature representing the region, have committed to working with state author-

## AP Govt. Announces Compensation for Irusumanda Blowout Victims

Hyderabad, January 24, 2026 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government has taken decisive steps to provide relief and compensation to residents affected by the gas blowout incident at the ONGC Moris oil well in Irusumanda village, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district. The blowout, which occurred on January 5, caused a massive release of gas and fire during repair operations, prompting the evacuation of hundreds of villagers and the implementation of extensive safety measures. Authorities worked closely with ONGC crisis management teams to control the fire and cap the well, ensuring the safety of the local population.

Following containment of the blowout, district officials have begun evaluating the extent of damage to agricultural crops, livestock, and property in the affected villages, including Irusumanda, Lakkavaram,

and ONGC to expedite the disbursement of compensation. The government has also urged the company to play its role in ensuring safety and timely support to residents in the affected radius, highlighting the importance of preventing similar incidents in the future. The administration is now in the process of finalising the loss assessments and recommendations from the Crisis Management Committee. Villagers and farmers in the surrounding areas are hopeful that the government's intervention will provide much-needed financial assistance and rehabilitation support, allowing them to rebuild their lives and recover from the disruptions caused by the gas blowout. The initiative underscores the government's commitment to disaster management and the protection of citizens' livelihoods in industrial accident scenarios.

## Minister Nara Lokesh Extends Greetings on National Girl Child Day, Champions Empowerment in Amaravati

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh: On the occasion of National Girl Child Day, Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh extended heartfelt wishes, emphasizing the pivotal role of girls as the "beacons of the future." Speaking from Amaravati, the minister underscored the coalition government's commitment to equipping girls with essential skills and opportunities, declaring that "with the right training and access, girls can soar to the skies as their only limit."

Lokesh's message resonated strongly amid ongoing celebrations marking the day, observed annually on January 24 to highlight the importance of girl child rights, education, and protection. "Girls are the guiding lights of tomorrow," he stated in a

public address. "Our coalition government is tirelessly working to safeguard their rights, provide quality education, and ensure their safety."

Let us eradicate discrimination against girls and ensure equal opportunities for all. "The minister's remarks align with national initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, launched by the Government of India in 2015 to address declining child sex ratios and promote girls' education. In Andhra Pradesh, the TDP Party-led coalition has introduced several welfare schemes targeting girl children, including enhanced scholarships under the Thalliki Vandana program, free bicycles for schoolgirls, and expanded hostels in rural areas.

Recent data from the state Women and Child



Development Department shows a 15% rise in girls' enrollment in higher secondary education over the past year, crediting these interventions. Lokesh highlighted the transformative potential of skill development, pointing to partnerships with institutions like the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation.

"When we invest in

girls through vocational training in IT, healthcare, and entrepreneurship, they not only uplift their families but drive economic growth," he added. He called for societal change, urging parents and communities to shun biases and foster an environment where girls thrive equally.

The event saw participation from local schoolgirls, NGOs, and officials, featuring cultural programs, awareness

rallies, and pledges for gender equality. Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's administration has allocated 5,000 crore this fiscal year for women and child welfare, including the YSR Prema Lakshmi scheme for pregnant women and nutrition support for adolescent girls.

Lokesh concluded on an optimistic note: "Discrimination has no place in modern India. Together, let's build a future where every girl realizes her limitless potential." His words have sparked positive responses on social media, with #GirlChildDayAP trending locally.

As Andhra Pradesh pushes for sustainable development, initiatives like these signal a brighter horizon for its young women, aligning state efforts with national goals for inclusive growth.

## Andhra Pradesh CM Naidu Launches PM SVANidhi Credit Cards, Disburses 206 Crore Loans to 94,000 Street Vendors

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Velagapudi: In a major boost to street vendors across Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu today launched the PM SVANidhi Credit Card scheme and disbursed loans totaling 206 crores to 94,183 beneficiaries. The event at the Velagapudi Secretariat aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationwide PM SVANidhi – Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi programme, benefiting urban vendors hit hard by past economic disruptions.

Joining Naidu were Principal Secretary for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD), S. Suresh Kumar IAS, and Mission Director of MEPMA, Vakati Karuna



IAS. The initiative saw simultaneous events across all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the state, with public representatives distributing cheques, issuing credit cards to 3-4 vendors per ULB, and felicitating disabled beneficiaries.

Special interactions highlighted success stories from 50-150 invitees per district programme. Andhra Pradesh has emerged as the nation's second-best performer under PM SVANidhi. Key stats include 7,16,907 applications mobilized,

6,34,874 sanctioned, and 6,09,333 disbursed (991.74 crores total).

Socio-economic profiling covers 3,42,548 vendors, with 14,40,605 enrolled in welfare schemes and 3,08,000 digital transactions recorded. Under PM SVA-

Nidhi 2.0 (launched September 17, 2025), the state has achieved impressive targets:

Launched by the Centre on May 14, 2020, PM SVANidhi offers working capital loans up to 15,000 (with tranches up to 50,000), 7% interest subsidy, and 100 monthly cashback for digital payments. Through "SVANidhi Se Samridhii," vendors gain access to PMJMY, PMSBY, PMJDY, and One Nation One Ration Card.

Naidu hailed the scheme as a pillar of financial inclusion, empowering vendors with dignity and self-reliance. "This is AtmaNirbhar Bharat in action," he said, urging higher digital uptake. Officials aim to accelerate credit card issuance and profiling in coming months.

## Tirupati Police Rescue 13-Month-Old Girl from Kidnappers, Arrest Six in Child Trafficking Case

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Tirupati: A shocking kidnapping case involving a 13-month-old girl, Jaya Shri, has sent shockwaves across Telugu states after she was abducted from Tirupati on January 21. The incident, which unfolded in the East Police jurisdiction, prompted swift action from local authorities, leading to the girl's safe rescue and the arrest of six individuals involved in the crime.

The nightmare began when the toddler vanished from her home, prompting her distraught parents to file a complaint with the East Police Station. Officers immediately registered a case and launched a multi-team search operation. By meticulously reviewing CCTV footage from nearby areas, investigators identified the culprits: Maryam and her husband Murugan, a couple suspected of snatching the child. Further probes re-



vealed disturbing details.

After the abduction, the accused pair allegedly consumed alcohol while carrying the girl on their shoulder. They traveled by train from Katpadi to Erode town, begging for alms with the infant in tow to evade suspicion. Acting on a tip-off, police tracked them down, took them into custody, and interrogated them intensely. During questioning, the couple revealed the location where they had sold the child.

Among the seized items were Rs 25,271 in cash and a TVS XL scooter believed to have been used in the crime. Authorities suspect the accused may have been involved in similar activities, and further in-



vestigations are underway to uncover any broader network. Tirupati Police Commissioner commended the team's vigilance, urging parents to remain cautious in crowded areas and report suspicious activities immediately. "CCTV footage and public cooperation were key to this swift resolution," he stated.

The case has reignited debates on child safety in urban India, with activists calling for stricter anti-trafficking measures. The arrested individuals face charges under relevant sections of the POCSO Act and IPC for kidnapping and trafficking. They have been remanded, and the investigation continues.



## Pensioners are in panick

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Visakhapatnam/Sitamadhar: Drought Allowance Pending for Thousands of Pensioners Due to Technical Glitch Thousands of pensioners in Sitamadhar mandal, Visakhapatnam district, have not received their pending drought allowances released by the government, with officials citing a technical issue as the cause. According to treasury department records, around 14,000 pensioners under the Sitamadhar sub-treasury jurisdiction remain unpaid for the 2018 drought arrears.

The state government disbursed two instalments of drought allowances related to 2018 for employees, teachers, and pensioners just before Sankranti. Beneficiaries under Anakapalli, Paderu, Elamanchili, Chodavaram, and Narsipatnam sub-treasuries received their dues smoothly. However, the entire batch of 14,000 pensioners in Sitamadhar did not. In 2018, the sub-treasury cov-

ered 14,000 pensioners, a number that has now risen to 19,000.

Those eligible from that year were entitled to Two Dearness Allowances (DAs): the first raising DA from 27% to 30%, and the second from 30% to 33%. When the YSRCP government took office in 2019, it approved DA arrears release for others, no funds reached Sitamadhar pensioners' accounts.

During these re-uploads, the specific DA hikes for 2018 must be explicitly mentioned

each time. The CFMS (Centralized Financial Management System) department at the Vijayawada treasury head office should monitor this closely, ensuring staff address technical hurdles annually during bill submissions. Despite the pre-Sankranti release for others, no funds reached Sitamadhar pensioners' accounts.

This mass failure unlike isolated cases—sparked concern. Many visited the sub-treasury office for answers, while others contacted higher officials by phone. Sub-treasury staff informed district authorities, who escalated the matter to

Vijayawada superiors. After review, officials confirmed a CFMS technical glitch prevented the credits. Higher authorities are now resolving the issue in the CFMS system.

Sitamadhar sub-treasury officials assured pensioners that the problem would be fixed in a few days, as shared by several affected individuals. This delay has frustrated elderly pensioners reliant on these payments, especially amid festive expenses. The incident highlights recurring CFMS vulnerabilities, urging better oversight to prevent future lapses in welfare disbursals.



## Visakha Utsav Starts

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Visakhapatnam: Extensive arrangements are underway for the annual Visakha Utsav, set to captivate the city from January 25 to 31. District Collector M.N. Harendira Prasad announced on Friday.

Speaking at a meeting in his office with Joint Collector Vidhyadhari and District Tourism Officer Madhavi, the Collector outlined a vibrant lineup of cultural programs, sports, and adventure activities at the main venue opposite Kali Mata Temple on RK Beach.

The flagship events will unfold at this beachfront location, with programs running from 6 PM to 10 PM daily. A secondary stage for local artists is planned near Novotel Hotel, hosting shows from 5 PM to 7:30 PM. Chief guest for the inauguration will be District In-Charge Minister Dola Sri Balu Veeranjiyawami, alongside Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh.

Playback singer Sunita will kick off the festivities with cinematic hits on the opening day. Food enthusiasts can explore 70 stalls near the main venue, offering local delicacies alongside artisan craft sales. Initial plans shifted



## CRDA Launches Global Tender for Integrated Master Plan to Boost Amaravati with International Airport and Sports City

TPN Bureau | January 23, 2026

Guntur: In a significant step towards realizing Amaravati's vision as a world-class capital, the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has initiated the second phase of land pooling, paving the way for an integrated master plan. This ambitious blueprint will incorporate an international airport and a state-of-the-art World Class Sports City, marking a major milestone in the region's urban transformation.

To craft this comprehensive master plan, CRDA has issued an international tender notification for appointing an experienced consultant. The move underscores the state's commitment to high standards in infrastructure and sustainable development, drawing

global expertise to elevate Amaravati's global footprint.

The tender schedule downloading process has already commenced, with the deadline set for February 6, 2026, at 2:00 PM. Interested firms can access the documents via the official CRDA portal. Adding momentum to the process, CRDA has scheduled a pre-proposal meeting on January 28 at its project office. This interactive session will allow potential bidders to clarify doubts, understand project specifications, and align their proposals with the authority's vision.

Officials emphasized that the consultant selection will prioritize firms with proven track records in mega urban projects, ensuring the master plan integrates cutting-edge technology, green spaces, and multi-



modal connectivity. The second phase of land pooling gains traction amid renewed enthusiasm for Amaravati's development. Farmers in the capital region have responded positively, with pooling activities accelerating to secure the necessary acreage for key infrastructure.

The international airport, envisioned as a gateway to Southeast Asia and beyond, will handle millions of passengers annually, boost-

ing tourism, trade, and employment. Complementing this, the World Class Sports City complements with Olympic-standard facilities, training academies, and event arenas aims to position Andhra Pradesh as a sports hub, fostering youth talent and hosting global events.

CRDA Commissioner noted, "This integrated master plan will not only redefine Amaravati but also drive economic growth across the state.

By leveraging international expertise, we ensure a future-ready capital that balances progress with livability." Stakeholders hail the initiative as a game-changer, especially after recent government reaffirmations on Amaravati's primacy.

With tenders open, the project is poised for rapid progress, signaling Andhra Pradesh's bold stride towards a thriving, modern capital.

## Home Minister Anitha Participates in Swarna Andhra-Swachha Andhra Program at Model School in Kashinkota

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Kashinkota, Anakapalli District: Andhra Pradesh Home Minister V. Anitha attended the Swarna Andhra-Swachha Andhra program at the Model School in Tegada village, Kashinkota Mandal, Anakapalli district, today. The event, aimed at promoting cleanliness, development, and student welfare under the state government's flagship initiatives, saw enthusiastic participation from students and school staff.

Following the program, Minister Anitha interacted warmly with the students, listening to their concerns and aspirations. When students raised the need for a dedicated sports ground to enhance their physical activities and extracurricular development, the minister assured them of swift action. "We will make arrangements for a proper playground soon," she promised,

emphasizing the government's commitment to holistic education that includes sports and recreation alongside academics.

The visit coincided with National Girl Child Day celebrations, adding a special touch to the occasion. Minister Anitha joined the girl students in cutting a ceremonial cake, symbolizing empowerment and recognition of their potential. This gesture underscored the state's focus on gender equality and nurturing future leaders from an early age. Addressing the gathering, the minister offered valuable life advice to the young audience.

"Avoid ruining your lives over small mistakes," she urged, highlighting the importance of resilience and wise decision-making. She stressed the need for children to be aware of laws and their rights, enabling them to navigate challenges confidently. "Legal aware-

ness from a young age will protect you and help build a just society," Anitha added. Minister Anitha also praised the transformative reforms in the education sector led by her cabinet colleague, Minister Nara Lokesh.

"Minister Lokesh has brought revolutionary changes to our education system, making it more inclusive, modern, and student-centric," she noted. These efforts include infrastructure

upgrades, digital integration, and skill-based learning, aligning with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision for a 'Swarna Andhra' – a golden era of prosperity and cleanliness. The event reflects the YSRCP-led government's ongoing push for rural development and youth empowerment in coastal Andhra districts like Anakapalli. Programs like Swarna Andhra-Swachha Andhra combine sanitiza-

tion drives with educational outreach, fostering community participation. Local officials and parents commended Anitha's approachable demeanor, hoping it inspires similar initiatives across mandals.

As Andhra Pradesh accelerates its development agenda ahead of key 2026 milestones, such grassroots engagements signal a hands-on approach to governance, bridging policy with people's needs

## Minister Kinjarapu Acchennaidu Lauds Nara Lokesh's Pivotal Role in Andhra Pradesh's Future at Kotabommali Birthday Fete

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Kotabommali: Minister Kinjarapu Acchennaidu hailed TDP leader and Minister Nara Lokesh as a key architect shaping Andhra Pradesh's future, emphasizing his innovative approach to modern politics during celebrations marking Lokesh's birthday on Friday. The event unfolded at the local NTR Bhavan, where TDP ranks gathered to honor Lokesh.

Acchennaidu, attending as the chief guest, praised Lokesh as a young leader steering politics in a fresh direction. "Beyond his name, Lokesh has solidified his political stature through dedicated work," Acchennaidu stated. He highlighted how Lokesh earns widespread admiration by making decisions aligned with youth aspirations. In a gesture of public service, Acchennaidu visited the local government social hospital, distributing rotis, fruits, and blankets to



patients.

This act underscored the TDP's commitment to grassroots welfare amid the festivities. Addressing the crowd, Acchennaidu assured swift resolution of public grievances. "Every problem brought to our Janmabhoomi programs or public darbars will be addressed within a stipulated time," he promised. Later, at the NTR Bhavan, he held a public darbar, receiving petitions

from residents across the district.

Directing officials to examine and resolve them promptly, Acchennaidu reinforced the government's people-centric governance model. The program drew prominent figures, including State Kaling Corporation Chairman Boyina Govindaraju, PECCS Chairperson Velamala Vijayalakshmi, former PECCS President Kinjarapu Harivaraprasad,

TDP's Boyina Ramesh, Poojari Shailaja, Badana Ramamurthy, Tarra Ramakrishna, and Nambala Kshaniwas, among others.

Acchennaidu's remarks reflect growing TDP enthusiasm post their return to power, with Lokesh emerging as a bridge between youth energy and policy execution. His portfolio in IT, electronics, and youth affairs positions him to drive Andhra Pradesh's development

## CM Naidu Meets Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal at Amaravati Airport, Discusses Key State Issues



TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu held a cordial meeting with Union Minister of State for Finance and Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal, at the VIP Lounge of Amaravati's upcoming greenfield international airport on Saturday evening.

With tenders open, the project is poised for rapid progress, signaling Andhra Pradesh's bold stride towards a thriving, modern capital.

By leveraging international expertise, we ensure a future-ready capital that balances progress with livability." Stakeholders hail the initiative as a game-changer, especially after recent government reaffirmations on Amaravati's primacy.

With tenders open, the project is poised for rapid progress, signaling Andhra Pradesh's bold stride towards a thriving, modern capital.

bust NDA coordination at the grassroots level, especially ahead of upcoming assembly sessions and national budgetary deliberations.

This airport rendezvous gains significance as Naidu's government marks its first anniversary in office, having prioritized infrastructure revival since June 2024. The TDP-BJP alliance, forged post-2024 elections, has already delivered dividends like enhanced central funding for Polavaram irrigation and coastal highways.

Political observers view the meeting as a precursor to more high-level engagements, potentially paving the way for Andhra Pradesh's inclusion in priority central projects. Naidu later tweeted, "Productive discussions with Shri @ArjunRamMeghwal ji on AP's growth story. Together, building a prosperous future!" Meghwal reciprocated, praising Naidu's "innovative governance model."

In "As Andhra Pradesh navigates fiscal challenges and urban development hurdles, such bilateral meets reinforce the state's strategic importance in national politics."

## Srikakulam Urban Land Market Values to Rise from February 1, Sparking Public Concerns



TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Srikakulam: The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to increase market values of land in urban areas across Srikakulam district starting February 1. Revenue Department Principal Secretary G. Sai Prasad issued orders to this effect, marking the second such revision since the coalition government came to power.

This move is set to burden ordinary and middle-class residents already grappling with rising prices of sand, cement, and construction materials, as higher land values will inflate registration charges.

The hike is limited to urban zones, sparing rural areas for now. Affected regions include Srikakulam Corporation, along with Amadalavalasa, Palasa-Kasibugga, Ichchapuram, Rajam, and Palakonda Nagar.

Panchayat.

Registration officials are working overtime to update these values, aligning them more closely with open market rates. The revision comes amid a real estate boom in the district, fueled by accelerated Bhogapuram airport construction, national highway expansions, and Mulaipeta port development. Areas like Srikakulam city outskirts, Etcherla, Palasa, and Rajam have seen open market land prices soar over the past two years, far outpacing government book values.

Sub-Registrar offices in Srikakulam, Rajam, Palasa, Cheepurupalli (near district borders), and others brace for massive crowds. Meanwhile, authorities promise a fully modernized market value revision system within two months.

Urban residents, particularly in commercial and residential hubs, will feel the pinch most acutely as registration costs climb. This development underscores the tension between infrastructure-driven growth and affordability for common citizens in Srikakulam.

# “SayNoToDrugs” Walkathon in Vijayawada Draws 800 Students, Delivers Powerful Anti-Drug Message

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Vijayawada: In a vibrant display of youth resolve against drug abuse, Aster Ramesh Hospitals, in partnership with the Elite Anti-Narcotics Group for Law Enforcement (EAGLE), hosted a massive “Say No to Drugs” Walkathon here today. The event, aimed at educating young people on the devastating health, social, and economic impacts of narcotics, saw enthusiastic participation from around 800 students and citizens, marching from Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium to Benz Circle. Dr. Pothineni Ramesh Babu, Managing Director of Aster Ramesh Hospitals and a renowned cardiologist, kicked off the proceedings with a stark medical perspective.

“Drug addiction is not merely a bad habit but a complex disease process caused by the interaction of genetic factors and environmental influences medically referred to as epigenetics,” he



said. He detailed how prolonged drug use erodes gray matter in vital brain areas like the prefrontal cortex and insular cortex, particularly in the third stage of addiction, leading to crippled decision-making and eroded self-control. Highlighting hope amid the crisis, Dr. Babu pointed to cutting-edge treatments available at de-addiction centers.

These include precision medicine target-

ing dopamine, opioid, and GABAergic receptors, combined with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). “Early identification and timely medical intervention can help individuals completely recover from addiction,” he assured the crowd.

He also raised alarms about evolving threats, noting that drug mafias now exploit AI-enabled drones and the dark web for trafficking. Mr. Ake Ravi Krishna, Head of the EAGLE Department, urged vigilance against global predators.

“International drug smugglers are targeting Indian youth, especially students,” he warned, revealing drone-dropped consignments in regions like Kashmir and Punjab. He called for patriotic action: “Stay away from drugs and report suspicious activity to the 1972 helpline.

Under the PIT NDPS Act, 1988, authorities

have detained 96 drug offenders across Andhra Pradesh, including 22 from the NTR Commissionerate limits, signaling a robust crackdown. The walkathon drew dignitaries like DCP (Traffic) Ms. Shireen Begum, educationist Dr. M.C. Das, and Aster Ramesh Hospitals Chairman Mr. M.S. Ramamoorthy, along with doctors, academicians, and senior police officials.

Students from SRR College, KBN College, Potti Sriramulu Engineering College, SRK Engineering College, Vijaya Women’s Engineering College, polytechnics, ITIs, Siddhartha Walkers, and IGM Stadium Walkers joined in, chanting “Say No to Drugs” slogans that echoed through Vijayawada’s streets.

Aster Ramesh Hospitals management thanked EAGLE, the police, educational institutions, walkers’ associations, and the public for their support, hailing the event as a resounding success in fostering a drug-free society.

## Devotees Donate 1.01 Lakh to Mopidevi Subrahmanyam Swamy Temple’s Daily Annadanam Scheme

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Mopidevi, Krishna District: In a heartfelt gesture of devotion, a family from Vijayawada has contributed Rs 1,01,116 to the sacred Sri Valli Devasena Sameta Sri Subrahmanyam Swamy Temple in Mopidevi village, Mopidevi mandal, Krishna district. The donation, made in memory of their late son Pedarla Raviteja, supports the temple’s renowned Nityannadanam scheme, which provides daily free meals to thousands of pilgrims and the needy.

The contributors, Pedarla Shivarama Prasad and his wife Parvati from Sitarampuram in Vijayawada, handed over the cheque to the temple’s superintendent, Achyuta Madhusudana Rao. The emotional ceremony took place amid traditional temple honors, where



the donors were felicitated with garlands, shawls, and sacred threads.

This act of philanthropy underscores the deep faith residents of Andhra Pradesh hold for this prominent punyakshetram, a revered abode of Lord Subrahmanyam Swamy.

Known for its ancient Dravidian architecture and powerful vibrations, the shrine attracts pilgrims seeking blessings for health, prosperity, and family well-being. The Nityannadanam program, a hallmark of the temple’s welfare initiatives, has been a lifeline for the underprivileged.

spiritual sites, drawing lakhs of devotees annually, especially during festivals like Skanda Shashthi and Brahmotsavams. Known for its ancient Dravidian architecture and powerful vibrations, the shrine attracts pilgrims seeking blessings for health, prosperity, and family well-being. The Nityannadanam program, a hallmark of the temple’s welfare initiatives, has been a lifeline for the underprivileged.

leged, serving hot, nutritious meals twice daily. Over the years, it has fed millions, reflecting the temple’s commitment to seva (service) alongside worship.

We honor the family’s generosity. Local leaders and devotees praised the gesture, highlighting how such contributions bolster Andhra Pradesh’s temple-based welfare ecosystem amid ongoing state development pushes. With the temple committee aiming to expand annadanam capacity, this influx will directly aid kitchen upgrades and meal distribution.

This event reinforces Mopidevi’s role as a beacon of spirituality in Krishna district, blending personal loss with communal good. Devotees are encouraged to participate in similar initiatives, ensuring the tradition endures.

## Unauthorized Rally by Jogi Brothers Sparks Chaos on NH-65 in Ibrahimpatnam

TPN Bureau | January 23, 2026

Vijayawada: In a brazen display of defiance, Jogi Ramesh and his brother Ramu, recently released on bail in a spurious liquor case, led an unauthorized rally with supporters on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad NH-65 near Ibrahimpatnam Ring Road in NTR district. The procession, marked by DJ music, fireworks, and traffic disruptions, escalated into a confrontation with police, highlighting ongoing tensions in the region.

Fresh out of Vijayawada district jail,

the Jogi brothers mobilized a convoy of cars and two-wheelers. Supporters converged at the Ibrahimpatnam Ring Road junction before heading toward their residence near Ibrahimpatnam Ferry. Blasting DJ beats and bursting banaucha fireworks, the group turned the national highway into a festive procession without prior permission, causing severe traffic jams.

As the vehicles arrived, supporters raised slogans and halted traffic completely, prompting swift police intervention. Officers

removed the DJ setup to restore order and attempted to disperse the rally. Enraged, Jogi Ramesh and Ramu stepped out of their car, arguing aggressively with the police alongside their followers. The mob surrounded officers, shouting slogans and creating a volatile scene. Vijayawada West ACP Durgarao intervened, allowing only Jogi Ramesh’s car to proceed to his home while firmly denying permission for the full rally.

“No rally is authorized here. Traffic cannot be stopped like

this,” the ACP stated. Ramesh exploded in fury, gesturing wildly and retorting disrespectfully: “Who are you to stop traffic? Let all cars go! What are you doing here at the traffic point? Haven’t rallies happened before? What kind of ACP are you?” He insisted everyone be allowed through, ignoring regulations.

With traffic at a standstill on the busy highway, police had little choice but to relent, permitting the entire convoy to proceed amid ongoing chaos. The group continued their

noisy rally to Jogi’s house, flouting all norms. Sources indicate police are likely to register cases against Jogi Ramesh and his brother for conducting an illegal rally, unauthorized procession, and obstructing traffic.

This incident underscores challenges in managing post-bail activities by individuals with political affiliations in YSRCP circles. Local authorities have urged stricter enforcement to prevent recurrence, emphasizing public safety on national highways.

## Nandigama Rural Students Form ‘Happy Republic Day SVVS’ Human Formation to Celebrate India’s 76th Republic Day

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Nandigama, Andhra Pradesh: In a stunning display of creativity and patriotism, over 400 students from Pallepalli Sri Vidya Vidyalayam (SVVS), a CBSE-affiliated school in Nandigama Rural Mandal, Krishna District, came together on Saturday to mark India’s 76th Republic Day. Dressed in crisp school uniforms, the young learners arranged themselves into a massive human formation spelling out “Happy Republic Day SVVS” in bold English letters, captivating onlookers and symbolizing the spirit of unity and national pride.

Students from SRR College, KBN College, Potti Sriramulu Engineering College, SRK Engineering College, Vijaya Women’s Engineering College, polytechnics, ITIs, Siddhartha Walkers, and IGM Stadium Walkers joined in, chanting “Say No to Drugs” slogans that echoed through Vijayawada’s streets.

The event unfolded on the school’s spacious playground under clear skies, transforming the ground into a living canvas of red, white, and blue – colors echoing the Indian tricolor. Students from kindergarten to Class 12 meticulously positioned themselves to form each letter, with the word “HAPPY” stretching across one end, “REPUBLIC DAY” dominating the center.

and “SVVS” proudly capping it off.

As the formation took shape, the air filled with cheers, claps, and the resounding chorus of the National Anthem, led by the school’s choir. School Chairman Mallikharjuna Rao, Directors Ramu and Akhil, along with a host of teachers and staff, graced the occasion.

Chairman Rao commended the students’ discipline and ingenuity, stating, “This human formation is more than a visual spectacle; it’s a testament to our commitment to instilling values of patriotism, teamwork, and excellence in our children. On this Republic Day, we honor the architects of our Constitution who envisioned a democratic India for all.”

The celebration kicked off with the ceremonial flag hoisting by Rao, followed by speeches highlighting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s pivotal role in drafting the Constitution and the significance of January 26, 1950, when India became a sovereign republic. Cultural performances included patriotic songs and dances, skits on constitutional rights, and a group rendition of “Vande Mataram.” Parents and local residents gathered in large numbers, capturing the moment on their phones and praising the school’s innovative approach to education.

SVVS, known for its emphasis on holistic development and CBSE curriculum, has a history of such grand Republic Day events. Last year, students formed the Indian map, earning widespread appreciation on social media. Director Ramu noted, “Events like these foster creativity while reinforcing civic responsibilities.”

Our 400-strong student body represents the future of Andhra Pradesh vibrant, united, and forward-looking.” As the sun set, the formation disbanded amid sweets distribution and selfies, leaving behind memories of joy and inspiration.

This heartfelt tribute not only celebrated the republic’s enduring legacy but also showcased the boundless potential of Nandigama’s youth.

## Krishna District Police Crack Down on Ganja Smuggling: 171.2 kg Seized in Chinnavutapalli Raid

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Vijayawada, Krishna District: In a major blow to the ganja mafia operating in Andhra Pradesh, Krishna district police arrested two smugglers and seized 171.2 kilograms of ganja worth several crores on the outskirts of Chinnavutapalli on January 23.

The operation, led by district authorities, underscores the intensified crackdown on narcotics networks. In December 2025, another significant interception occurred under Gannavaram Police Station limits at the BB Gudem underpass. During routine vehicle checks near Chinnavutapalli, police intercepted a van bearing registration number AP 39 UP 4715. A thorough search revealed the massive consignment of ganja concealed inside the vehicle.

The smugglers were transporting the contraband illegally when nabbed. The accused have been identified as Hanumant Durgaprasad (38) and Syed Mubarak (36), both residents of the region with suspected links to larger smuggling networks. In addition to the ganja, police recovered two cell phones from their possession, which are now under forensic examination to uncover further connections.

“We have ramped up surveillance on ganja smuggling and sales across the district.

Strict action is inevitable for those involved in such illegal activities,” SP Naidu warned, emphasizing zero tolerance. This latest bust adds to Krishna police’s string of successes against drug peddlers.

Just recently in Gannavaram area, 112 kg of ganja was seized, highlighting the persistent threat from narcotics networks. In December 2025, another significant interception occurred under Gannavaram Police Station limits at the BB Gudem underpass. During routine vehicle checks near Chinnavutapalli, police intercepted a van bearing registration number AP 39 UP 4715. A thorough search revealed the massive consignment of ganja concealed inside the vehicle.

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Authorities call on the public to report suspicious activities via helplines, promising confidentiality. As the fight intensifies, SP Naidu affirmed: “No mercy for those poisoning our society.” This operation not only disrupts immediate smuggling but signals a robust strategy to eradicate the ganja trade at its roots.



checks to dismantle these operations,” he added. The seized ganja in the current case is estimated to have a street value exceeding 5 crore, though official valuation is pending lab confirmation.

Local residents welcomed the police action, expressing concerns over rising drug abuse among youth. Community leaders have urged sustained vigilance, especially along national highways cutting through Krishna district. The accused have been remanded, and cases under the NDPS Act have been registered.

Further interrogations aim to expose the supply chain, including potential farmers and distributors. Krishna police’s proactive measures reflect Andhra Pradesh’s broader anti-narcotics drive under state leadership. Similar operations across districts have yielded over 500 kg of ganja seizures in the past month alone.

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# TDP Leaders Pay Tribute to Paritala Ravi on 21st Death Anniversary

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Amaravati: Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders across Andhra Pradesh paid rich tributes to former MLA Paritala Ravi on his 21st death anniversary, hailing him as a champion of the poor and marginalized. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu led the commemorations, praising Ravi's unwavering commitment to public welfare that earned him a special place in people's hearts.

In a heartfelt post on his official X (formerly Twitter) account, Naidu described Ravi as a leader who dedicated his political life to "public service as his ultimate mission." He highlighted how Ravi's tireless efforts through numerous development programs won the trust of Anantapur district's residents. "Ravi worked relentlessly for the welfare of the poor and weaker sections, implementing ini-



tatives that transformed lives in arid Anantapur," Naidu wrote, urging party workers to draw inspiration from his legacy.

The statewide observances saw TDP leaders, activists, and Ravi's admirers gathering at his memorials and portraits. In Anantapur,

hundreds offered floral wreaths at his statue amid chants of slogans and bhajans. Similar events unfolded in Rayachoti, Kadapa, and other key locations, with party cadres organizing blood donation camps and welfare distributions in Ravi's name echoing his focus on

grassroots service. Paritala Ravi, a fiery TDP strongman and four-time MLA from Rayachoti, rose to prominence in the 1990s amid factional violence in Rayalaseema. Despite controversies, he was revered for spearheading irrigation projects, rural electrification, and

poverty alleviation schemes in backward Anantapur.

Naidu, who mentored Ravi, credited him with bolstering TDP's foothold in the region through sheer dedication. TDP national general secretary Varaprasad Rao and other senior leaders joined the tributes, calling Ravi a "symbol of fearless leadership." In a statement, Rao said, "His vision for Anantapur's development remains a guiding light for us."

The events underscored TDP's efforts to revive Ravi's legacy amid ongoing political battles in Andhra Pradesh. These commemorations come at a time when TDP is pushing welfare agendas under Naidu's government, including schemes for farmers and the underprivileged. Ravi championed. Supporters vowed to carry forward his fight against injustice, ensuring his ideals endure.

## Human Chain Forms in Talluru to Promote Clean Andhra Vision on Voters' Day

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Talluru, Prakasam District: In a vibrant display of community spirit, students, officials, and local leaders in Talluru, Prakasam district, formed a striking human chain today as part of the state-wide Swarna Andhra-Swachha Andhra campaign. The event, held on the eve of National Voters' Day, aimed to raise awareness about civic cleanliness, voter responsibilities, and sustainable development, drawing hundreds of participants from the mandal office to the bustling bus stand center.

The initiative kicked off at the mandal office premises, where participants linked arms to create an impressive human chain stretching through the main

streets. Waving banners and placards with slogans like "Clean Andhra, Golden Future" and "Vote for Progress," they marched to the bus stand, engaging commuters, shopkeepers, and passersby. Volunteers distributed pamphlets highlighting waste segregation, anti-littering drives, and the importance of active voter participation in building a corruption-free Andhra Pradesh.

The chain symbolized unity in the state's ambitious vision to transform into a "Swarna Andhra" a golden era of prosperity through "Swachha Andhra," emphasizing hygiene, environmental protection, and good governance.

Speaking at the event, Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO) Ajit underscored the

campaign's dual focus. "Swarna Andhra-Swachha Andhra is not just a slogan; it's a movement led by Chief Minister's vision to make every village and town a model of cleanliness and development," he said.

"On National Voters' Day, we pledge to empower our youth as informed voters who choose leaders committed to these ideals." Mandal Education Officer (MEO) Subbayya echoed the sentiment, praising the students' enthusiasm. "Today's human chain is a powerful message: Clean surroundings lead to clean politics."

Every vote counts in shaping our district's future," he added. The program culminated in a collective pledge-taking ceremony at the bus

stand, where participants vowed to maintain cleanliness, exercise their voting rights responsibly, and promote awareness in their communities. Schoolchildren from local government and private institutions led the oath, reciting commitments to reduce plastic use and report violations via the Swachha Andhra app.

This event aligns with Andhra Pradesh's ongoing push under the YSR Congress government to integrate welfare schemes with environmental

## Daylight Snatcher Caught Red-Handed in Ongole After Knife Attack on Brave Woman

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Ongole: In a brazen daylight robbery attempt that sent shockwaves through Ongole town in Prakasam district, a chain snatcher was overpowered by locals after he assaulted a woman with a knife. The incident unfolded in broad daylight on Mangamuri Road, highlighting growing concerns over street crime and drug-fueled audacity in the region.

Enraged by her defiance, the snatcher whipped out a sharp knife and slashed at her arm, inflicting a minor injury. Bloodied but undeterred, Lakshmi's cries drew a crowd of locals who quickly surrounded the assailant. The man, in a ganja-induced haze, behaved erratically.

According to police reports, the drama began around noon when the victim, identified as Lakshmi Devi (name changed), a 42-year-old homemaker from a nearby locality, visited a local kirana store to buy groceries. As she stood at the counter, an unidentified man—later revealed to be under the influence of ganja—sneaked up from behind and yanked at the gold chain around her neck.

Valued at around 50,000, the mangalsutra was a cherished possession, and Lakshmi's instinctive resistance foiled his plan. Eyewitnesses described the chaos: "He grabbed her chain and tried to

flee, but Lakshmi shouted and held onto him tightly," said Raju, a shopkeeper at the scene.

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muttering incoherently and waving the knife wildly which panicked bystanders. "We were terrified; he looked like a madman on drugs," recounted Sowmya, a resident who filmed part of the confrontation on her phone. Alerted by the commotion, nearby shop owners and passersby wrestled the knife away and pinned him down until police arrived.

Ongole Town Police, led by Inspector K. Srinivas, responded within minutes after a frantic call. "The accused, identified as 28-year-old Ravi Kumar from a slum area on the town's outskirts, has a history of petty thefts and substance abuse," Srinivas told reporters. A search

revealed ganja packets and the attempted loot in his possession. Ravi was arrested, and Lakshmi received treatment at Ongole Government Hospital for her wounds, from where she was discharged after stitches.

This incident has reignited debates on public safety in Ongole, a bustling commercial hub in Prakasam district. Residents blame rising ganja peddling and lax policing for such bold crimes. "We need more patrols, especially on crowded roads like Mangamuri," demanded local trader association president M. Venkatesh. Police have registered a case under IPC Sections 393 (attempt to commit robbery), 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons), and NDPS Act provisions.

Investigations continue, with CCTV footage from nearby shops aiding the probe. Authorities urge citizens to remain vigilant and report suspicious activity. In a city where women often move freely during the day, this event serves as a stark reminder of lurking dangers.

## Ongole Rural Police Shine: Swift Gold Theft Bust and Six-Month Rape-Murder Breakthrough

TPN Bureau | January 24, 2026

Ongole: Ongole Rural Police have demonstrated exemplary efficiency in tackling crime, from rapid recoveries to painstaking investigations, leveraging technology and grassroots intelligence. In a daring theft just days ago, unidentified intruders slipped into a bride's room at a kalyana mandapam in Throvagunta, making off with a bag containing gold jewelry worth over 30 lakhs.

The incident unfolded mid-wedding ceremony, sending shockwaves through the family. Local police swung into action immediately, poring over CCTV footage from the venue. They identified the culprits as individuals from Madhya Pradesh, known for their sleight-of-hand tactics. Within a short span, the stolen property was recovered and returned to the victims, restoring faith in swift justice.

In a more complex case, Ongole Rural Police cracked a gruesome rape-murder after six months of relentless effort. The decomposed body of an unidentified young woman was found



in Maddipadu, with no initial leads on the brutal gang rape and killing. Officers fanned out across the district, compiling data on missing persons. This led them to pinpoint the victim as a woman from Singarayakonda. Analyzing her last call data records sealed the case: three

men were implicated in the heinous crime. All were arrested, bringing closure to a harrowing ordeal that demanded unwavering persistence. These successes underscore the force's tech-savvy approach.

Ongole's unified district boasts 6,239 CCTV cameras covering 3,384 areas, with 1,481 offer-

ing PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) capabilities for dynamic surveillance. This network has been pivotal in case resolutions. The table highlights a surge in CCTV and call data-driven breakthroughs, even as fingerprint cases dipped slightly.

"Technology is our force multiplier," said a senior officer, crediting a

round-the-clock monitoring and inter-district coordination for these wins. These efforts not only deter crime but also reassure communities in Prakasam district amid rising urban challenges. As Ongole Rural Police continue to innovate, residents hope for even safer streets ahead.

## Two Major Road Accidents in Andhra Pradesh Claim Lives, Injure Over a Dozen



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Markapuram, Prakasam District: A tragic chain collision near Chinnakatla in Konakanamitla Mandal, Markapuram Assembly constituency, claimed one life and left 12 others critically injured early Saturday morning. Around dawn, a private travels bus slammed into a stationary mini-lorry parked by the roadside.

Moments later, an RTC bus approaching from behind collided violently with the private bus, worsening the wreckage. Eyewitnesses described a chaotic scene as the vehicles crumpled on impact. One victim died on the spot, while the injured passengers suffered severe trauma. Local residents, police, and fire department personnel rushed to the site, swiftly extricating the trapped individuals and transporting them to

Kanigiri Government Hospital.

Doctors report that several injured remain in critical condition, receiving emergency treatment. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation, with the exact cause possibly poor visibility, speeding, or driver negligence yet to be determined.

In a separate incident on the Tuni Highway near Kakinada, another horrific crash unfolded near the Rural Police Station. A private travels bus, en route along the highway, rear-ended a lorry ahead, resulting in the immediate death of the bus driver. Four passengers sustained injuries in the mishap. Police responded promptly, securing the scene and aiding in rescue efforts. The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. Authorities have filed a case and begun probing the incident, pending full

details on contributing factors like road conditions or vehicle faults. These back-to-back accidents highlight ongoing road safety concerns in Andhra Pradesh, particularly on high-traffic routes and during early hours when visibility is low.

Prakasam District, encompassing rural stretches like Konakanamitla, has seen frequent mishaps due to narrow roads and heavy vehicle movement. Similarly, the Tuni Highway, a vital corridor linking coastal areas, remains prone to collisions amid rising vehicular density. Officials urge drivers to adhere to speed limits, maintain vehicle fitness, and avoid fatigue.

The state transport department has reiterated calls for stricter enforcement of traffic rules. Updates on the victims' conditions and investigation outcomes are awaited.

# Trump's Gaza Peace Plan and India's Dilemma in a Shifting Middle East

Peace in the Middle East has rarely emerged organically from within the region. Instead, it has almost always been shaped—if not imposed—by the interests, leverage, and persistence of external powers. Among these, the United States has played the most consequential role, acting variously as mediator, guarantor, enforcer, and partisan stakeholder. The proposed Gaza peace plan, to be implemented through a newly constituted Board of Peace (BoP), once again bears the unmistakable imprint of Washington's influence. What distinguishes this moment, however, is not merely the centrality of the United States, but the outsized role of an unusually unpredictable American president.

Unlike earlier peace initiatives that were anchored in relatively stable US foreign policy doctrines and institutional continuity, the BoP places extraordinary authority in the hands of President Donald Trump himself. The executive structure of the body effectively casts Trump as its chair, vesting him with sweeping powers over implementation, enforcement, and future direction. Whether such a personalised arrangement can deliver durable peace remains uncertain. The jury is very much still out.

Critics of the BoP argue that the model is fundamentally flawed. With a hard sunset deadline of 2027, they contend that the body is unlikely to oversee a transition that is both effective and sustainable, particularly in Gaza, where years of blockade, repeated wars, institutional collapse, and humanitarian devastation have hollowed out governance capacity. Others, however, offer a countervailing view. In a conflict as historically entrenched, culturally charged, and violently polarised as Gaza—especially in the aftermath of a catastrophic war between Israel and Hamas—an overarching, externally imposed framework may be the only viable mechanism capable of enforcing peace and preventing relapse.



India now finds itself at the centre of this debate. Among several countries invited by President Trump to join the BoP, India's response has been cautious. While 22 nations have already signed on as members, New Delhi has opted to pause, weigh its options, and think strategically before committing to what is, at best, a quasi-international body. This restraint may well be prudent. Although the BoP charter describes it as an international organisation, there appears to be a broad—if tacit—consensus that it does not fully meet the criteria typically associated with such entities, particularly those rooted in the UN Charter-based international order.

One of the most controversial aspects of the BoP is its “pay-to-stay” provision, which requires a contribu-

tion of \$1 billion for inclusion. This feature raises fundamental questions about legitimacy versus urgency. For countries like India, which place significant normative value on multilateralism, sovereignty, and rules-based global governance, the idea that membership hinges on financial contribution rather than legal mandate or moral authority is deeply problematic. It risks transforming peacekeeping into a transactional enterprise, undermining the very principles it purports to uphold.

Yet, despite these concerns, the temptation for India to join the BoP may be strong, and timing plays a crucial role. India-US relations are currently experiencing something of a winter. A long-pending trade agreement remains mired in negotiations, the Quad leaders' summit un-

der India's chairship has been postponed, and India continues to face some of the highest tariff burdens globally. In this context, joining the BoP could be viewed as a gesture of strategic accommodation, potentially easing bilateral frictions and restoring political momentum in the relationship with Washington.

There is also a structural argument in favour of India's participation. This could be New Delhi's moment to step up on global governance, particularly against the backdrop of its long-standing demand for reform of the UN Security Council. Active involvement in a high-profile peace initiative in the Middle East would allow India to project itself as a responsible stakeholder, capable of contributing to conflict resolution beyond its immediate

neighbourhood. Such a role would align with India's aspiration to be seen as a leading voice of the Global South.

Moreover, India's stakes in the Middle East are both deep and multifaceted. Millions of Indian citizens live and work across the region, forming a large and vulnerable diaspora. India also enjoys robust bilateral relationships with key Middle Eastern states—relationships that have often transcended the region's fractured politics. Beyond immediate interests, there is the broader strategic promise of linking the Middle East with the Indo-Pacific, a vision that holds significant implications for trade, connectivity, and the future of the Global South. Participation in the BoP could, in theory, strengthen India's role in shaping this emerging geopolitical arc.

However, the arguments against India joining the BoP are equally compelling and largely stem from the lack of clarity surrounding the body itself. While the initiative flows from United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 of November 2025—which created the BoP to ensure implementation of the second phase of the Gaza peace plan—there is a discernible imbalance between urgency and legitimacy. Under the Trump presidency, urgency appears to eclipse legitimacy, with speed and decisiveness prioritised over institutional robustness and broad-based consensus.

Several unresolved questions persist. The BoP charter makes no explicit reference to Gaza, an omission that raises concerns about mandate creep. The sweeping authority vested in the Presi-

dent of the United States further amplifies these anxieties, as does the possibility that the BoP could extend its remit to other conflicts around the world. For India, which has traditionally guarded its strategic autonomy and resisted externally imposed security architectures, this ambiguity is troubling.

The sunset clause presents another dilemma. While the BoP is slated to conclude its work in 2027, two years may prove grossly insufficient to stabilise, reconstruct, and politically normalise Gaza. If the mandate were to be extended, questions would inevitably arise about future leadership—particularly in the period after Trump's presidential tenure ends in 2028. A body so closely tied to a single individual risks losing coherence and credibility once that individual exits the scene.

Finally, optics matter. The BoP already includes countries such as Pakistan and Turkey, whose regional agendas often run counter to India's interests. At the same time, notable Global South powers—including China, South Africa, and Brazil—have chosen to remain outside the arrangement. India's participation in such a grouping could complicate its diplomatic positioning, especially if the BoP comes to be seen as a US-dominated instrument rather than a genuinely multilateral initiative.

Given these complexities, New Delhi would be wise not to rush its decision. The choice India makes at this juncture will carry long-term implications for its role in the Middle East, its relationship with the United States, and its broader vision of global order. Strategic autonomy has been a cornerstone of Indian foreign policy, and preserving it will require careful calibration rather than impulsive alignment. In the end, India's future influence in the Middle East may depend less on whether it joins the BoP, and more on how judiciously it navigates the opportunities and risks this moment presents.

## The Exhaustion of Absolutism: Women, Power, and Revolution in Iran

Every revolution produces its heroes. Some rise organically from within the crowd; others are manufactured, elevated, and mythologised after the fact. They may be real or imagined, flawed or flawless, lionised on posters and podiums alike. Yet history suggests a paradox: successful revolutions do not depend on heroes. They succeed without them, and often despite them. They succeed when the will to change emerges not from stages of spectacle but from the quieter, harsher spaces of everyday life—where heroism is not aspirational but unavoidable.

It is in precisely these spaces that Iranian women have long existed.

Whether Iran is on the brink of overthrowing the Ayatollah regime is, at this moment, almost beside the point. What matters more is what is already visible in fragments and flashes—grainy videos and whispered testimonies that slip through a state-imposed digital blackout. These images tell a clear story: a threshold has been crossed. The common Iranian has crossed the Rubicon. A society that has endured decades of surveillance, coercion, and ritualised fear is unlikely to return to the old normal of everyday terror administered by Islamic militias and state authorities.

The regime may yet survive. It may not fall without external intervention—whether in the form of financial pressure, diplomatic isolation, or even military force. History suggests that revolutions abetted

from outside rarely heal cleanly. Iran itself bears the scars of such interventions. The 1979 revolution against a corrupt monarchy—one that was deeply entangled with Western powers—promised emancipation but delivered a different kind of confinement. In overthrowing imperial influence, the revolution reversed Iran's socio-cultural and geopolitical clock. Religious dogma soon eclipsed political pragmatism, and the new regime acquired enemies at a faster pace than it issued fatwas. As Crane Branton famously warned, revolutions have a tendency to replace one orthodoxy with another.

This historical memory tempers any easy optimism. The Iranian state will not back down easily. But what distinguishes this moment is that the protesters will not either.

What sets the current uprising apart from earlier spasms of dissent—the student protests of 1999, the Green Movement of 2009, or even the fuel-price demonstrations of 2019—is its depth. Those movements, while significant, were either sectoral or episodic. They could be contained through a mixture of repression, selective concessions, and fatigue. What is unfolding now is different. This is not a protest that can be appeased with cosmetic reforms or silenced by brute force alone. It represents, to borrow Hannah Arendt's language, a rupture in the realm of the “given”—a moment when obedience itself loses its self-evidence.

At the heart of this rupture

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Sociologist Asef Bayat has described this system as “social control through everyday life,” a form of power that reproduces itself not primarily through grand proclamations but through constant, minor coercions—small humiliations, routine threats, and enforced conformity. What is now unfolding in Iran is the inversion of this logic. It is everyday resistance—diffuse, decentralised, and relentless—that is eroding the regime's authority through a thousand small cuts.

In this context, acts that might appear mundane elsewhere acquire radical political significance. The removal of the hijab, the cutting of hair, the decision to dance in pub-

lic—these are not merely cultural gestures. They are profoundly political acts in a system where the personal has long been forcibly nationalised. The state's attempt to sacralise control over private life has made even the smallest assertion of autonomy a form of rebellion.

Michel Foucault, writing with admiration—if not without controversy—about the Iranian Revolution of 1978, observed that a form of “political spirituality” had mobilised the masses against a technocratic state. What he underestimated was how that same spiritual absolutism, once institutionalised, would hollow out political legitimacy. The protests today

mark the exhaustion of that absolutism. The moral vocabulary that once justified repression has lost its persuasive power.

This does not mean the state is weak. The Islamic Republic continues to command formidable instruments of violence. History offers no guarantees that moral clarity or popular resolve will prevail. The Paris Commune was drowned in blood. Anti-colonial revolutions across parts of Africa replaced European rule with domestic autocracy. The Arab Spring curdled into counter-revolution, civil war, and renewed authoritarianism. Even Iran's own 1979 revolution, often romanticised as a popular triumph, quickly devoured its pluralism. Intellectuals such as Jalal Al-e Ahmad and Ali Shariati—whose critiques of Westernisation shaped revolutionary consciousness—would scarcely recognise the clerical authoritarianism that followed.

And yet, something irreversible has occurred.

As Charles Tilly argued, revolutions are not singular events but processes—prolonged negotiations between state capacity and popular contention. By this measure, Iran is already in a revolutionary situation, regardless of how or when it ends. The regime may persist institutionally, but it has lost something far harder to recover: consent. Fear remains, but it is no longer monopolised by the state. When unveiled teenage girls confront armed men with slogans rather than stones, the

symbolic economy of power collapses.

Demography reinforces this shift. More than sixty per cent of Iran's population was born after the 1979 revolution. Their historical memory is not shaped by monarchy or imperial meddling, but by sanctions, censorship, and the daily dissonance between official piety and lived reality. For them, the regime's founding myths offer little solace and even less legitimacy.

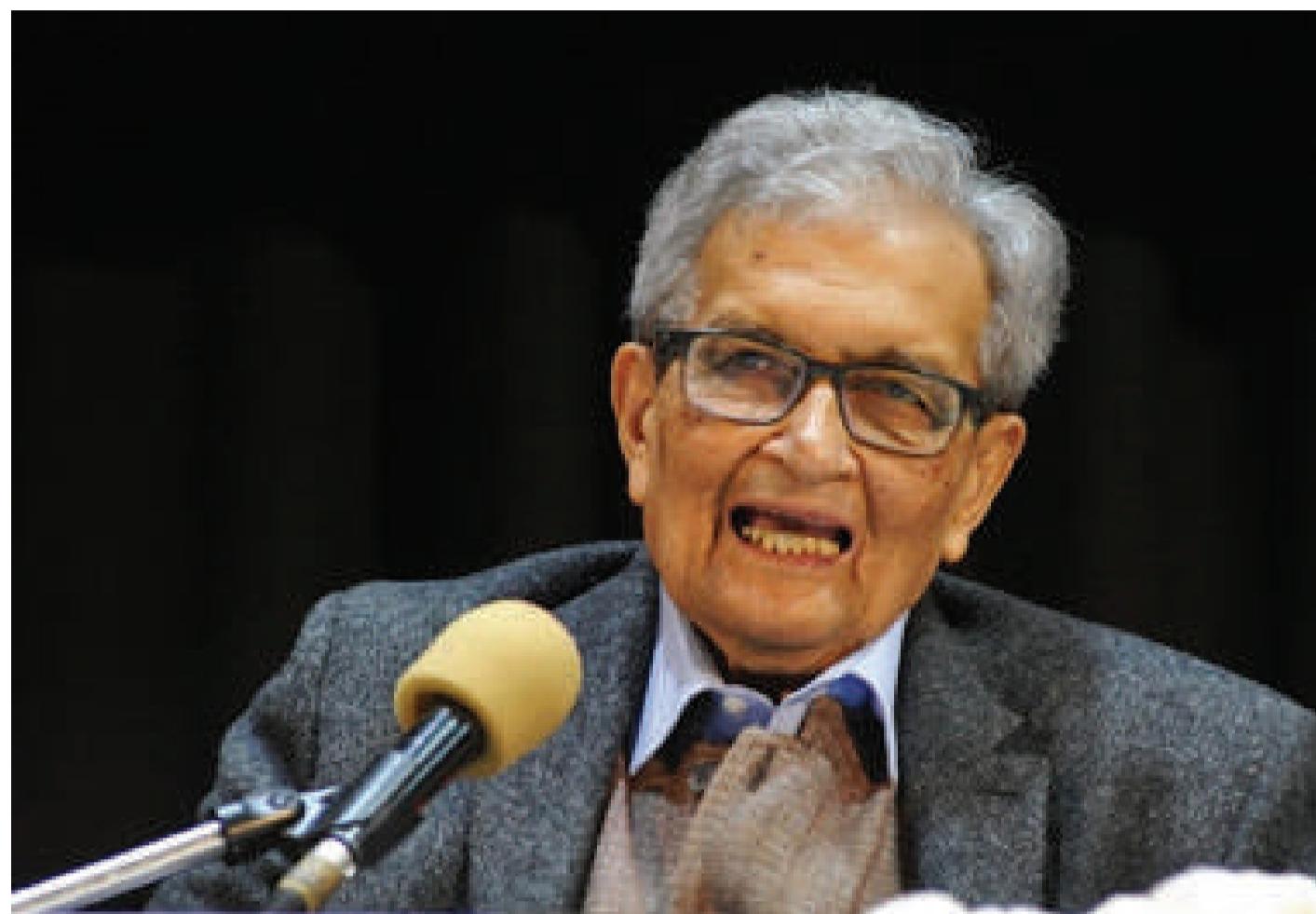
What is emerging, then, is not a movement with a manifesto but a society reclaiming authorship. There are no singular leaders, no charismatic figures to arrest, exile, or assassinate. This frustrates both the regime and foreign analysts accustomed to negotiating with faces rather than forces. Yet it is precisely this horizontality that gives the uprising its durability. As James C. Scott observed in his studies of everyday resistance, power is most vulnerable when defiance becomes normalised.

Whether the Islamic Republic falls next year or lingers for another decade is, in a sense, secondary. The moral universe on which it depends has been punctured beyond easy repair. Iranian women, long relegated to the margins of official history, have moved from the corners to the centre. They have withdrawn their compliance once and for all.

In doing so, they have revealed a truth that revolutions often grasp too late: history is not changed by heroes. It is changed by persistence.



## Amartya Sen Raises Concerns Over 'Hasty' Electoral Roll Revision in West Bengal Ahead of Polls



Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen has expressed serious concerns over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal, warning that the process is being conducted with "undue haste" and could undermine democratic participation ahead of the state's assembly elections, which are due in a few months.

Drawing on his personal experience during the SIR in Bengal, Sen said even Election Commission officials appeared constrained by time pressures. He recalled being questioned about his eligibility to vote from Santiniketan, his home constituency, where he has voted in the past and where his details are already on record.

"Sometimes, the officials of the Election Commission themselves seem to lack enough time," he said. "They questioned my right to vote from my home constituency and even asked about my late mother's age at my date of birth, despite the fact that both my mother's and my own details are available in official records."

Asked whether the SIR process could politically benefit any party in West Bengal, Sen said he could not offer a definitive judgment. "I am not an election expert," he said. "I have been told by those who seem to know more that the BJP may benefit from undercounting. I don't know whether that is true, but the real issue is that the Election Commission should not insist on a faulty arrangement, regardless of who benefits."

On which sections of society are most vulnerable to exclusion, Sen pointed to the poor and underprivileged. "The documents required for inclusion in the new electoral roll are often difficult to obtain for the underdogs of society," he said, warning that class bias inherent in documentation requirements could disproportionately affect the indigent.

Although the issue was eventually resolved, Sen said his experience left him deeply concerned about voters who lack access to similar support

systems. "I could happily say, like the Beatles, 'I get by with a little help from my friends,'" he remarked. "But I worry about others who do not have so many loyal friends. My friends helped me get through the rigid gates of the formidable Election Commission."

Sen was asked to appear for a hearing after officials flagged what they described as a "logical discrepancy" related to the age difference between him and his mother.

"The Election Commission and the Supreme Court must ensure that no adult Indian citizen faces difficulty in qualifying to vote," he emphasised.

Despite these concerns, Sen said he remains eager to cast his vote in the upcoming assembly elections, depending on logistical constraints. As a professor at Harvard University and former Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, he said professional commitments abroad require careful planning.

Recalling an earlier election, Sen described making an intense 48-hour journey across continents to vote in Santiniketan. "But I am 92 now—more elderly," he said reflectively. "I was then only around 82."

Concluding on a contemplative note, Sen said he hoped to once again reflect on Rabindranath Tagore's writings on India's plural cultural heritage—if I manage to do what I should, if I could."

According to the 92-year-old economist, the revision is being rushed, leaving voters with insufficient time to submit documents needed to confirm their eligibility. "The SIR is being done in a hurry, with inadequate time for people with voting rights to have sufficient opportunity to submit documents to vindicate their entitlement to vote in the coming assembly elections," he said. "This is both unjust to the elec-

torate and unfair to Indian democracy."

He also flagged broader concerns about the environment in which voting rights are exercised, particularly for minority communities. "Minority groups sometimes face difficulties in getting their rights, including voting rights, respected," Sen said, noting that Indian Muslims and some Hindu communities can be subjected to discrimination and targeting.

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## Heavy Snowfall Disrupts Life in Jammu and Kashmir; Jammu–Srinagar Highway Remains Closed for Second Day



Life across large parts of Jammu and Kashmir remained severely disrupted for the second consecutive day as heavy snowfall and icy road conditions forced the continued closure of the Jammu–Srinagar National Highway (NH-44), the region's main arterial road. Authorities said persistent snowfall and dangerously slippery surfaces made travel unsafe, prompting precautionary halts at multiple locations.

Hill resorts and higher reaches, including Patnitop, Nathatop, Sanasar, Batote, Banihal, Gool, Ukhral and surrounding areas, witnessed uninterrupted snowfall for the second day, bringing normal life to a standstill. Pathways were buried under thick snow, markets remained deserted, and public movement was minimal. In Batote, located in Ramban district, many shopkeepers kept their shutters down for the second straight day due to the absence of customers and continued inclement weather.

The pilgrimage to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine was also suspended after heavy rainfall lashed Katra while snowfall intensified at the Bhawan, officials said. Authorities cited safety concerns for pilgrims as the reason for halting the yatra.

Following heavy snowfall, teams of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) launched

snow-clearing operations in key areas, including Sonamarg, Kullan and Gagangir, in an effort to restore road connectivity. However, officials acknowledged that the intensity of the snowfall has slowed restoration work in several locations.

In Ramban district, local authorities struggled to cope with the sudden and heavy accumulation of snow. Officials said that the available snow-clearing machinery and manpower from the Jammu Power Development Corporation Limited (JPCL) and the Jal Shakti Vibhag were inadequate to address the scale of the disruption. As a result, several remote tehsils, including Batote, Banihal, Gool, Ukhral and Rajgarh, remained cut off from the Ramban district headquarters for

the second day. Movement on NH-44 was halted at multiple safer locations, including Jakhani Chowk in Udhampur district, as a precautionary measure. Traffic remained suspended up to Ramsoo due to continued snowfall and ice accumulation, officials said, adding that the highway would reopen only after weather conditions improved and the road surface was deemed safe.

Air travel was also hit hard by the adverse weather. Srinagar Airport, along with IndiGo Airlines, announced multiple flight cancellations and a temporary suspension of operations. However, flight services gradually began to resume later in the day, with the first flight landing at Srinagar Airport around 11:00 am.

Railway operations, however, continued in parts of the Kashmir Valley. In Anantnag district, Indian Railways maintained train services despite snow-covered tracks, ensuring limited connectivity for commuters.

Amid the harsh weather conditions, the Udhampur Police on Friday rescued 12 people, including women and children, who were stranded in deep snow in the Chochru Galla area. The individuals, reportedly belonging to nomadic families, were trapped due to the sudden deterioration in weather.

Police said a distress call was received at the Sangh police post, located nearly 12 kilometres from Chochru Galla. Rescue teams were immediately dispatched and took nearly three hours to reach the site due to difficult terrain and heavy snow.

Photos and videos shared by the Udhampur Police on social media platform X showed officers guiding stranded locals down snow-covered slopes. In one video, police personnel were seen carrying elderly women and helping them carefully navigate the treacherous terrain.

Authorities have advised residents and travellers to avoid unnecessary movement, remain indoors, and follow official weather and traffic advisories as snowfall continues across the region.

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The cancellations come as a powerful winter storm sweeps across large parts of the United States, bringing heavy snow, ice, and danger-

## Shashi Tharoor Declines Public Comment on Skipping Congress Meet, Says Issues Will Be Taken Up Internally



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has firmly declined to engage in public speculation over his absence from a recent high-level Congress meeting in Delhi, stating that the matter has already been sufficiently discussed and will be addressed directly with the party leadership. Speaking at the Kerala Literature Festival, Tharoor made it clear that he would not use a public platform to discuss internal party issues.

"I am not here to make any political declarations. This is a literary festival," Tharoor said when asked about the controversy. "These are issues I need to take up with my own party leadership and not in a public forum."

The four-time Member of Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram said he would soon be travelling to Delhi for the ongoing Parliament session, where he expects to have a structured and appropriate conversation with senior party leaders. Emphasising his long association with the Congress, Tharoor said that any differences would be resolved through internal mechanisms.

"I have been in the Congress for the last 17 years. Whatever has gone wrong needs to be addressed, and it will be addressed in the appropriate forum," he said.

Tharoor also underlined that he had already clarified his position regarding the meeting and would not offer any further explanation publicly. He noted that while media reports have speculated on his absence, not all of them may be accurate. "The issue has been adequately covered by the media. Some reports may be right, some may

not. I will not publicly clarify my reasons," he said, adding that the party leadership had been informed well in advance about his unavailability.

Senior leaders of the Congress's Kerala unit were scheduled to meet party president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi in Delhi as part of preparations for the upcoming Kerala Assembly elections. As one of the party's most prominent leaders from the state, Tharoor was widely expected to attend. However, sources cited by NDTV said he skipped the meeting due to a prior commitment, which had been communicated to the leadership beforehand.

Reiterating his commitment to the party, Tharoor said he would continue to play an active role in Parliament and convey his views directly to party leaders rather than through public commentary or media statements.

Addressing another area of debate, Tharoor defended his remarks on Operation Sindoora, asserting that he had not deviated from the Congress's official position in Parliament. While acknowledging that there had been public disagreement on certain principles, he

said he stood by his views. Referring to a column he wrote following the Pahalgam incident, Tharoor said he had argued that the attack could not go unpunished and that a kinetic response was necessary.

Tharoor also spoke about the importance of constitutional values, stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi regards the Constitution as sacrosanct and noting that it has endured despite past opposition from some quarters. He said the Constitution's longevity reflects its strength and relevance.

The developments prompted sharp reactions from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with party leader C.R. Kesavan accusing the Congress of singling out Tharoor for prioritising national interest over party considerations. The BJP claimed Tharoor's comments on national security and Operation Sindoora had unsettled the Congress leadership.

Despite the political exchanges, Tharoor reiterated that internal differences should be handled internally, signalling his intent to resolve issues through direct engagement with the party leadership rather than public debate.

## Air India Cancels New York, Newark Flights Amid Severe Winter Storm Warning in US



Air India has issued a travel advisory and cancelled all of its flights to and from New York and Newark for January 25 and 26, citing a severe winter storm forecast to impact the US East Coast. The airline said the decision was taken to ensure the safety and well-being of passengers and crew as extreme weather conditions are expected to disrupt flight operations across the region.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, Air India warned that heavy snowfall is forecast across New York, New Jersey, and adjoining areas from early Sunday morning through Monday. The airline said the storm is expected to have a significant impact on air travel and airport operations.

"A severe winter storm with heavy snow is forecast for New York, New Jersey and adjoining areas in the US East Coast from early Sunday morning to Monday, which will have a significant impact on flight operations," Air India said in its advisory. "In view of the safety, well-being and convenience of our passengers and crew, all Air India flights to and from New York and Newark have been cancelled on 25 and 26 January."

The storm is expected to produce crippling ice accumulations in several regions, posing serious risks to power infrastructure. Authorities have warned that hundreds of thousands of people could lose electricity, with outages potentially lasting several days in some areas. Travel conditions across much of the storm's path are expected to range from extremely difficult to impossible, with both road and air travel severely disrupted.

Thousands of flights across the US have already been cancelled or delayed ahead of the storm as airlines attempt to manage operational challenges caused by snow-covered runways, icy conditions, and limited visibility. Airports along the East Coast are bracing for further cancellations as the storm intensifies.

Passengers travelling to or from the affected regions have been advised to monitor weather updates closely and stay in touch with airlines for the latest information.

sources and prepare emergency services. These include Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, New York, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, and Kansas. Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced a disaster declaration covering 134 counties, while Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser declared a state of emergency for the nation's capital.

CNN also reported that more than half of all Americans are expected to experience subzero wind chills over the coming week, increasing the risk of frostbite and hypothermia.

Ahead of what officials have described as a historic winter storm, US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the federal government is coordinating closely with state and local authorities. He added that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is on standby and ready to respond as conditions worsen.

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## US Treasury Hints at Possible Removal of India Tariffs as Russian Oil Imports Plunge



US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent suggested on Friday at the World Economic Forum in Davos that the 25% tariffs imposed on India for purchasing Russian oil could eventually be lifted, following a sharp decline in India's Russian oil imports.

Speaking with Politico, Bessent described the tariffs as a "huge success," noting that Indian refinery purchases of Russian crude have "collapsed" since the levy was introduced. He indicated that while the tariffs remain in place, a diplomatic path exists for their removal if India shifts its energy sourcing. Bessent emphasized that these trade measures have tangible benefits for the US economy.

"We put a 25 percent tariff on India for buying Russian oil, and the Indian purchases by their refineries of Russian oil have collapsed. So that is a success. The tariffs are still on. I would imagine there is a path to take them off, so that's a check and a huge success," he told Politico.

The remarks come amid discussions in the US Congress on a proposed bill that could impose a 500% duty on countries importing Russian oil. India, however, has maintained that its energy policy is guided by the need to secure "affordable energy" for its population of 1.4 billion.

Reacting to the proposed legislation, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir

Jaiswal said New Delhi is closely monitoring developments.

"We are aware of the proposed bill. We are closely following the developments," Jaiswal said during a weekly press briefing.

Despite potential legislative threats from Washington, India continues to navigate its strategic autonomy while responding to global market realities.

Bessent also criticized European countries for purchasing refined Russian oil from India, arguing that by doing so, they are "financing the war against themselves." He described the trade as an "act of irony and stupidity," noting that Europeans were buying products refined in India from discounted Russian crude.

"Before the Ukraine invasion, approximately 2-3 percent of Indian oil went into its refineries from Russia. After sanctions, it got deeply discounted, and purchases surged to the high teens—7, 18, 19 percent. Huge profits for Indian refiners. But in the ultimate act of irony and stupidity, Europeans were buying the refined products made from Russian oil. They are financing Russia's war effort," Bessent said.

Meanwhile, the European Union and India are preparing to advance a comprehensive strategic agenda, including a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) described by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as "the mother of all

deals." The agreement would cover a market of 2 billion people, representing roughly 25% of global GDP.

Bessent suggested that the EU has avoided imposing similar tariffs on India to protect the forthcoming trade deal, calling it "virtue signalling."

"I will also point out that our virtue-signalling European allies refused to do it because they wanted to sign this big trade deal with India," he said.

The EU and India are set to hold the 16th summit in New Delhi, where a new comprehensive strategic agenda is expected to be adopted. Von der Leyen is scheduled to visit next weekend to finalize the agreement, underscoring Europe's view of India as a crucial economic partner despite the Russian oil controversy.

Speaking at Davos, von der Leyen emphasized Europe's commitment to expanding trade and international cooperation.

"There is still work to do. But we are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement. Some call it the mother of all deals. One that would create a market of 2 billion people, accounting for almost a quarter of global GDP," she said.

Placing the agreement in a broader context, von der Leyen reiterated that Europe remains open to partnerships and trade opportunities worldwide.

## As Bangladesh Heads to the Polls, US Signals Openness to Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami



More than a year and a half after mass anti-government protests forced Sheikh Hasina to resign as Bangladesh's prime minister and flee the country, the nation is preparing for a landmark election on February 12. The political landscape has shifted dramatically since Hasina's ouster, with her Awami League barred from contesting the polls and the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami poised for what analysts say could be its strongest electoral performance to date.

Against this backdrop, the United States has stepped up its engagement with Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh's largest Islamist party, signalling a pragmatic willingness to work with whichever political forces emerge victorious. According to a report by The Washington Post, US diplomats have conveyed openness to engaging with the Jamaat, a party that has been banned multiple times in Bangladesh's history, most recently under Hasina's rule.

The report cites audio recordings from a closed-door meeting held on December 1 between a Dhaka-based US diplomat and

female Bangladeshi journalists. In the discussion, the diplomat remarked that Bangladesh had "shifted Islamic" and predicted that Jamaat-e-Islami would "do better than it's ever done before" in the upcoming election. "We want them to be our friends," the diplomat reportedly said, even asking journalists whether they would consider featuring members of the party's student wing on their programmes.

The diplomat also sought to allay fears that Jamaat-e-Islami would impose a strict interpretation of Islamic law if it came to power, suggesting that the US would respond decisively with punitive economic measures should that occur. According to the reporting, the diplomat said the United States would impose "100 percent tariffs" if the party attempted to enforce rigid religious governance.

In a statement to The Washington Post, Monica Shie, spokesperson for the US Embassy in Dhaka, described the meeting as a "routine gathering" and an "off-the-record discussion" in which "numerous political parties were discussed." She

stressed that Washington does not favour any single political party and intends to work with whichever government is elected by the Bangladeshi people.

### A Controversial Political Force

Jamaat-e-Islami was founded in 1941 by Islamist thinker Syed Abul Ala Maududi and has long been one of South Asia's most controversial political movements. The party opposed Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan, arguing that separation would destabilise the regional balance in South Asia. During the 1971 Liberation War, senior Jamaat leaders aligned themselves with the Pakistani state and were accused of forming paramilitary groups that killed thousands of civilians fighting for independence, according to reports by Al Jazeera.

When Sheikh Hasina returned to power in 2009, her government launched war crimes trials against senior Jamaat leaders through the International Crimes Tribunal and banned the party from political activity. A sweeping crackdown followed, leaving Jamaat political

ly marginalised for more than a decade.

That ban was lifted after Hasina was toppled by student-led protests in 2024. Since then, Jamaat-e-Islami has re-emerged as a major political force under the leadership of chief Shafiqur Rahman,

Secretary-General Mia Golam Porwar, and deputy chief Syed Abdullah Mohammed Taher. The party has capitalised on political instability and public anger over corruption to expand its support base.

Historically, Jamaat has advocated governance based on sharia law and policies that would restrict women's participation in the workforce, arguing that shorter working hours would allow women to better fulfil their domestic responsibilities. In recent years, however, the party has sought to soften its image, emphasising anti-corruption and economic justice while avoiding overt religious rhetoric.

The Jamaat has also entered into an alliance with the National Citizen Party (NCP), a student-led political outfit formed by figures who spearheaded last year's uprising against Hasina. The

partnership has sparked internal dissent within the NCP, with some members opposing collaboration with the Islamist party.

Since Hasina's fall, Jamaat-e-Islami leaders have held several meetings with US officials. Party chief Mohammad Rahman also held a virtual meeting in January with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, signalling growing international engagement.

### Concerns in New Delhi

The US outreach to Jamaat-e-Islami is unlikely to ease anxieties in India. New Delhi designated Jamaat-e-Islami's Kashmir chapter an "unlawful group" in 2019 and renewed the designation in 2024. Indian officials remain wary of the party's ideological orientation and its potential impact on regional security.

Thomas Kean of the International Crisis Group told Al Jazeera that a Jamaat-led government would face greater difficulty resetting relations with India than a government led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). "India is looking for a reset after the election, but that will be more challenging with Jamaat in power than the BNP," Kean said, citing domestic political constraints in both countries.

The US engagement with Jamaat could also further strain India-US relations, already under pressure due to US tariffs on Indian products, disagreements over India's conflict with Pakistan, and New Delhi's continued purchases of Russian oil.

### The Road to February 12

The February 12 election is expected to be a contest between the BNP and an alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami, its former coalition partner. Jamaat leaders have said they remain open to working with the BNP, raising the possibility of a power-sharing arrangement if the opposition prevails.

As Bangladesh approaches election day, the vote is shaping up not only as a test of its democratic transition but also as a moment with significant regional and geopolitical consequences.

## Indian-Origin Family Killed in Georgia Shooting; Husband Charged With Murder

A devastating tragedy struck an Indian-origin family living in the United States after a domestic dispute allegedly turned deadly in the early hours of Friday morning. An Indian woman and three of her relatives were shot dead at their home in Lawrenceville, a suburb of Atlanta in the US state of Georgia. Police have charged the woman's husband, Vijay Kumar, with multiple counts of murder in connection with the incident.

According to authorities, the shooting occurred around 2:30 am local time at a residence in the 1000 block of Brook Ivy Court. Officers from the Gwinnett County Police Department responded to a 911 call and arrived at the scene within minutes. Inside the home, they discovered four adults who had suffered fatal gunshot wounds.

Police later identified the victims as Meenu Dogra, 43, Kumar's wife; Gourav Kumar, 33; Nidhi Chander, 37; and Harish Chander, 38. All four were of Indian origin and were related to one another, though officials have not publicly detailed the pre-

cise family relationships beyond Dogra being Kumar's spouse.

Children were present inside the house at the time of the shooting, adding to the horror of the incident. According to police, three children ran into a closet and hid as the violence unfolded. One of the children, who is believed to be the son of Kumar and Dogra, managed to place an emergency call to 911, alerting authorities to the situation.

Police said the child's call played a critical role in their rapid response. Based on the information provided, officers were able to locate the residence quickly. The children were not physically harmed during the shooting. They have since been taken into the care of a family member, authorities confirmed.

Vijay Kumar, 51, was arrested and has been charged with multiple serious offenses. According to local media outlet Fox5 Atlanta, Kumar faces four counts of felony murder and four counts of aggravated assault. In addition, prosecutors have filed four counts of

malice murder, one count of cruelty to children in the first degree, and two counts of cruelty to children in the third degree.

Police have not publicly disclosed the motive behind the shooting but described it as stemming from a family dispute. The investigation remains ongoing, and authorities have said further details will be released as they become available.

The incident has sent shockwaves through both the local community in Georgia and the Indian diaspora in the United States. Neighbours described the area as a quiet residential neighbourhood and expressed disbelief that such violence could occur there.

India's Consulate General in Atlanta confirmed the deaths and the arrest of the suspect, expressing deep sorrow over the incident. In a statement posted online, the consulate said it is in touch with local authorities and is providing all possible assistance to the affected family.

"We are deeply grieved by a tragic shooting incident linked to an alleged

family dispute, in which an Indian national was among the victims," the consulate said in its statement. "The alleged shooter has been arrested, and all possible assistance is being extended to the bereaved

family."

The consulate has not specified the nature of the assistance being provided but typically offers support related to legal processes, coordination with authorities, and, when required, repatriation of remains. The shooting highlights ongoing concerns around domestic violence and gun-related crimes in the United States, particularly incidents involving families and children. Advocacy groups have repeatedly stressed the need for greater awareness, intervention, and support mechanisms to prevent domestic disputes from escalating into fatal violence.

As the legal process unfolds, Kumar remains in custody while awaiting further court proceedings. Authorities have urged anyone with additional information related to the case to come forward as the investigation continues.





## 'Happy Birthday, Momo': Assam Elephant Calf's Sweet Celebration Goes Viral



A heartwarming birthday celebration for a baby elephant in Assam has captured the attention of social media users, winning hearts with its simplicity and genuine affection. Elephant lover Bipin Kashyap recently celebrated the birthday of a young domestic elephant calf named Priyanshi, fondly called Momo, and the joyful moment has since gone viral online.

The video, shared by Kashyap on Instagram, shows him enthusiastically celebrating Priyanshi's special day. In the clip, he can be seen singing the birthday song while standing beside the calf, his happiness and affection clearly visible. The gentle interaction between the two highlights a deep bond, one built on care, familiarity, and mutual trust.

Priyanshi, also known as Momo, is a pet elephant, and the video offers a rare and touching glimpse into the affectionate relationship she shares with Kashyap. Rather than an elaborate event, the celebration is marked by warmth and sincerity, reflecting Kashyap's genuine love for the animal. Many viewers described the moment as refreshing, noting how it showcases compassion toward animals in its purest form.

One of the most endearing parts of the video is the specially prepared birthday "cake" for the elephant calf. The blue-coloured cake, designed exclusively for Priyanshi, is surrounded by an assortment of fruits, grains, and

vegetables. The birthday menu includes bananas, apples, grapes, and other nutritious treats carefully chosen to suit the calf's dietary needs. The thoughtful preparation adds to the charm of the celebration and demonstrates the care taken to ensure the elephant's well-being.

The video quickly drew warm reactions from viewers across social media platforms. Many users expressed delight at seeing the baby elephant enjoy her birthday, calling the moment adorable and uplifting. Comments poured in praising Kashyap for his empathy and love for animals.

"I love those people who genuinely care for animals. Happy birthday to Momo," one user wrote. Another described the clip as "the most beautiful scenery on Instagram." Others offered blessings and heartfelt wishes, with one commenter saying, "Love you, brother, for caring so deeply for these animals. God bless you all."

Several viewers also sent good wishes to both Priyanshi and her mother, hoping for their long and healthy lives. The overwhelming response reflects how simple acts of kindness toward animals can resonate widely and bring joy to people far beyond their immediate surroundings.

In a digital space often filled with distressing news, Priyanshi's birthday celebration stands out as a gentle reminder of compassion, connection, and the happiness found in caring for all living beings.

## A Son's Final Gift: Violin Serenade for Dying Mother Moves the World



In a deeply moving act of love, a man in China arranged a final musical farewell for his dying mother, a gesture that has touched hearts across the world. The emotional moment, widely described online as "the most tender farewell," took place in a hospital in China's southern Guangdong province and has since gone viral on social media.

Huang Haile said goodbye to his mother, Ye Jindi, at the Dongguan Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine on January 6. Aware that her time was limited, Huang invited professional violinist Tang Xing to perform at her bedside in the hospital's intensive care unit. The violinist played "Mother," a well-known composition by Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi, famously featured in the 1999 film *Kikujiro*. The soft, melancholic melody filled the ICU room, creating a quiet and intimate moment between mother and son.

Ye, 77, had been diagnosed with late-stage liver cirrhosis in 2023. Her condition worsened significantly last December shortly after she celebrated her birthday, when she developed heart inflammation. Doctors later informed the family that her illness had progressed too far for surgical intervention. As her health rapidly declined, Ye was admitted to the intensive care unit on December 29.

The decision to bring music into the ICU was deeply personal. Ye had worked as a primary school music teacher earlier in her life, and music held a special place in her heart. Huang explained that he believed hearing is often the last sense to fade before death. At first, he hoped that the music would comfort his mother and give her strength to continue fighting the illness.

"I thought music might give her confidence and courage," Huang shared.

Although Ye's condition did not improve, the music offered a moment of peace and dignity. About a week after the violin performance, Ye passed away. Honouring her final wishes, Huang transferred her from the ICU to a general ward, where she spent her last moments calmly and without distress.

Huang described his bond with his mother as extraordinarily close. After his father, a sailor, died when Huang was just 13, Ye raised him alone. She never remarried, choosing instead to devote her life entirely to her son. Following her liver disease diagnosis, Huang quit his job to care for her full-time.

The viral video has resonated widely, serving as a poignant reminder of love, gratitude, and the quiet ways people say goodbye.

## After a Decade Apart, Microchip Brings Lost Dog Home in Emotional Reunion



A Florida family has been reunited with their long-lost dog more than a decade after she mysteriously disappeared, thanks to a routine microchip scan at an animal shelter. The heartwarming reunion has captured widespread attention on social media and underscored the enduring importance of microchipping pets.

Miami-Dade Animal Services shared the story earlier this month after a senior dog was brought into the shelter. As part of standard intake procedures, shelter staff scanned the animal for a microchip—an often-overlooked step that can prove life-changing. The scan revealed an unexpected result: the dog was Buttercup, a 15-year-old pet who had been missing from her home for over 10 years.

The microchip contained identifying information that allowed shelter workers to trace Buttercup's original owners and contact them. For the family, the call brought an emotional end to a decade-long period of uncertainty and loss. Soon after, Buttercup was reunited with her owners,

closing a chapter that began with her unexplained disappearance more than ten years earlier.

In a social media post, Miami-Dade Animal Services described the reunion as a powerful reminder of why microchipping pets is so critical. "Last week, Buttercup was reu-

nited with her owner af- ter being missing for more than 10 years," the post read. "A decade apart, and thanks to a simple scan, this sweet girl finally made her way home. Moments like this remind us why micro-

chipping matters."

The shelter also empha-

sized that a microchip is only effective if the information linked to it is kept up to date. "A microchip is only as good as the information attached to it," the post added. "Keeping your contact details updated can be the difference between a lost pet staying lost and a happy

reunion like Buttercup's."

The story quickly resonated with animal lovers online, sparking an outpouring of emotional reactions. Social media users flooded the shelter's Facebook page with messages of joy, curiosity, and affection. Many asked about Buttercup's condition and whether she recognised her family after so many years apart. Others wondered about her journey during the decade-long separation, with one user commenting, "Ten years? We need to know more of the story."

Several commenters shared their own experiences with adopting or losing pets, while others called the reunion heart-melting and inspiring. One user recalled adopting a dog from the same shelter 13 years ago and noted that she remains happy and healthy—proof, they said, of the lasting impact shelters and responsible pet care can have.

Buttercup's story, though extraordinary, serves as a simple reminder: a small chip can make all the difference, even years later.

## Mumbai Actor Wins Hearts After Letting Delivery Rider Walk Free Following Accident



A heartwarming act of compassion by Mumbai-based actor Siddharth Bhardwaj has struck a chord on social media after a video showing his response to a traffic accident went viral. Instead of demanding compensation for damage to his luxury car, Bhardwaj chose empathy, allowing a struggling delivery executive to walk away without paying a single rupee.

The incident occurred when a delivery rider, later identified as Vishal, accidentally crashed into Bhardwaj's parked BMW, leaving visible scratches on the vehicle. In the video shared by the actor, Bhardwaj calmly points out the damage and asks the rider how much he would be able to contribute toward repairs. Clearly shaken, Vishal offers between Rs 3,000 and Rs 4,000 before breaking down emotionally and revealing that his mother is battling advanced-stage cancer.

"So this delivery guy smashed into my parked car," Bhardwaj wrote in

the caption accompanying the video. "Upon asking him for compensation, he broke into tears and showed me his mom's hospital bills as she is on the last stage of cancer."

Moved by the rider's situation, Bhardwaj immediately dropped the idea of compensation. "I didn't have the heart to even ask him for a penny after that," he added. "I'll get my car fixed, and that is my contribution towards his cause and helplessness." The video ends with Bhardwaj embracing Vishal, a moment that has resonated deeply with viewers.

In a follow-up video, Bhardwaj shared an update on Vishal's situation, revealing that social media users had rallied to support the delivery executive. Clearly shaken, Vishal offers between Rs 25,000 and Rs 30,000 in donations from well-wishers.

Bhardwaj said Vishal offered to use the donated

money to repair the damaged car, but the actor firmly refused. "I told him that every single penny is for his mother," he said. "My car is not his responsibility."

The videos have garnered more than 2.5 million views, prompting an outpouring of praise from

users who applauded Bhardwaj's kindness. Many comments highlighted how difficult it can be to let go after damage to a hard-earned possession, while others called the compassion still exists.

"Don't worry, Sid. You will be compensated from

above for this good deed," one user wrote. Another commented, "This is how we can make a difference to any life we touch."

For many, the incident served as a powerful reminder that small acts of empathy can have an outsized impact—both online and off.

## Bengaluru Entrepreneur Plans to Leave City, Citing Traffic, Pollution, and Health Concerns



For many lifelong residents, Bengaluru is more than just a city—it is home, memory, and identity. But for a 41-year-old entrepreneur who was born and raised in the city, leaving has become a difficult yet necessary decision. In a candid post on Reddit, the business owner shared why he is plan-

ning to move out of Bengaluru, citing declining quality of life, worsening traffic congestion, and health concerns.

The entrepreneur wrote that the past year has been particularly challenging, as daily commutes have become increasingly exhausting due to relentless traffic

jams and rising dust pollution. Managing his business, he said, now comes at the cost of constant stress, leaving little time or energy for his family. After decades in the Garden City, he feels he has reached a breaking point.

"Bengaluru is the city where I was born and

raised, but it's a city I will soon have to say goodbye to," he wrote. At 41, he said, the physical and mental toll of navigating the city every day has become too heavy. Long hours spent on the road, combined with poor air quality and unending construction dust, have begun to affect his health and overall well-being.

The entrepreneur expressed particular concern for honest taxpayers and salaried employees who have no choice but to endure long daily commutes. He pointed out that many people spend hours stuck in traffic, sacrificing personal time and peace of mind just to get to and from work. According to him, this is not a sustainable way to live. In his post, he also noted that Bengaluru has now become the second most congested city in the world, after Mexico City—a statistic that underscores the scale of the problem. However, he was careful to clarify that his post was not meant as criticism of the city itself. Instead, he described it as

a warning directed at policymakers and authorities, urging them to acknowledge growing public frustration and take meaningful action.

"I'm not blaming Bengaluru," he wrote. "I'm warning the government. People are tired, and many are actively looking for solutions."

His post struck a chord on social media, drawing mixed reactions from fellow users. Some echoed his frustration, with one commenter saying, "As a fellow Bengalurian myself, I feel exactly the same." Others highlighted different concerns, such as pollution and waste management. "I made peace with the traffic," another user wrote. "It's the dust, debris, and garbage getting to me."

Several users also shared similar experiences, with one recalling a strong desire to leave the city. Together, the responses reflect a growing unease among residents grappling with the changing realities of life in India's tech capital.

## Bangladesh Cricket Board Appeals to ICC Dispute Resolution Committee Amid T20 World Cup Controversy



In a last-ditch effort to overturn the International Cricket Council's (ICC) decision to hold Bangladesh's men's T20 World Cup matches in India, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has approached the ICC's Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC). However, sources say the appeal is unlikely to be heard, as it falls outside the committee's remit.

Facing growing pressure, the BCB, led by Amiul Islam Bulbul, sought to explore all available options before taking further steps. "Yes, BCB has approached the DRC of ICC as it wants to exhaust all its options. If DRC rules against BCB, then the only body that can be approached is the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Switzerland," a BCB official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told PTI.

The controversy escalated after Bangladesh's interim government and sports ministry advisor, Asif Nazrul, who is known for his hardline stance against India, announced that the national team would not travel to India

due to "security concerns." This came in the wake of senior pacer Mustafizur Rahman being removed from Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL squad at the direction of the BCCI, prompting claims that the players' safety could be at risk.

However, according to the ICC's constitution and the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the DRC, the committee has no authority to hear appeals against decisions made by the ICC Board of Directors. Clause 1.3 of the ToR explicitly states: "The Committee shall not operate as an appeal body against decisions of the ICC or any decision-making body established under the ICC's Memorandum and Articles of Association or under any rules or regulations of the ICC."

An ICC board source told PTI that while Bangladesh can formally approach the DRC, the rules clearly prevent the committee from hearing cases challenging Board of Directors' decisions. "Bangladesh can approach the DRC, but if one looks at the rules, the case cannot

even be heard as the committee doesn't have the remit to hear an appeal against a decision made by the Board of Directors," the source said.

The ICC Board of Directors, following an independent security assessment which rated the threat level as "low to moderate," voted 14-2 in favor of keeping Bangladesh's matches in India. Despite this, Nazrul has maintained that the decision was ultimately a government directive rather than a cricket board decision.

The DRC, chaired by English barrister Michael Beloff, KC, operates under British law and primarily evaluates whether ICC rules and procedures were correctly followed. It does not function as a conventional appeals tribunal.

ICC sources have expressed frustration over the way the BCB handled the situation. "The ICC Board Members are extremely angry with Amiul Islam Bulbul as to why a press conference was held before informing the ICC of their decision. Asif Nazrul is persona-non-grata for the ICC, but Bulbul shouldn't have allowed the

standing" with the BCCI was not legally binding, but merely a "letter of intent."

The committee typically examines procedural compliance rather than substantive disputes, meaning the BCB's request to move the T20 World Cup fixtures is unlikely to succeed. The DRC comprises several independent experts, including Beloff, Mike Heron (KC), Justice Winston Anderson, Deon van Zyl (South Africa), Gary Roberts (Americas), Guo Cai (Asia), Annabelle Bennett (EAP), Jean Paulsson (Europe), Peter Nicholson (Ethics Officer), and committee administrators Vijay Malhotra (Chair of Audit Committee) and Sally Clark (Management Support).

ICC sources have expressed frustration over the way the BCB handled the situation. "The ICC Board Members are extremely angry with Amiul Islam Bulbul as to why a press conference was held before informing the ICC of their decision. Asif Nazrul is persona-non-grata for the ICC, but Bulbul shouldn't have allowed the

press conference before formally notifying the global body," the source said.

Meanwhile, the ICC has kept Scotland on standby as a potential replacement team should Bangladesh fail to participate. ICC Chairman Jay Shah, who was recently in Namibia for the U19 World Cup, is currently in Dubai, with a formal announcement regarding Bangladesh's status expected by Saturday.

As the T20 World Cup draws closer, this unprecedented dispute highlights the complex interplay between politics and cricket administration. The BCB's move to approach the DRC reflects both its desperation and the limitations of governance mechanisms in international cricket.

Whether the decision will ultimately affect the Bangladesh team's participation remains uncertain, but the situation underscores the challenges of balancing security concerns, political influence, and the aspirations of players in high-profile international tournaments.

## Manoj Tiwary Criticizes Bangladesh's T20 World Cup Withdrawal, Cites Political Interference



Former Indian cricketer Manoj Tiwary

Tiwary has criticized Bangladesh's decision not to play their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 matches in India, suggesting that political interference influenced the move rather than genuine security concerns.

Speaking to ANI, Tiwary questioned the reasoning behind Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) decision, pointing out that the country's former Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, resides safely in India. "It wasn't from the board's side. Today, if you watched the press conference, the Sports Minister gave a statement to the media, saying there is a security risk, but the board president was standing right next to him. Generally, in other countries, the cricket board is an autonomous body, and political and ministerial involvement is limited only to organizing events," he said.

He added, "In their country, politics has entered the picture, and political figures have become heavily involved in the board, and these kinds of decisions are emerging. Regarding safety, Sheikh Hasina came to our country after the protests there and she is safe here. The central government of our country provided her with good security. So, if a country's Prime Minister can come and live safely here, the players will definitely get safety too."

Tiwary's comments follow the ICC's rejection of the BCB's request to shift their T20 World Cup fixtures outside India. The tournament, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, is set to begin on February 7.

Tensions between India and Bangladesh have been exacerbated by rising incidents of crimes against minorities in Bangladesh. Last year, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) instructed Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to release pacer Mustafizur Rahman from their 2026 IPL squad following public outcry over atrocities against minorities. In response, the BCB cited security concerns for their contingent as the reason for pulling out of the World Cup matches in India.

Tiwary lamented the impact of this decision on Bangladeshi players. "This is a loss for the players. All Bangladeshi players want to play for their country, and it's their dream to perform in the World Cup. But what can the players do now? It wasn't in their hands. The ICC's instruction was simply, 'Either you play, or you leave.' We know the board didn't make the decision—the Sports Ministry did. Politics has entered sports, and this time it's affected a major decision: Bangladesh is not coming to play in the World Cup."

As per the current schedule, Bangladesh are set to start their T20 World Cup campaign on February 7 against West Indies at Eden Gardens, Kolkata. They will then face Italy on February 9, also in Kolkata, before taking on England. Afterward, they are scheduled to travel to Mumbai to play Nepal at Wankhede Stadium.

## Ishan Kishan Shines on Return, Blasts 76 off 32 Balls Against New Zealand



India wicket-keeper batter Ishan Kishan made a spectacular return to the national team ahead of the T20 World Cup, smashing a blistering 76 off just 32 balls in the second T20I against New Zealand on Friday. The innings was a timely response to doubts over his place and form, as selectors had backed him for a top-order role over Shubman Gill.

Kishan had a quiet outing in the series opener, and even after arriving at the crease in the second T20I, admitted that doubts had crept into his mind. "I asked myself one question, can I do it again or not? And I had a very clear answer: I felt I could bat through the innings and play good shots. I just needed to get runs somewhere to answer my questions. Even if I got out, I just wanted to play good cricket, that was it," he said after the match.

He shared the crease with India skipper Suryakumar Yadav, a familiar partner from their Mumbai Indians days in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Their understanding and quick running between the wickets added momentum to India's innings, with Kishan taking charge with aggressive strokeplay and calculated risks.

Despite the brilliant performance, Kishan acknowledged that his job is far from over. India still have three more T20Is against New Zealand, giving him the opportunity to consolidate his position and continue building momentum ahead of the T20 World Cup. His return could prove crucial as India look to fine-tune their batting line-up and solidify their top-order options in the lead-up to the marquee tournament.

## The Invisible 12th Man: How Dew Could Shape the T20 World Cup 2026



### Timing Matters

February in India typically brings moderate to heavy dew, particularly in North, East, and Central India, as cold nights collide with warmer daytime temperatures. March sees lighter dew conditions as nights warm, though coastal and river-adjacent grounds remain vulnerable. The implication is stark: night matches, especially in the tournament's early stages, are likely to be contested under sharply contrasting conditions across innings.

### Why Dew Tips the Balance

Dew forms when surface temperatures fall be-

low the dew point, causing moisture to settle on the grass, outfield, and ball. In cricketing terms, this moisture fundamentally alters the contest. Teams batting second often find scoring easier, while bowlers struggle to maintain control as the ball becomes slick and difficult to handle.

Former India off-spinner R. Ashwin summed it up succinctly: "The difference in quality between the teams isn't coming through—dew is narrowing that gap if you happen to lose the toss." Statistical analysis of recent T20 games confirms this trend, showing a significant increase in scoring rates for second innings and higher win

percentages for chasing teams under heavy dew conditions. Skill remains crucial, but environmental factors increasingly dictate how it manifests.

### A Bowler's Worst Enemy

For bowlers and fielders, dew can turn competition into survival. Sunil Gavaskar famously likened a wet white ball to "a bar of soap," an image that resonates across dressing rooms. Grip disappears, yorkers turn into full tosses, slower balls lose their deception, and spinners struggle to extract revolutions as the ball skids across the surface. Even swing specialists find it difficult to maintain a dry side. Routine fielding becomes challenging, with misfields and dropped catches becoming more likely.

Harsha Bhogle has noted,

"The next big death bowler will be the best dew bowler," reflecting how T20 cricket skills now extend beyond beating batters to mastering conditions themselves. Why Batters Love Dew

For teams chasing, dew is a silent ally. The ball comes onto the bat cleaner, timing improves, and lateral movement diminishes, reducing risk for batters. While a wet outfield can occasionally slow the ball, the advantage overwhelmingly favors the side batting second, especially when the target is modest.

### Bowler-Specific Challenges

- Finger Spinners:** Dew drastically reduces grip, making it difficult to impart revolutions.
- Wrist Spinners:** Considered more effective in dewy conditions due to variations in delivery and less reliance on tight finger grip.
- Fast Bowlers:** The primary issue is control. A slippery ball can lead to wide deliveries and difficulty executing yorkers, slower balls, and bouncers.

### A Structural Challenge

The growing impact of dew has reignited an old debate about T20 cricket: is the game too dependent on the toss? Experts like Bhogle warn that the format risks creating a "win-the-toss-win-the-match" pattern, while Gavaskar has suggested earlier start times to reduce dew's influence. Despite these discussions, solutions remain elusive.

As the World Cup approaches, dew is set to play a quiet yet decisive role. Unseen, uncontrollable, and often decisive, the invisible 12th man could end up being the loudest influence on matches in T20 World Cup 2026. Teams that anticipate and adapt to it may well gain the edge in what promises to be a thrilling, moisture-laden tournament.

confidence ahead of the international assignment. "I was just looking to score runs. Sometimes it's important to do it for yourself, to answer your own questions about how you're capable of playing for India. That's why it was important for me to play domestic cricket and get runs. The good part was that we won the trophy as well, and I carried that confidence here. So it was a pretty good day for me," he added.

The innings underlined Kishan's ability to handle pressure and adapt to different match situations, reaffirming the faith of selectors who chose him over the established top-order option, Shubman Gill. His stroke-making, coupled with quick running and tactical awareness, provided India with the platform to build a competitive total against the Kiwis.

Despite the brilliant performance, Kishan acknowledged that his job is far from over. India still have three more T20Is against New Zealand, giving him the opportunity to consolidate his position and continue building momentum ahead of the T20 World Cup. His return could prove crucial as India look to fine-tune their batting line-up and solidify their top-order options in the lead-up to the marquee tournament.

## Sharwanand Unveils Teaser of Stylish Crime Comedy 'Baa Baaa Black Sheep'



Tollywood is set to witness an intriguing blend of crime, comedy, and style with the upcoming film *Baa Baaa Black Sheep*, whose teaser was unveiled by actor Sharwanand on the auspicious occasion of *Vasanth Panchami* on Friday. Produced by Venu Donepudi under the Chitralayam Studios banner and directed by Guni Manchikanti, the film promises a quirky cinematic experience packed with wit, chaos, and high-energy storytelling.

Sharwanand, currently basking in the blockbuster success of *Nari Nari Naduma Murari*, launched the teaser and expressed his delight with its slick presentation and rich visuals. Wishing the team success, the actor praised the unique concept and stylish execution showcased in the teaser, which has already generated positive buzz among film enthusiasts.

*Baa Baaa Black Sheep*

is described as a stylish crime comedy that revolves around guns, gold, and a city-wide humorous hunt involving six individuals. The teaser offers glimpses of a flamboyant gangster, a group of misfit friends, eccentric criminals, and a chaotic chase triggered by the discovery of Mahatma Gandhi's "missing watch." As greed and crime take center stage, the narrative unfolds through hilarious misunderstandings, unexpected twists, and sharp character dynamics.

Producer Venu Donepudi stated that the film smartly blends a crime-driven plot with witty dialogues and situational comedy. "The story thrives on secrets, irony, and humorous mishaps, making comedy an organic part of the crime narrative," he said, adding that strong writing and clever character interactions are the film's biggest strengths.

The film boasts an eclectic ensemble cast featuring Tinnu Anand, Upendra Limaye, George Marian, Akshay Lagusani, Vishnu Oi, Karthikeya, and Vismaya Sri. Adding to its uniqueness, *Baa Baaa Black Sheep* is the first film to be shot entirely in Meghalaya. The breathtaking landscapes of the northeastern state play a vital role in the storytelling, giving the film a fresh visual appeal. The makers collaborated closely with the Meghalaya government to ensure smooth production, with Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma acknowledging the project as a milestone in promoting the state's creative economy and tourism.

Currently in post-production, *Baa Baaa Black Sheep* is eyeing a summer release. With stylish visuals, a quirky crime plot, and a talented technical team backing it, the film is shaping up to be an exciting addition to Telugu cinema's evolving entertainment landscape.

## Attitude Star Chandra Hass' 'Barabar Premista' Set for February 6 Release Amid College Students' Frenzy



Attitude Star Chandra Hass is gearing up to entertain young audiences with his upcoming Telugu entertainer *Barabar Premista*, which is scheduled for a theatrical release on February 6. Directed by Sampath Rudra, the film is produced by Geda Chandu, Gayatri Chinni, and AVR under the banners CC Creations and AVR Movie Wonders, with Kakarla Satyanarayana presenting the project. Miss India finalist Meghna Mukherjee plays the female lead, while Ishtamga fame Arjun Mahi appears in the role of the antagonist.

The makers announced the release date in a vibrant and energetic manner by hosting a special event at Brilliant Group of Colleges in Hyderabad on Wednesday. The campus was filled with ex-

citement as hundreds of students gathered to catch a glimpse of the film's lead pair. Adding to the frenzy, Chandra Hass and Meghna Mukherjee surprised the students with energetic dance performances, creating a festive atmosphere before officially revealing the release date. The announcement of the February 6 release was met with loud cheers, reflecting the strong youth buzz surrounding the film.

Addressing the students, hero Chandra Hass said he was thrilled to begin the film's promotions at a college. "Seeing all of you gives me immense energy. We are confident of scoring a big win with *Barabar Premista* on February 6. Please watch the film in theatres and enjoy it," he said. Hero-

With its lively campus promotions, relatable village-based love story, and youthful energy, *Barabar Premista* is poised to strike a chord with audiences when it hits theatres on February 6.

## Varun Sandesh-Starrer 'Hello It's Me' Title and First Look Poster Launched in Hyderabad



The title and first look poster of the upcoming Telugu film *Hello It's Me*, starring Varun Sandesh in the lead role, were officially unveiled at a launch event held in Hyderabad on Thursday. The film marks the directorial debut of actress Shagna Sri Venu, who earlier earned recognition as a heroine with Government Junior College. Notably, Shagna also plays the female lead in the film, making it a significant milestone in her career.

Produced by VSK Sanjeev, Vangapalli Sandeep, and Vangapalli Sankeerth under the banners S2S Cinemas and Shass Productions, *Hello It's Me* is currently in the final stages of shooting. Actor Darshan Madamanchi plays another key role in the film, which is positioned as a clean, family-oriented romantic entertainer with a strong youth connect.

Several prominent personalities from the film industry attended the launch event and shared their thoughts. Veteran actor Rajasekhar spoke fondly about Shagna, recalling his earlier association with her in a short film. He expressed happiness about being part of the project and praised the journey of young talent in the industry. Actor Dr. Bhadram lauded Varun Sandesh's performances and expressed confidence that his role in *Hello It's Me* would once again impress audiences. He also appreciated the producers for entering cinema purely out of

passion.

Actor Jaswanth described the film as content-driven and said it carries an important message for today's youth. Actress Nandini Rodda, making her acting debut, expressed her excitement about sharing screen space with Varun Sandesh and thanked the team for the opportunity. Cinematographer Brahmateja Maripudi highlighted Shagna's dedication, stating that she handled the project like a "one-woman army," even shooting in challenging weather conditions.

Music director Vamsikanth Rekhana said the film reflects

how today's youth should and should not behave, adding that all six songs have come out exceptionally well. Producers Sanjeev and Sandeep spoke about backing Shagna's vision despite initial skepticism, emphasizing her determination and passion as a filmmaker.

Director Rajesh Jaganatham noted that it is rare for a young actress to simultaneously act and direct a film, calling Shagna's effort commendable. Addressing the gathering, Shagna Sri Venu said *Hello It's Me* is based on a strong, relatable story that every boy and girl can connect with. She also stressed that direction has no gender boundaries, crediting her team and Varun Sandesh for their immense support.

Varun Sandesh, speaking at the event, said after doing consecutive thrillers, he was happy to return to a clean family love story. He expressed confidence in Shagna's storytelling and said the film's music would resonate strongly with audiences.

With a strong cast, youthful theme, and passionate team, *Hello It's Me* is gearing up to strike a chord with audiences upon release.

## Vennela Kishore Steals the Show in a Rib-Tickling Avatar from Upcoming Entertainer 'Purushaha'



attention and further raising curiosity around the film.

*Purushaha* takes a refreshing and realistic approach to the husband-wife dynamic by blending relatable marital situations with situational comedy. With a trendy narrative style that resonates with today's generation, the film promises a unique comic take on post-marriage life. Even while the shoot is underway, the team has been smartly building buzz through quirky and engaging promotional material.

Each poster released so far has added a new layer of intrigue. The teaser earlier hinted at the struggles men face after marriage while also underlining the indispensable role of wives in a man's life. The latest poster featuring Vennela Kishore takes the excitement a notch higher.

Sporting a perplexed expression, Kishore is accompanied by the witty line, "Kitikee Daggara Em Jarigindi?" (What

happened at the window?), suggesting a comic situation filled with misunderstanding and chaos. The visual strongly indicates that the film will explore fresh, never-before-seen comedic moments.

Presented by Battula Saraswathi and produced by Battula Koteswara Rao under the Kalyan Productions banner, *Purushaha* is directed by Veeru Vulavala. The film marks the introduction of Pavan Kalyan Battula as the lead hero. Despite revealing only posters and first looks so far, the makers have managed to generate impressive buzz by introducing characters in a way that reflects their unique traits and behavior, keeping audiences guessing about the story.

Adding to the excitement, the teaser—launched by acclaimed filmmaker Buchi Babu Sana—has received a tremendous response. Packed with comedy in every frame and highlighted by the punchline

"You are the pride of mankind," the teaser has significantly boosted expectations around the film's entertainment quotient.

On the technical front, *Purushaha* boasts a strong crew with cinematography handled by Satish Muthyalu, music composed by Shravan Bharadwaj, editing by Koti, and art direction by Ravibabu Dondapati. Post-production work is currently progressing at a brisk pace, and the makers are expected to announce the release date soon.

Featuring an ensemble cast that includes Pavan Kalyan Battula, Saptagiri, Kasireddy Rajkumar, Vaishnavi Kokkura, Vishika, Hasini Sudheer, Sri Sandhya, Gabi Rock, Anaira Gupta, Rajeev Kanakala, Pammie Sai, VTV Ganesh, and Vennela Kishore, *Purushaha* is shaping up to be a laughter-packed entertainer that promises wholesome fun for audiences of all ages.

## 'Sri Chidambaram Garu' to Release Worldwide on February 6

The upcoming Telugu film *Sri Chidambaram Garu* is all set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on February 6, the makers announced at a press meet held in Hyderabad on Friday. Presented by Smt. Chinta Varalakshmi, the film is produced by Chinta Vineesh Reddy and Chinta Gopala Krishna Reddy under the Sri Chakras Entertainment banner, with Chinta Rajasekhar Reddy serving as co-producer. The film is written and directed by Vinay Ratnam, while noted producer Vamsi Nandipati is releasing it theatrically.

Starring Vamsi Tummala and Sandhya Vashishta in the lead roles, *Sri Chidambaram Garu* has already attracted attention with its recently released teaser, which received an overwhelming response for its emotional depth and refreshing presentation. Adding to the buzz, the song "Velledaari," beautifully rendered by Oscar-

winning music director M.M. Keeravani, struck a strong chord with audiences. Composed by Chandrasekhar, the song has been widely appreciated for its soulful tune and meaningful lyrics, with Keeravani's vocals giving it a timeless emotional appeal.

The release date announcement came alongside the success celebrations of the song. Speaking at the event, chief guest R.P. Patnaik praised the young team for making a mature and inspiring film. He described *Sri Chidambaram Garu* as a story that today's society needs, especially at a time when many youngsters struggle to cope with small problems.

"This film sends out a powerful message that one's weakness can become one's strength," he said, while also appreciating Vamsi Tummala's expressive performance and wishing the entire team

success.

Music directors Chandru and Ravi expressed their happiness at collaborating with M.M. Keeravani and thanked Vamsi Nandipati for introducing the project to them.

Producer Gopala Krishna Reddy stated that the film was made without compromising on production values and described it as a content-driven cinema comparable to big

budget films. He added that supporting new talent was his main intention behind producing the film.

Actress Sandhya Vashishta, who plays the character Leela, said the film has a feel-good narrative with a Malayalam cinema vibe. Hero Vamsi Tummala highlighted the emotional strength of the film and called it a rewarding cinematic journey, crediting the music

for elevating the overall experience. Director Vinay Ratnam concluded by saying the film is close to his heart and assured that every song and scene would resonate emotionally with audiences.

With strong content, soulful music, and a meaningful message, *Sri Chidambaram Garu* is gearing up to offer an emotional and inspiring theatrical experience this February.

