



**BUZZ POINTS**

Amaravati RTC Hire Bus Operators Call Off Strike After Successful Talks



PAGE 02

**BUZZ POINTS**

Andhra Pradesh Declares Konaseema Jagganna Thota Prabha L Thiratham as Official State Festival

PAGE 02

Bomb Threat Emails Target Four Andhra Pradesh District Courts; Searches Yield No Explosives

PAGE 03

Vijayawada Infant Trafficking Ring: Deeper Links to Delhi and Mumbai Gangs Emerge

PAGE 04

Major Fire Breaks Out at Tehsildar Office in Kanchikacherla

PAGE 05

## CM Chandrababu Naidu Inaugurates Massive SARAS Fair in Guntur, Connects Directly with Women Entrepreneurs

TPN Bureau | January 09

Guntur City: The SARAS exhibition center in Guntur buzzed with vibrant energy today, showcasing handmade crafts, artisanal products, and traditional items from self-help groups (SHGs) across India. Intricately crafted dolls, handloom sarees from diverse regions, jewelry attracting women and youth, home decor pieces, and mouthwatering local delicacies turned the venue into a mini-India. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Mumbai to Mizoram, SHG products from every corner of the country drew crowds, marking the first such large-scale national-level SARAS fair outside New Delhi. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the event, but what stole the spotlight was his unscripted interactions. Defying his high-security protocol one of India's most protect-



ed leaders Naidu mingled freely with vendors, inquiring about their lives, earnings, and aspirations. "I'm not a leader confined to four walls; I prefer being an elder brother," he remarked, visiting stalls one by one. He praised the quality and market potential of SHG products, calling each stall a "success story." His tour began at the Madugula Halwa stall, where he engaged warmly: CM: "How many kilos do you sell daily?" Vendor: "40 kg, sir." CM: "How many work here?" Vendor: "Four of us, sir." CM: "Monthly earnings?" Vendor: "One lakh rupees, sir." CM: "After sharing, how much for you?" Vendor: "50,000 for me, sir. I saved halwa for you, please try it." Naidu tasted it, shared with Minister Pemmasani, and instructed his security to give the vendor 5,000. In a heartwarming moment, a DWACRA woman approached: "Sir, she wants a photo with you—she's been crying since morning." Naidu laughed and posed obligingly. At a Chandragiri stall displaying a wooden Lord Venkateswara idol, Naidu quizzed the artisan: "What wood is this? If made with sandalwood (red sandal), how much would it sell for?" The reply: "2,000, sir." The tour ended at potter Venkata Rao's stall, where his wife shared his illness. Naidu promptly asked medical costs 10 lakh and directed officials to provide 6 lakh aid on the spot. Overjoyed artisans hailed his responsiveness. Naidu's visit, part of his Thursday Guntur tour, evoked elder-brother affection. Women vendors beamed with joy rarely seen in official events. This SARAS fair not only promotes rural entrepreneurship but highlights Naidu's hands-on governance style, bridging leaders and common folk.



## Amaravati: Dhyana Buddha Project Revived with Modernization Works in Full Swing

TPN Bureau | January 09

Amaravati: Iconic Dhyana Buddha project, a landmark symbol of Andhra Pradesh's capital Amaravati, has finally sprung back to life with modernization works kicking off in full earnest. Under the Tourism Department's oversight, the project had been stalled by the previous government, leading to its rapid deterioration into a state of neglect. Lack of funding left the site in ruins. Cracks marred the towering 125-foot Buddha statue, allowing rainwater to seep inside and form ugly patches of moss and grime. The indoor video displays, meant to educate visitors, fell into complete disrepair. Tourists arriving at the site expressed severe dissatisfaction, with complaints pouring in about the unkempt premises and poor maintenance. Local MLA Bashyam Praveen took swift note of the mounting grievances and sprang into action. Last February, the MLA penned

letters to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and senior Tourism Department officials, urging immediate intervention for the project's revival. Responding promptly to his initiative, the government sanctioned Rs 1.85 crore specifically for the modernization efforts. From that point, the Tourism Department prepared detailed estimates, culminating in the official launch of works today. Engineers and workers are now addressing critical issues head-on. Rainwater leaking from the statue's structure will be sealed, while dilapidated expansions and railings undergo complete repairs. The magnificent 125-foot statue will receive a fresh coat of vibrant colors to restore its awe-inspiring sheen. The entire premises will be beautified, transforming the site into a resplendent tourist haven. This revival aligns with the current TDP-led government's push to bolster Andhra Pradesh's tourism sector, especially in Amaravati, envisioned as

the state's singular capital. The Dhyana Buddha, perched along the Krishna River, draws spiritual seekers and history enthusiasts alike, symbolizing peace and enlightenment. Once fully revamped, it promises to boost visitor footfall and contribute to the local economy. MLA Bashyam Praveen hailed the development as a "long-overdue win for Amaravati's heritage." He credited Chief Minister Naidu's responsive governance for turning the vision into reality. Tourism officials estimate the works will wrap up in a few months, unveiling a "new avatar" for Dhyana Buddha that could rival global Buddhist landmarks. Local residents and heritage enthusiasts have welcomed the move, hoping it signals more investments in AP's cultural treasures. With Andhra Pradesh's tourism ambitions gaining momentum under initiatives like these, Amaravati is set to shine brighter on the national map.

## Pawan Kalyan Warns Against Fake News, Vows Unwavering Development for Pitapuram During Sankranti Festivities

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Pitapuram, Andhra Pradesh: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party leader Pawan Kalyan issued a stern warning against spreading misinformation in Pitapuram, urging residents to stop viralizing trivial or fabricated incidents. Speaking at the 'Pitapuram Sankranti Mahotsavam' organized here on Friday, he expressed frustration over how even minor events like a coconut or palm leaf falling—are amplified into major controversies online. "Anything small that happens in Pitapuram goes viral," Pawan Kalyan said,

highlighting the constituency's heightened scrutiny. "Even if school children fight here, it becomes big news, but something like the Pulivendula incident [referring to a past political murder] doesn't. Stop spreading falsehoods." He emphasized that peace and security must prevail, directing police to act firmly against troublemakers. "If anyone comes to Pitapuram to stir fights, I'll sit them down and sort it out. My words are soft, but my hands are firm. I won't tolerate those creating divisions among people," he added, alluding to alleged past harassment by the previous YSRCP government, including abuses and false cases. Earlier, Pawan Kalyan,

accompanied by Ministers Narayana, Nadendla Manohar, and Kandula Durgesh, visited various stalls at the festival, showcasing local culture and products. Elevating the event's significance, the Deputy CM called for Pitapuram Sankranti to become a landmark celebration embracing all faiths. "This festival needs an identity. Let's take Andhra's love to Telangana, invite sisters from there, and let them taste Godavari district hospitality," he said. Dismissing stereotypes, he clarified, "Sankranti isn't just cockfights and gambling, enjoy those if you want, but don't limit it to that." Pawan Kalyan underscored Pitapuram's spiritual importance as the birthplace

of saint Sri Pada Sri Vallabha, terming his election from here as divine will. Committing to its growth, he pledged, "With or without power, I'll work for Pitapuram's people until my last breath. Empower me more, and I'll do even better." He outlined ongoing development initiatives, positioning the town as a key Shakti Peetham for the nation. Turning to state politics, he praised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's experience as vital for Andhra Pradesh. "Naidu and I fully understand how to protect people. Alliance leaders shouldn't weaken the coalition," he cautioned, urging unity against divisive forces. The remarks come

amid ongoing TDP-Jana Sena-BJP alliance efforts to stabilize governance post-2024 elections. The Sankranti Mahotsavam drew large crowds, featuring traditional games, cultural performances, and stalls promoting local handicrafts. Pawan Kalyan's address, blending festivity with firm resolve, resonated with attendees, reinforcing his image as a grassroots leader focused on development and harmony in Kakinada district. Local residents hailed the event as a boost for Pitapuram, with many echoing calls for curbing social media rumors. As Andhra Pradesh gears up for more festivals, Pawan Kalyan's message sets a tone of vigilance and progress.



## CM Chandrababu Naidu Hails Farmers' Resilience, Launches Pattadar Passbooks in Rayavaram



TPN Bureau | January 09

Rayavaram, East Godavari District: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu praised farmers for their unwavering spirit during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting they continued working the fields to feed everyone despite the crisis. Speaking at a program distributing pattadar passbooks and land documents to farmers here on Friday, Naidu questioned why the previous YSRCP government's land papers featured YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's photo. He criticized the "dangerous mindset" of past leaders and reiterated the TDP's pre-election promise of "Your Land - Your Right," now fulfilled by issuing passbooks with the state emblem. Addressing offi-

cials, Naidu directed them to conduct gram sabhas and distribute passbooks to all eligible farmers by January 11 without a single rupee of corruption. "MRDOs, RDOs, and staff must work diligently. We'll conduct another survey next month for remaining cases, ensuring zero mistakes once printed," he said. Highlighting 29 land-related complaints received, he assured all would be resolved, including issues from 22-year-old cases. Farmers' land records will be securely stored on blockchain, with strict action against land grabbers to instill fear. Urging people to avoid minor land disputes, especially with family or relatives Naidu warned, "Court battles waste lifetimes." Naidu invoked the need to prevent a return to "narakaasur" (demonic) rule, reflect-

ing on his luck in serving as CM during all three Godavari Pushkaralu. He outlined ambitious water plans: utilizing 300 TMC of water flowing unused into the sea to avert droughts. "Once Polavaram is complete, this region will have no water scarcity. We'll channel water from Polavaram to Visakhapatnam and then to Vamsadhara. We won't compromise on state interests fights yield no benefits," he stated. If surplus water remains, Telangana can use it; excess at Srisailem will be diverted to Rayalaseema. The event underscores the NDA government's focus on transparent land reforms and irrigation projects, key TDP poll promises. Naidu's visit energizes East Godavari farmers amid ongoing efforts to digitize and secure land rights.





# Suryapet SP Urges Speed Control Amid Intensified Sankranti Road Surveillance in Nalgonda Districts

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026  
Suryapet: Superintendent of Police (SP) Narsimha issued a stern warning to motorists on Friday, emphasizing strict adherence to speed limits as police ramp up surveillance across key districts ahead of the Sankranti festival. “Reckless speeding is unacceptable for vehicle drivers. Everyone must follow speed regulations,” SP Narsimha declared during a media briefing.

He stressed the need for safe travel, assuring the public that robust monitoring systems are in place to ensure festival-goers celebrate joy-

fully and return home safely. With Sankranti festivities drawing large crowds for rural visits and family gatherings, traffic police have deployed extensive patrols on national and state highways prone to accidents.

The initiative covers Nalgonda, Suryapet, and Bhuvanagiri districts, identified as high-risk zones due to black spots dangerous road stretches with a history of crashes. SP Narsimha highlighted non-stop vigilance, including speed cameras, mobile checkpoints, and drunk-driving checkpoints, to curb violations.

District	Surveillance (km)	Black Spots
Nalgonda	63	10
Suryapet	66	24
Bhuvanagiri	25	4

Detailed surveillance data underscores the scale of the operation: Suryapet tops the list with 66 km under watch and a concerning 24 black spots, often linked to sharp curves, poor

lighting, and heavy truck traffic on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway. Nalgonda follows closely with 63 km monitored and 10 hot-spots, while Bhuvanagiri's shorter 25 km

stretch includes four critical points near railway crossings. “These black spots have claimed numerous lives in the past. We’ve installed warning signs, rumble strips, and in-

creased patrolling to prevent tragedies,” SP Narsimha added. Police teams are using advanced tools like speed guns and AI-enabled cameras to enforce limits 50 kmph in urban ar-

reas, 80 kmph on highways. Violations will attract heavy fines starting at 2,000, license suspensions, and vehicle impoundment for repeat offenders.

The drive aligns with Telangana Police’s annual Sankranti safety protocol, launched amid rising road fatalities. Last year, the state recorded over 3,000 accidents during the festival season, with speeding cited in 40% of cases. This time, coordination with the Telangana Road Transport Authority includes free bus services to reduce private vehicle use and awareness campaigns via FM radio, social me-

dia, and village loudspeakers. SP Narsimha appealed to drivers: “Plan your trips early, avoid night travel on black spot routes, wear helmets and seatbelts, and never drink and drive. Let’s mthisake Sankranti accident-free.” Emergency helplines (100 for police, 108 for ambulances) are active 24/7. Local residents welcomed the measures.

“With 24 black spots here, we’re relieved to see more cops,” said farmer K. Ramesh from Suryapet. As the festival peaks on January 14, authorities aim for zero fatalities through vigilant enforcement.

# Andhra Pradesh Declares Konaseema Jagganna Thota Prabha L Thiratham as Official State Festival

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026  
Amaravati: In a move to celebrate and preserve the rich cultural heritage of Andhra Pradesh, the state government has officially recognized the Jagganna Thota Prabha L Thiratham of Konaseema as a state festival. This announcement came from Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh during a media interaction on Thursday at the Amaravati Secretariat. Speaking alongside State Cultural and Creativity Committee Chairperson Podapati Tejaswi, Minister Durgesh highlighted the festival’s deep-rooted tradi-

tions and its embodiment of Telugu culture.

“This 470-year-old procession, held annually in Konaseema—a region already renowned internationally for its unique festivals takes place on Kanuma day during Sankranti. Recognizing it as a state festival is a decision taken by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and the cabinet, and it’s a matter of great pride,” he said. The Jagganna Thota Prabha L Thiratham, often simply called the Prabha L Thiratham, is one of Konaseema’s most distinguished spectacles.

Konaseema, nestled

in the Godavari Delta and famed for its lush coconut groves, backwaters, and vibrant festivals, draws crowds from across the globe during Sankranti. This particular procession features elaborately decorated deities carried through orchards (thota), illuminated by traditional lamps (prabha l), creating a mesmerizing riverine procession that symbolizes devotion, community, and agrarian prosperity. Minister Durgesh emphasized the festival’s role in cultural continuity.

“These celebrations will pass on our legacy to future generations,” he noted, underscoring



the government’s commitment to promoting indigenous traditions amid modernization. The decision aligns

with broader efforts by the TDP-led administration to revive and elevate regional festivals, boosting tourism and lo-

cal economies. Konaseema’s festivals, including this one, have gained international acclaim for their eco-friendly prac-

tices and artistic grandeur, often compared to Kerala’s Onam boat races but infused with Telugu flair. Podapati

Tejaswi echoed the sentiment, praising the initiative as a step toward integrating cultural preservation with state policy. She highlighted how such recognitions could lead to increased funding for infrastructure, artist support, and global promotion. This declaration is expected to elevate the event’s profile, potentially attracting more visitors and investments. With Sankranti approaching, preparations are underway to ensure a grand celebration that honors Konaseema’s 470-year legacy while showcasing Andhra Pradesh’s cultural vibrancy on a larger stage.

## Guntur Stadium Revival: Centre Approves 14 Crore Under Khelo India for Multi-Sports Complex

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026  
Guntur: In a major boost for sports infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh, Union Minister of State for Rural Development and local MP Pemasani Chandrasekhar announced that the Central Government has sanctioned 14 crore for the development of the long-neglected Brahmananda Reddy Stadium in Guntur.

This funding marks the first concrete step toward transforming the decades-old venue into a state-of-the-art multi-sports complex, addressing years of stagnation under previous administrations. The announcement comes as part of a comprehensive 170 crore proposal submitted by the state government to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for upgrading sports facilities across the region.

Under the flagship Khelo India scheme aimed at nurturing grassroots talent and promoting fitness nationwide the ministry has granted preliminary approval for the initial 14 crore tranche. Funds will be released in phases, ensuring systematic develop-

ment, Minister Pemasani assured during a press briefing at the stadium premises today. Brahmananda Reddy Stadium, named after the veteran Congress leader and former Chief Minister B. Venkata Reddi, has been a symbol of Guntur’s sporting heritage since its construction in the 1980s. Once a hub for district-level athletics, football, and cricket matches, it fell into disrepair over the past decade due to lack of maintenance and funding delays. Local athletes and coaches have long lamented the crumbling tracks, outdated floodlights, and inadequate facilities, which forced many young talents to train in subpar conditions or migrate to Vijayawada or Visakhapatnam. With this approval, the stadium will undergo a comprehensive makeover.

Plans include a modern multi-sports complex featuring synthetic athletic tracks, indoor badminton and gymnastics halls, a FIFA-standard football pitch, and advanced training academies. The project aligns with the TDP-led NDA government’s push for sports development in

Andhra Pradesh, complementing initiatives like the upcoming international cricket stadium in Visakhapatnam.

“This is a game-changer for Guntur’s youth. We’ve waited too long; now, with Central support, we’ll build facilities that rival national standards,” Pemasani stated, crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision for Khelo India. The development is expected to create over 200 local jobs during construction and position Guntur as a sports destination in coastal Andhra.

District Collector and sports officials hailed the move, promising completion within 18-24 months. Critics from the opposition YSRCP, however, questioned the phased funding model, urging faster disbursement to avoid further delays.

This sanction underscores the Centre-state synergy under the current regime, potentially paving the way for more approvals from the 170 crore package. As Guntur eyes a sporting renaissance, residents hope it ignites a new era of fitness and excellence.

## Amaravati RTC Hire Bus Operators Call Off Strike After Successful Talks



TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026  
Amaravati: In a relief to passengers ahead of the Sankranti festival rush, hire bus operators’ associations in Andhra Pradesh have withdrawn their proposed strike starting January 12 following fruitful negotiations with APSRTC Managing Director Dwarka Tirumala Rao. The operators, representing thousands of private buses contracted by the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC), had threatened to halt services due to mounting operational challenges.

Key among their grievances was the increased burden from running five types of buses under the state government’s flagship Stree Shakti scheme, aimed

at empowering women drivers and conductors. “The passenger load has surged, driving up maintenance costs significantly,” said a spokesperson for the operators’ unions during the talks. They demanded additional financial support to cover these expenses, along with resolutions for insurance coverage gaps that have left buses vulnerable to claims.

In a series of meetings held today, MD Dwarka Tirumala Rao engaged directly with union leaders, addressing their concerns head-on. The discussions extended to Transport Minister Gudivada Amarnath, who assured swift action. Officials promised to resolve the five primary demands including enhanced per-kilometer rates, better

insurance provisions, and subsidies for Stree Shakti operations by January 20.

“We’ve committed to implementing these measures promptly to ensure seamless services,” the MD stated, emphasizing the corporation’s appreciation for the operators’ role in public transport. The decision to call off the strike comes at a critical time, with Sankranti travel peaking next week. Operators cited passenger convenience as a major factor. “We don’t want festival-goers facing hardships; that’s why we’re stepping back trusting the assurances,” the unions announced in a joint statement. This scheme, launched under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s TDP-led government, has expanded wom-

en’s participation in transport but strained private partners amid rising fuel prices and repair costs. APSRTC, which relies heavily on these 10,000+ hire buses for intra- and inter-state routes, hailed the resolution as a win-win.

The corporation reported a 20% uptick in Stree Shakti bus usage since its rollout, underscoring the need for sustainable support. With the strike averted, normal services resume uninterrupted, boosting confidence in the state’s transport ecosystem.

This development aligns with ongoing efforts to modernize APSRTC post its 2024 revival, including fleet expansion and digital ticketing. Operators remain optimistic but watchful for deadline adherence.





# YCP MLAs' Secret Assembly Sign-Ins Exposed: TDP Leader Predicts Party Split Amid Internal Rifts

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Amaravati: In a stinging revelation, TDP Politburo member Yanamala Ramakrishnu accused YSR Congress Party (YCP) MLAs of duplicitous behavior after they secretly signed the assembly attendance register, despite party chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's public boycott of legislative proceedings. The expose came to light following scrutiny by the Assembly's Ethics Committee, prompting Ramakrishnu to issue a statement on Thursday highlighting what he called the YCP's "bootlicking tactics."

"Ramakrishnu pointed out the glaring contradiction in YCP's stance. "Jagan announced a complete boycott of assembly activities," he said. "Yet, his party's MLAs

signed the register behind his back. This reflects deep internal divisions within YCP and could pave the way for the party's disintegration." The development has sparked speculation about growing dissent among YCP ranks, especially after the party's drubbing in the 2024 elections, where TDP-Jana Sena-BJP alliance swept to power.

The controversy erupted when the Ethics Committee reviewed attendance records, uncovering that several YCP MLAs marked their presence without participating in debates or proceedings. Sources indicate this covert action was aimed at retaining perks like daily allowances and constituency development funds, which require minimum attendance. Ramakrishnu lambasted the move as hypocritical, urging Jagan to address the "betrayal" by his own legislators.



cal, urging Jagan to address the "betrayal" by his own legislators.

Political analysts view this as a symptom of YCP's post-defeat turmoil. With Jagan leading an aggressive opposition strategy marked by frequent protests and boycotts—many MLAs reportedly feel sidelined from legislative influence. "Signing in quietly shows they're hedging bets amid uncertainty,"

said a senior observer. TDP leaders, including N. Chandrababu Naidu, have capitalized on the episode to portray YCP as disorganized.

YCP spokespersons dismissed the claims as TDP propaganda, insisting the sign-ins were procedural and not indicative of rebellion. However, the episode underscores challenges for Jagan in maintaining party unity. As the winter session progresses, all eyes are on whether more MLAs defect or if Jagan reins in the dissenters.

Ramakrishnu concluded optimistically: "These cracks will widen, signaling YCP's impending split." This revelation adds to Andhra Pradesh's charged political atmosphere, where governance under the NDA government faces constant opposition scrutiny.

# CM Chandrababu, Pawan Kalyan, Nara Lokesh Support Family of Doctor Harassed to Death Under YSRCP Rule

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Amaravati: In a heartfelt gesture of justice, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, and IT Minister Nara Lokesh have extended special support to the family of Dr. Sudhakar, who tragically died due to harassment during the previous YSRCP government led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Home Minister Anitha Vangalapudi expressed profound gratitude to the trio for their proactive intervention, highlighting it as a testament to the NDA coalition's commitment to the oppressed. Dr. Sudhakar's son, Lalith Sad, who was working as a Junior Assistant in the Cooperation Department, has been promoted and appointed as Deputy Tahsildar in the Revenue Department under Group-2 services.

This elevation fulfills a key promise made by the coalition government, providing financial

stability and dignity to the grieving family. Reacting to the development, Home Minister Anitha recounted the harrowing ordeal faced by Dr. Sudhakar. "The entire public witnessed how the Jagan government subjected Sudhakar to extreme character assassination just for asking for a mask during the pandemic," she said in a statement.

Anitha, who claimed to have personally observed the family's mental agony, added, "We saw the psychological trauma inflicted on Sudhakar and his loved ones firsthand. His death was a direct result of Jagan's arrogance and vindictive politics." Dr. Sudhakar, a dedicated doctor from Andhra Pradesh, became a symbol of state overreach in 2020 when he was publicly humiliated by YSRCP leaders for questioning mask distribution protocols amid COVID-19 restrictions. Videos of his verbal abuse went viral, sparking widespread

outrage.

The relentless harassment, including transfers and threats, reportedly led to his untimely demise, leaving his family in distress. Anitha praised the cabinet's swift decision as "a shining example of the coalition government's pure intentions towards Dalits and the marginalized." She emphasized that reinstating justice for Sudhakar, who could not be brought back and securing a prestigious Deputy Tahsildar post for his son demonstrates true empathy.

"Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu took personal responsibility to honor our promise, delivering justice to Sudhakar's family," she noted. This move aligns with the TDP-Jana Sena-BJP coalition's broader agenda of redressing grievances from the YSRCP regime (2019-2024), which faced accusations of vendetta politics against critics, opposition leaders, and government employ-



ees. Political analysts view it as a strategic outreach to Dalit communities, a key voter base in Andhra Pradesh, ahead of local body elections. CM Naidu's office confirmed the appointment order was issued immediately, with Lalith Sad set to assume duties soon. Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, known for his advocacy for the underprivileged, reportedly played a pivotal role in pushing the file through administrative channels.

The gesture has drawn applause from TDP supporters on social media, with hashtags like #JusticeForSudhakar trending. YSRCP leaders, however, dismissed it as "political drama," alleging the coalition is exploiting past tragedies for sympathy votes.

As Andhra Pradesh focuses on governance reforms under the new administration, cases like this underscore the coalition's pledge to protect whistleblowers and families scarred by political excesses.

# TDP MP Chinnni Slams Jagan on Capital Issue, Praises Chandrababu's Vision for Vijayawada-Guntur Mega City

TPN Bureau | January 8, 2026

Amaravati: Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has once again stirred controversy over the state's capital, Amaravati, accusing the current TDP-led government of constructing it in a riverbed and urging the Supreme Court to intervene. Speaking to fan party leaders at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli on Thursday, Jagan dismissed Amaravati as a "so-called capital," claiming it lacks basic infrastructure like roads, water, and electricity.

"Capital is where the CM sits," Jagan reiterated, indirectly targeting Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. He vowed no permissions for buildings in riverbeds and mocked the project as unfeasible. This comes days after YSRCP Rajya Sabha

MP and political secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy stated the party has no objection to Amaravati as capital, highlighting internal flip-flops drawing widespread criticism. The Amaravati saga traces back to 2014, when Andhra Pradesh bifurcated from Telangana, leaving the new state capital-less. Naidu's TDP government surveyed regions and selected 28 villages around Thulluru in Guntur district, including Amaravati. Then-opposition leader Jagan welcomed the decision in the Assembly. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone, kickstarting works. SRCP's 2019 landslide victory led Jagan to announce three capitals: Amaravati (legislative), Kurnool (judicial), and Visakhapatnam (executive) for "decentralized governance." This sparked farmer



unrest, as land donors who gave 33,000 acres felt betrayed. Protests, hunger strikes, and marches faced police hurdles; courts eventually permitted paydaytras from Amaravati to Arasavalli. No construction occurred under YSRCP, and opposition leaders faced cases and arrests, fueling public backlash. The 2024 elections delivered a crushing verdict:

TDP-Jana Sena-BJP alliance won 164 seats, reducing YSRCP to 11—denying it opposition status. Naidu's government reaffirmed single-capital Amaravati, accelerating projects with central support. Works are progressing rapidly between Vijayawada and Guntur. Jagan's latest barbs, contrasting his past support and Sajjala's recent nod, have sparked accusations of

opportunism. Critics say he's undermining stability for political gain, even as Parliament considers a bill affirming Amaravati's legal status. TDP leaders dismissed the remarks as "desperate conspiracies," vowing to push ahead. Amaravati remains a flashpoint in AP politics, symbolizing development promises and regional divides.

## Government Distributes Official Pattadar Passbooks to Farmers in Narsaraopet, Boosting Agri Sector



TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Narsaraopet (Palnadu District): Andhra Pradesh government is relentlessly working towards the comprehensive development of the agriculture sector, affirmed MLA Dr. Chadlavada Aravind Babu and MP Lavu Sri Krishnadevarayalu during a key event in Uppalapadu village, Narsaraopet Mandal.

The duo spearheaded the distribution of government-stamped Pattadar Passbooks to local farmers, marking a significant step in securing land rights. As chief guests, MLA Dr. Chadlavada Aravind Babu and MP Lavu Sri Krishnadevarayalu personally handed over the passbooks, emphasizing their role as the primary legal document affirming farmers' ownership of land. Speaking on the occasion, they highlighted that these officially sealed passbooks are fully accepted by banks and

financial institutions. "Farmers can now confidently use them to access loans and financial support," they stated, urging beneficiaries to leverage these for agricultural advancement. The leaders praised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's farmer-centric governance, which prioritizes rural welfare. Under his leadership, initiatives like modern farming techniques, irrigation projects, crop insurance, and subsidies are being implemented to double farmers' incomes.

"Agriculture must become profitable, and clear land rights are crucial for that," they noted, adding that the government is reforming the revenue system for greater transparency. They also underscored the coordinated efforts between central and state governments, with farmer security at the core.

"We are always available to resolve farmers' issues," they

assured the gathering. The event saw participation from Janasena constituency in-charge Syed Jilani, BJP in-charge Rangashetty Ramakrishna, TDP leaders Mannan Sharif, Gattupalli Satyanarayana, Pulimi Ramireddy, and numerous alliance party workers and supporters. This distribution aligns with the TDP-led NDA government's broader agenda to empower farmers in Palnadu district. By digitizing and authenticating land records, the initiative reduces disputes and enables easier access to credit, fostering sustainable agri-growth. Local farmers expressed gratitude, hailing it as a "game-changer" for their livelihoods amid ongoing challenges like erratic monsoons and rising input costs.

Officials confirmed that similar programs will roll out across the constituency, targeting thousands more pass-

## Bomb Threat Emails Target Four Andhra Pradesh District Courts; Searches Yield No Explosives



TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh: Multiple district courts in Andhra Pradesh received chilling bomb threat emails on Thursday, prompting extensive security sweeps across the state. The threats, which claimed intent to use human bombs and RDX explosives, targeted courts in Chittoor, Anantapur, Eluru, and Visakhapatnam. No explosives were found after thorough searches, but investigations are underway to trace the hoax's origins. The menacing emails arrived late Wednesday night but were discovered by judges upon arriving at the courts Thursday morning. They immediately alerted local police, triggering a swift response. Bomb disposal squads, dog squads, and specialized teams combed the premises from early morning until evening.

"We conducted exhaustive checks, including sniffer dog operations and explosive detection devices. Nothing suspicious

was detected," a senior police official from Chittoor told reporters. The emails, laced with terrorist rhetoric, alleged involvement from a splinter group of Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The group reportedly broke away after being humiliated by a Tamil Nadu political party and has now allied with Kashmir-based ISI terrorists.

They threatened suicide attacks at 1:15 PM using human bombs laced with RDX. The claims escalated concerns, prompting the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to alert state police and urge heightened vigilance. This incident underscores rising digital threats to public infrastructure in India.

Authorities suspect the emails could be "letter bombs" hoax messages designed to sow panic or genuine reconnaissance by extremists. Police are scrutinizing email headers, IP traces, and linguistic patterns to identify senders. "Whether it's a prank, rival mischief, or a real plot, we're

leaving no stone unturned," said Chittoor Superintendent of Police K. Ravi Kumar.

Courts remained operational with minimal disruptions, though public access was temporarily restricted during searches. Similar threats have hit Indian institutions before, including schools and airports, often traced to overseas servers or disgruntled individuals. The Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police has ordered statewide alerts for courts and government buildings. As night fell, normalcy returned, but the probe intensifies. Forensic teams are analyzing email metadata, while cyber cells collaborate with NIA. State Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha condemned the threats, assuring robust action.

"Terror has no place in AP; we'll hunt down those responsible," she posted on X. Residents urged calm, but the episode highlights vulnerabilities in judicial security amid India's evolving threat landscape.



# VB G RAM G Empowers Rural India Towards Viksit Bharat 2047: MP Kalisetti Appalanaidu PIB Vijayawada Hosts Vartalap Media Workshop in Vizianagaram to Boost Awareness

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Vijayawada | Vizianagaram: Member of Parliament Shri Kalisetti Appalanaidu hailed the newly enacted Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Gramin (VB G RAM G) as a game-changer for rural India, positioning villages at the heart of the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. Speaking as chief guest at ‘Vartalap’, a media workshop organized by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) Vijayawada here today, he described the scheme as a holistic strategy for asset creation and livelihood enhancement in rural areas.



The MP highlighted key upgrades, including an increase in statutory wage days from 100 to 125 per financial year. “VB G RAM G focuses on building rural assets while providing sustainable livelihoods to locals,” Shri Appalanaidu said. He urged journalists to amplify awareness campaigns, emphasizing, “To reach real beneficiaries, media must create massive

outreach.” PIB Vijayawada Director Shri G. Suresh Kumar outlined the workshop’s goal: bridging the Centre and regional media to dispel misconceptions. He noted benefits like extended work days and livelihood support during agricultural off-seasons, aiding farmers and beneficiaries. Shri Y.V.K. Shanmukh Kumar, MGNREGS Director, delivered a detailed presentation, praising Vizianagaram as a top-performing district since MGNREGS’s inception. “Evolving beyond mere employment, VB G RAM G prioritizes asset and livelihood creation,” he stated.

Advanced tools like Artificial Intelligence,

GPS geo-tagging, and digital monitoring ensure transparency, curb corruption, and prevent duplication, boosting beneficiary incomes. In interactions, senior journalists suggested measures to stem migration from backward districts like Vizianagaram. Additional Commissioner, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Shri Siva Prasad responded, detailing provisions for equitable resource distribution, weekly payments, unemployment allowances, and priority for SCs, STs, women, and special category labour. Thematic focus areas include water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood infra-



structure, and disaster preparedness to build resilient communities.

Other participants included Shri Gopichand,

Chief Quality Control Officer (MGNREGS), Lead Bank officials Shri VV Ramana Murthy and Shri Anil, and Dis-

trict Water Management Agency Project Director Smt Sarada Devi. The event underscores VB G RAM G’s role in

Andhra Pradesh’s rural transformation, aligning with state priorities under TDP-led governance.

## Supreme Court Overturns AP High Court Order, Revives Corruption robes Against 13 Officials

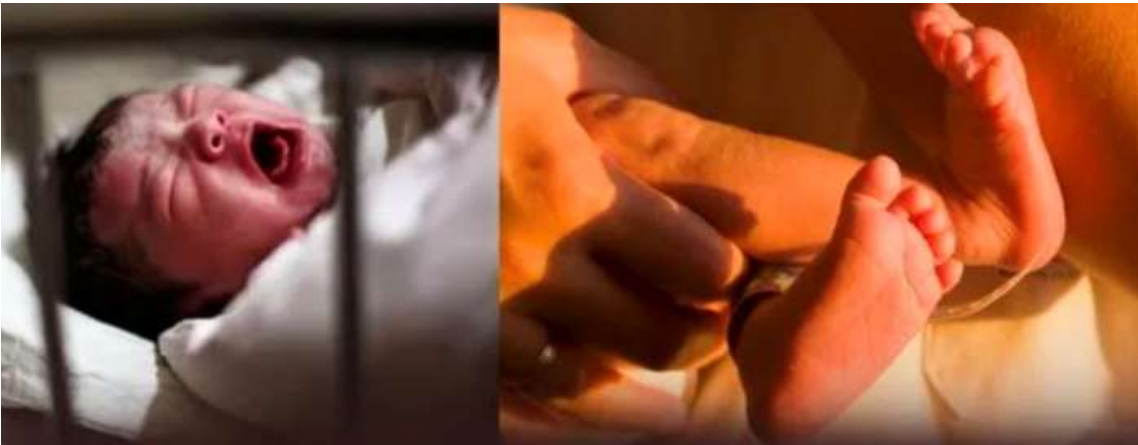


Vijayawada | New Delhi: In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court on Thursday set aside the Andhra Pradesh High Court’s August 1, 2025, decision that had quashed 13 FIRs registered by the Vijayawada Anti-Corruption Bureau’s (ACB) Central Investigation Unit (CIU) against state officials accused of corruption. The bench, comprising Justices M.M. Sundresh, Satish Chandra Sharma, and another, directed the ACB to continue investigations, complete them within six months of receiving the judgment copy, and file final reports. It also barred the AP High Court from entertaining future petitions challenging such FIRs or probes on jurisdictional grounds. The case stems from corruption cases filed between 2016 and 2020 under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Following the state’s bifurcation in 2016, the ACB’s Hyderabad-based CIU designated a “police station” via a 2003 G.O. was relocated to Vijayawada on October 17, 2016, and continued functioning as such. By 2020, it had registered 13 FIRs, completing probes in 12

and even filing a chargesheet in one. Accused officials approached the High Court in 2020-2023, arguing the Vijayawada unit lacked formal “police station” notification post-relocation, rendering the FIRs invalid. Despite a September 14, 2022, G.O. designating the office as the state’s sole ACB police station, they insisted probes after October 2016 were unauthorized. The High Court agreed, quashing all 13 FIRs in August 2025 purely on jurisdictional technicalities, without considering alternatives. The ACB (Rayalaseema) Joint Director challenged this via an SLP on September 12, 2025. The Supreme Court bench lambasted the High Court’s approach, stating it effectively “nipped investigations in the bud” and undermined justice. “Quashing FIRs under the Prevention of Corruption Act on mere technicalities, without suggesting alternative jurisdictions, mocks the rule of law,” the judgment noted. It clarified that pre-bifurcation laws from the united Andhra Pradesh remain valid in both successor states absent

amendments. Key directives include: ACB to expedite probes without arrests or coercive actions unless necessary. Accused to fully cooperate. Liberty for accused to challenge chargesheets or future proceedings individually. No High Court petitions on FIR validity henceforth. Senior advocates Siddharth Luthra, Siddha Agarwal, and Guntur Pramod Kumar argued for the state, emphasizing continuity of legal framework post-bifurcation. This verdict bolsters the ACB’s mandate amid Andhra Pradesh’s ongoing anti-corruption drive under the TDP-led government. It revives probes into alleged graft by 13 officials, potentially leading to chargesheets soon. Critics of the High Court order had warned it could derail dozens of cases, while the ruling reinforces investigative autonomy. The ACB hailed the decision as a “victory for accountability,” urging swift closure. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister’s Office sources indicated monitoring compliance, signaling renewed momentum against corruption.

## Vijayawada Infant Trafficking Ring: Deeper Links to Delhi and Mumbai Gangs Emerge



TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Vijayawada: What began as a local baby-selling racket has unraveled into a sprawling interstate network linking Vijayawada to notorious gangs in Delhi and Mumbai’s Mumbra area. Police suspect the prime accused, Balagani Sarojini, supplied infants kidnapped by these syndicates, raising alarms over child abductions masked as parental sales.

In March last year, Vijayawada police busted Sarojini’s gang while

they were trafficking babies. Officers rescued seven infants, now in child welfare centers, and arrested 18 suspects, including Sarojini. The case was registered at the Women Police Station. Initial probes pointed to desperate parents selling their children due to poverty. However, new arrests have flipped the narrative. Key figures from Delhi—Kiran Sharma and Berty, surfaced as handlers. Both were recently apprehended and jailed. The plot thick-

ened with Anil Baba Kair, a Mumbra operative currently in Thane Jail, Mumbai. Police issued a PT warrant for him after learning of his role. Separately, Kavita Pratap Jadhav, arrested in Mumbai’s Thane, was produced in Vijayawada’s Chief Metropolitan Court on Thursday. Granted remand until January 21, she was shifted to the district jail. Bhawanipuram police named her in their case. Anil’s prior conviction fueled fresh suspicions. Kulgaon police in Maha-

rashtra arrested him for kidnapping a 12-year-old girl and demanding 20 lakh ransom after her parents filed a complaint. This overlap prompted Vijayawada investigators to probe if the seven infants came via kidnapping, not just parental consent. “We’re exploring hospital thefts or outright abductions,” a senior officer said. Investigations reveal seamless ties between Delhi and Mumbra gangs. Satish, linked to Anil and jailed in Mumbai, connects directly to Sarojini. Police believe

these groups procured babies through staged kidnappings, funneled them to Sarojini for sale. Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu ordered a full mapping of illegal child transport chains, placing oversight with Administrative DCP KGVS Sarita. She briefed the CP Thursday on progress. As arrests mount, new links surface. Priyanka, part of Kiran Sharma’s Delhi team, remains at large. Satish Baba Kair, nabbed in Gujarat’s Vadodara, is en route to Vijayawada on transit remand. Anil is expected Saturday. “This is a phased operation across states,” police noted, suspecting coordinated supply chains. The case exposes vulnerabilities in child protection, with public outrage growing over trafficked innocents. Authorities urge parents to report suspicious activities amid ongoing raids. (Police sources; further details awaited from interrogations.)

## Andhra Pradesh High Court Slams Machilipatnam Municipal Commissioner for Defying Orders on YSRCP Office Occupancy Certificate

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh High Court unleashed scathing criticism against the Machilipatnam Municipal Commissioner on Thursday, terming court orders a “laughing matter” and warning of strict action for non-compliance. Justice N. Harinath, presiding over the hearing, expressed fury over the official’s failure to issue an occupancy certificate for the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) office in Machilipatnam, despite prior directives. The court mandated the commissioner to file an affidavit explaining the defiance and postponed the hearing to February 9. “If we send one official inside [jail], everyone will fall in line. We know where to draw the line beyond the law,” Justice Harinath remarked, underscoring the gravity of contempt proceedings. The bench cautioned that the commissioner’s actions bor-

dered on court defiance, nullifying his counter-affidavit that contradicted earlier High Court instructions. The petition stemmed from Krishna district YSRCP president Perni Nani, who accused the commissioner of bias. Nani’s writ petition highlighted how the official ignored a bench led by the Chief Justice, which had ordered scrutiny of submitted documents for issuing the certificate. Instead, the commissioner repeatedly issued notices demanding explanations, halted construction, and ultimately rejected the occupancy certificate issuance. During arguments, petitioner’s counsel Y. Nagireddy detailed the harassment: “Officials are acting with malice on the party office issue. Even after court directives, they sent notices seeking repeated clarifications, stopped construction works, and rejected the certificate.” Justice Harinath retort-

ed sharply, questioning if the commissioner needed English lessons to understand orders or viewed them as a joke. This episode reflects ongoing tensions between YSRCP and local authorities under the TDP-led government. The party alleges po-

litical vendetta in denying basic approvals for its offices, especially after losing power in 2024. The High Court revoked the commissioner’s affidavit, reinforcing judicial supremacy. Legal experts note this as a stern reminder amid rising contempt cases

against officials in Andhra Pradesh. YSRCP leaders hailed the ruling as a victory for rule of law, while municipal authorities remained silent. The February hearing will scrutinize the affidavit, potentially escalating to contempt charges.







# Ministers Lokesh and Ramprasad Reddy Commit to Rayachoti’s All-Round Development

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026  
Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Minister for Education, IT, and Skill Development, Nara Lokesh, affirmed the state government’s unwavering commitment to the comprehensive development of the Rayachoti constituency. Speaking after a meeting with Transport, Youth Affairs, and Sports Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy, Lokesh promised full governmental support to transform Rayachoti across all sectors within the next three years.

The meeting, held on Friday, saw the two ministers engage in detailed discussions on key development initiatives

for Rayachoti. Lokesh emphasized that priority would be given to education, IT, and skill development sectors. “We will take all necessary steps to establish educational institutions, IT colleges, and skill development centers in Rayachoti,” he stated, assuring complete backing from the state government and relevant departments.

This collaboration underscores the TDP-led government’s focus on grassroots development in Chittoor district’s Rayachoti assembly segment. Rayachoti, known for its agricultural base and growing youth population, stands to benefit from targeted investments that align with

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s vision of a skilled, employable workforce. Lokesh highlighted plans to position Rayachoti as a hub for education and employment opportunities, fostering long-term economic growth.

Minister Ramprasad Reddy, representing Rayachoti as its MLA, welcomed the initiatives. The discussion covered infrastructure upgrades, youth skill training programs, and integration with state-wide schemes like the IT push under the Andhra Pradesh Innovation Society. Specific proposals include setting up advanced IT training hubs linked to global tech firms and upgrading lo-



cal colleges with modern curricula in AI, cyber security, and digital skills. Lokesh reiterated



that these projects would receive seamless inter-departmental support, ensuring timely

implementation. “Rayachoti’s youth deserve world-class opportunities. Our government is

fully committed to making this a reality,” he added. The ministers also reviewed ongoing

transport and sports infrastructure projects, pledging synergy between their portfolios.

This development push comes amid the coalition government’s efforts to deliver on pre-poll promises, contrasting with the previous YSRCP regime’s alleged neglect of backward constituencies. Local stakeholders have hailed the meeting as a positive step, expecting job creation and educational upliftment to boost Rayachoti’s prospects. Officials confirmed that detailed project proposals would be forwarded to the cabinet for approval soon, with groundwork beginning in the coming months.

## Major Fire Breaks Out at Tehsildar Office in Kanchikacherla

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026  
Kanchikacherla: A massive fire erupted today at the Tehsildar office in Kanchikacherla, sending shockwaves through the local administration. The blaze originated in the office’s storeroom, where flames spread rapidly, engulfing stored materials. Thick smoke billowing from inside the building alerted staff, who promptly informed the fire station, averting a potential catastrophe.

Fire tenders rushed to the scene upon receiving the distress call. The firefighting team acted swiftly, battling the inferno and bringing it under control within hours. Officials praised the rapid response, noting that it prevented the fire from spreading to other parts of the building and saved lives. No casualties were report-

ed, providing immense relief to authorities and the public.

Preliminary investigations reveal significant damage to government records stored in the affected storeroom. Several files and documents were reduced to ashes, though exact details on the nature of the records or the extent of the loss remain undisclosed pending a full assessment. This incident raises concerns over the preservation of critical administrative data in public offices.

Authorities have launched a probe into the cause of the fire. Initial suspicions point to a possible short circuit, but other factors are also under scrutiny. A thorough inquiry will determine the exact trigger, with findings expected to guide preventive measures. Revenue and fire department of-



ficials have already conducted a joint review of the site. In the aftermath, higher-ups from the Revenue and Fire Departments visited the spot, assuring the public of enhanced safety protocols. “We are committed to ensuring such incidents do not recur. Immediate steps will include electrical audits, better storage facilities, and staff training on emergency protocols,” a

senior official stated. Local residents and political leaders expressed relief over the absence of human loss but voiced worries about data recovery and accountability. The Tehsildar office, a key hub for land records, revenue collections, and citizen services in the region, now faces temporary disruptions as cleanup and restoration begin. This event underscores

the vulnerabilities in government infrastructure, especially in rural areas like Kanchikacherla, NTR district. As Andhra Pradesh pushes for digital governance, such analog losses highlight the urgency for backups and modernization. Officials promised a detailed report soon, emphasizing no stone will be left unturned in preventing future mishaps.

## Srikakulam Gears Up for Grand 7-Day Rathasapthami Celebrations



Srikakulam | Sikkole: District Collector Swapanil Dinkar Pundkar and MLA Gonda Shankar launched the Rathasapthami festivities with a curtain-raiser event at the Arasavalli Devasthanam premises on Friday morning. Symbolizing the birth anniversary of Lord Surya, this year’s celebrations will span seven days from January 19 to 25, embracing the deity’s seven horses, seven colors, and the seven chakras in the human

body through a series of vibrant programs.

The officials flagged off the “Arasavalli promotional chariot” to spread awareness across the district. Addressing the gathering, Collector Pundkar urged residents to participate actively, blending spirituality with social awareness. “We’re organizing unprecedented attractions like grand processions, helicopter rides, and hot air balloon displays,” he said.



Cultural shows will light up KR Stadium, while a food festival takes over the NTR Municipal High School grounds. To manage crowds on Rathasapthami day, darshan opportunities are extended over seven days. He also called for Surya Namaskars in all schools, colleges, and residential communities for the next 10 days, specially commending national yoga player Rasajna Rajahansa.

MLA Shankar highlighted additional highlights, in-

cluding a massive exhibition at the Balika High School, a replica of the Arasavalli temple at KR Stadium alongside models of prominent state shrines, traditional dances, arts, and sports competitions. “On Rathasapthami, we’ll host a mega group yoga session with 5,000 participants on an 80-foot road, plus contests for school students,” he announced, emphasizing the event’s role in elevating the district’s prestige. Joint Collector Firman Ahmed Khan, DRO Sai

Pratyusha, DSP Vivekananda, District Ayush Medical Officer Jagadish, yoga gurus K. Muralidhar, Pandrangi Murali, Tangi Swati, Minister Satyanarayana, Social Welfare DD Madhusudan Rao, Arasavalli EO Prasad Rao, Surya Patanjali Yoga Centre students, and other officials attended the launch.

This state-level festival promises a spectacle of devotion, culture, and community spirit, drawing crowds to honor Lord Surya in grand style.

## Parvathipuram Manyam District Ushers in Early Sankranti Celebrations

Krishnapalli Anganwadi Hosts Grand Festivities Collector and JC Bless Children in Traditional Bhogi Ritual

TPN Bureau | January 9  
Parvathipuram: Early Sankranti celebrations kicked off with great enthusiasm across Parvathipuram Manyam district, as announced by District Collector Dr. N. Prabhakar Reddy. At the Krishnapalli Anganwadi center in Parvathipuram Mandal, festivities commenced under the auspices of the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) on Friday. The Collector graced the event as chief guest, igniting the Bhogi bonfire to officially launch the celebrations. Joining him, the Joint Collector (JC) participated alongside the children, adding to the joyful atmosphere. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Dr. Prabhakar Reddy highlighted how festive fervor had enveloped all Anganwadi centers in the district. “This grand pre-Sankranti event at

Krishnapalli is a testament to that spirit,” he said. Amid the children’s playful excitement, the program featured traditional rituals where tiny tots received Bhogi berries poured over them a customary practice symbolizing good health and longevity.

The Collector personally blessed them, wishing they live to be a hundred years strong and healthy. The children’s enthusiastic involvement in lighting the Bhogi flames stole the show, their cheers echoing through the venue. The entire Anganwadi center was adorned with vibrant rangolis (muggulu), resonating with the melodies of Haridasu folk songs, transforming it into a cultural spectacle.

“Such programs play a vital role in passing down our rich traditions and culture to the younger generation,” the Collector emphasized. He urged

the children to pursue higher education and achieve great heights in life. Extending his warm greetings, Dr. Reddy conveyed advance Sankranti wishes to the mothers, Anganwadi workers, helpers, and all villagers present. The center buzzed with the toddlers’ laughter and mothers’ cheerful banter, turning Krishnapalli Anganwadi into a premature slice of Sankranti paradise even before the festival’s official dates. These early celebrations underscore the district’s commitment to blending tradition with community welfare, especially through ICDS initiatives that nurture early childhood development. As Sankranti approaches, similar events are expected across more Anganwadis, fostering cultural continuity and joy in rural pockets of Parvathipuram Manyam.



## Government Pushes Market Expansion for Indigenous Products like Araku Coffee in Narsaraopet

TPN Bureau | January 9, 2026  
Narsaraopet (Palnadu District): The Andhra Pradesh government is prioritizing market expansion for swadeshi products, with a special focus on tribal-origin items like Araku coffee. District Collector Krtika Shukla declared today. She inaugurated a new Araku coffee stall in Narsaraopet town alongside Narasaraopet MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu and MLA Dr. Chadalavada Aravind Babu.

The event under-

scores the state’s commitment to boosting local economies and self-employment opportunities. Speaking at the launch, Collector Shukla emphasized that such initiatives significantly contribute to the development of tribal regions. “Providing market access to indigenous products is our primary goal,” she said. “This is an excellent opportunity for youth to step into self-employment. The government will extend all necessary support.”

She highlighted how direct sales outlets em-



power producers by cutting out intermediaries, ensuring fair prices and sustainable livelihoods. MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu urged greater

promotion of the Araku coffee brand among the public. “We must take this tribal excellence to every household,” he stated. He advocated for

models where farmers sell directly to consumers, reducing middlemen exploitation and guaranteeing just remuneration. “This ap-

proach strengthens rural economies and aligns with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat,” he added, praising the TDP-led NDA government’s proactive policies. MLA Dr. Aravind Babu lauded Araku coffee’s global acclaim. “Not just nationwide, this product has earned international recognition for its superior quality,” he noted. “It’s the hard work of tribal farmers that places it at the top.” He called for sustained efforts to scale such ventures, benefiting Pal-

nadu district’s agrarian communities. The event saw participation from Revenue Divisional Officer Madhulatha, DRDA PD Jhansirani, Janasena constituency in-charge Syed Gilani, TDP leaders Gattupalli Satyanarayana, Mananu Sharif, Kurapati Srinivasarao Pulimireddy, Battula Selvaraj, and BJP constituency in-charge Rangishetty Ramakrishna, among others. Local enthusiasts and vendors gathered, sampling the aromatic brew and expressing op-

timism about its potential. This stall is part of broader state initiatives to promote GI-tagged products from tribal belts like Araku Valley in Alluri Sitharama Raju district. By establishing outlets in urban and semi-urban areas, the administration aims to bridge producers and markets, fostering economic inclusion. Officials confirmed plans for more such stalls across Palnadu, aligning with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s vision for rural prosperity.



# Beneath Kerala’s Sands Lies India’s Strategic Future

For decades, India has spoken of technological sovereignty, energy independence, and strategic autonomy. Yet one of the most powerful tools to achieve all three lies quietly beneath our feet—embedded in the mineral-rich sands of Kerala’s coastline. With the passage of the nuclear SHANTI Bill, flawed though it may be, the moment has arrived to move from rhetoric to action.

The Chavara-Neendakara-Kayamkulam stretch of Kerala’s coast contains one of the world’s richest concentrations of thorium-bearing monazite, titanium minerals such as ilmenite, rutile, and leucoxene, zircon, and associated rare earth elements (REEs). Very few regions globally host all three categories at such scale. Kerala does. These deposits are among the most accessible strategic minerals in the world, requiring neither underground mining nor the prolonged lead times of hard-rock extraction.

Kerala’s heavy mineral sands—monazite, ilmenite, rutile, zircon, and sillimanite—are indispensable to the global energy transition, defence manufacturing, aerospace, electronics, and advanced metallurgy. Yet India has barely begun to treat this endowment as the strategic asset it truly is. We continue the irrational practice of exporting rare earth oxides while importing finished magnets and high-value components. If this cycle is to be broken, Kerala is the most logical place to begin.

### India Needs Imagination—and Will

Handled strategically, these minerals could form the backbone of India’s long-term energy security, aerospace capability, and technological self-reliance. The challenge is not the absence of resources; it is the absence of imagination and institutional resolve to treat minerals as instruments of national



power.

Kerala should be officially designated India’s pilot state for strategic mineral development. Done correctly, it could become a living demonstration that democratic governance, environmental responsibility, and national security can coexist. If Kerala leads responsibly, it can set a replicable model for the rest of the country.

### Thorium: Energy Independence Deferred

During parliamentary debates on the SHANTI Bill, several speakers highlighted India’s thorium advantage. India’s nuclear establishment has long recognised thorium as the holy grail of energy security. With the world’s largest monazite reserves, India holds roughly a quarter of global thorium resources—much of it located in Kerala.

Thorium is not just another mineral. It is a long-duration energy asset capable of powering

India for centuries through advanced breeder reactors. Yet today, thorium remains confined to laboratories and policy papers. The three-stage nuclear programme—once a symbol of Indian scientific ambition—has progressed at a glacial pace, even as other nations accelerate toward next-generation nuclear technologies.

Kerala could alter this trajectory. A state-level thorium innovation mission—anchored in collaboration between the Department of Atomic Energy, leading research institutions, and private engineering firms—could accelerate reactor component manufacturing, materials research, and safety systems. The objective need not be immediate commercial deployment; demonstrable technological progress alone would be transformative. A pilot thorium cluster in Kerala would send a clear message: India intends to shape the future of nuclear energy, not

merely observe it.

### Titanium: The Metal of Strategic Autonomy

If thorium represents energy independence, titanium represents strategic autonomy. Titanium alloys are indispensable for aerospace, defence, naval engineering, hypersonic platforms, and space exploration. Their unique combination of strength, light weight, and corrosion resistance makes them essential to any modern military or spacefaring nation.

Kerala’s coastal sands contain some of the world’s richest ilmenite deposits, the primary ore for titanium. India is the world’s largest producer of ilmenite, yet remains a marginal player in titanium metal and alloy production. Raw ore is exported; value addition takes place overseas.

This dependence is a strategic vulnerability. No nation aspiring to great-power status can afford to outsource the production of a metal so

central to its defence and aerospace ecosystems. Kerala can again serve as the proving ground. A titanium downstream manufacturing corridor—integrating beneficiation, slag production, sponge titanium, and alloy fabrication—could create a domestic ecosystem India currently lacks. With ISRO, DRDO, and the Indian Navy as anchor customers, Kerala could emerge as the titanium hub of the Indian Ocean region.

### Rare Earths: The Hidden Backbone of Power

Rare earth elements are the quiet enablers of 21st-century technology. China’s near-hegemonic control over rare earth mining, refining, and magnet manufacturing has already been weaponised, including against India. Today, China controls about 60% of global rare-earth mining, over 90% of refining capacity, and much of the downstream supply chain.

Rare earths power permanent magnets, electric vehicles, wind turbines, advanced electronics, precision sensors, and precision-guided weapons. Dependence on a single supplier is no longer just an economic risk—it is a strategic one.

Kerala’s monazite and zircon sands contain significant rare earth content, though coastal erosion is steadily depleting these reserves. Yet India’s REE separation capacity remains minimal, and downstream manufacturing—magnets, alloys, and components—is almost non-existent. We export raw materials and import finished products at high cost.

A Kerala Rare Earths Mission could reverse this trajectory. By integrating mining, separation, metallurgy, and component manufacturing, Kerala could host India’s first complete REE value chain. This is not merely an industrial opportunity;

it is a national security necessity.

### Why Kerala Is the Right Place

Critics will argue that this is parochial advocacy, or that mining is environmentally destructive, socially disruptive, and politically contentious. Within Kerala, some will insist that the state’s dense population and strong civic culture make it unsuitable for such an experiment.

But that is precisely why Kerala is the right place.

If strategic mineral development can be done responsibly in Kerala—with transparency, community participation, scientific oversight, and strict environmental safeguards—it can be done anywhere in India.

Kerala’s regulatory capacity, political awareness, and social engagement make it uniquely positioned to pioneer an ethical, sustainable model of

extraction.

Community consent will not emerge from rhetoric alone. It will come from visible benefits: skilled employment, revenue sharing, improved infrastructure, educational opportunities, and credible ecological protection. Kerala already has a public-sector legacy through IREL and KMML. What it lacks is a 21st-century vision that integrates science, industry, and national strategy.

### Let Kerala Lead

India’s mineral policy has long been extractive rather than strategic. We mine, export, and re-import value-added products at a premium. That era must end. In the decades ahead, minerals will not merely be commodities—they will be instruments of power.

Kerala offers India a rare convergence: thorium, titanium, and rare earths in one globally significant region. Very few places in the world can claim this combination. But resources alone do not confer power. Strategy does.

Kerala should be declared India’s pilot state for strategic minerals. This requires a Kerala Strategic Minerals Authority; a thorium innovation cluster; a titanium downstream manufacturing corridor; a rare earths value-chain mission; a transparent, community-first environmental framework; and a deep national security partnership with the Central Government.

India often speaks of becoming a global power. Kerala offers a chance to build the material foundations of that ambition.

Handled passively, these minerals will remain sand.

Handled strategically, they can become the steel, fuel, and circuitry of India’s future.

# India’s ‘Clean’ Cities and the Poison Beneath the Tap

Indore, Gandhinagar, and Bengaluru are frequently held up as symbols of India’s urban success. Indore has repeatedly topped the Swachh Survekshan rankings as the country’s “cleanest” city. Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad are showcased as planned, green, and efficiently governed urban centres, with Gandhinagar slated to host the Commonwealth Games in 2030. At the Swachh Survekshan 2024–25 awards in July 2025, Ahmedabad was named India’s cleanest big city, while Gandhinagar topped the Super Swachh League in the mid-sized city category. Bengaluru, despite its well-known struggles, continues to be branded India’s technology capital and boasts one of the highest municipal revenues in the country.

Yet beneath these accolades lies a deeply troubling reality: contaminated drinking water caused by the mixing of sewage and water supply lines. Cracks develop in pipelines, sewer lines overflow, pressure changes force contamination into drinking water systems—and people fall sick. Increasingly, these incidents are no longer confined to the monsoon season. That such severe water contamination continues to recur in major Indian cities is not merely alarming; it is indefensible.

The recent deaths in In-

dore, the typhoid outbreak in Gandhinagar, and widespread illness linked to contaminated water in Bengaluru expose a profound failure of urban governance. They compel us to ask a fundamental question: what do “clean” and “well-managed” actually mean in India’s cities?

### The Reality Behind the Rankings

On January 6, the Madhya Pradesh government confirmed before the High Court that at least eight people had died in Indore. Reports indicate that since December 24, over 310 residents from the Bhagirathpura area have been admitted to hospitals with symptoms linked to water contamination.

In Gandhinagar, a sudden surge in typhoid cases has affected multiple localities. As of January 7, health authorities confirmed 85 active cases, with a total of 144 reported infections. Anticipating a rise in paediatric cases, Gandhinagar Civil Hospital opened a dedicated 30-bed ward for children suffering from high fever, vomiting, and gastrointestinal distress. Contaminated water has been identified as the primary cause.

In Bengaluru, residents of KSFC Layout in Lingarajapuram have been forced to rely on private water supplies for more than a week due to foul-

smelling, discoloured tap water. Many reported months of gastrointestinal illness, vomiting, and diarrhoea, but the scale of contamination became evident only recently.

Access to safe drinking water is not a luxury or an aspirational goal. It is a constitutional obligation. Article 21 of the Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, includes the right to clean water as intrinsic to the right to life. When sewage enters drinking water pipelines and people fall seriously ill or die, it is not an accident—it is a failure of planning, maintenance, governance, and accountability.

### The Illusion of Cleanliness

Indore’s tragedy is especially stark given its reputation. Cleanliness rankings focus heavily on visible sanitation—solid waste management, street sweeping, behavioural campaigns, and public toilets. Water infrastructure, buried underground and out of sight, receives far less attention until it fails catastrophically.

Gandhinagar’s typhoid outbreak reveals a similar contradiction. Officials have acknowledged that the problem was not ageing infrastructure but newly laid pipelines installed dangerously close to sewer lines. When high-pressure water began

flowing, weak joints developed leaks, allowing sewage to contaminate drinking water. This is not a technical mishap; it is a grave lapse in public safety, and those responsible must be held accountable.

Planned cities are often assumed to be safer. But planning without continuous maintenance is meaningless. Preventive maintenance is a well-established principle in urban management, yet in practice it remains largely confined to reports and presentations.

Bengaluru exposes another systemic weakness: fragmented governance. Different agencies handle water supply, sewage, stormwater drains, and roadworks. One agency damages pipelines during excavation, another is responsible for repairs, and a third monitors water quality—often resulting in no one being held accountable. During the monsoon, overflowing drains and flooded streets further increase contamination risks. For a city that markets itself as a global technology hub, the routine necessity of boiling water or buying expensive tanker supplies is an irony bordering on the absurd.

### Why This Should Alarm Us

Nearly 70% of India’s surface water is unfit for consumption. Rivers are heavily polluted by sewage

and industrial waste, while groundwater is contaminated by arsenic, fluoride, and other naturally occurring toxins. Millions suffer the health and economic consequences, placing enormous strain on already scarce freshwater resources.

As policymakers focus on extending piped water coverage, these recurring tragedies underline a critical truth: access alone is not the problem. Even cities with established water networks cannot guarantee safe drinking water.

What makes these failures especially disturbing is that they occur in cities with higher revenues, stronger administrative capacity, and greater civic awareness than most towns and peri-urban areas. If Indore, Gandhinagar, and Bengaluru cannot ensure safe water, conditions elsewhere are likely far worse. This exposes a structural flaw in India’s urban governance—an obsession with rankings, optics, and announcements, at the expense of unglamorous but vital systems such as pipeline integrity, routine testing, and preventive maintenance.

Rapid urbanisation has only compounded the problem, pushing more people into congested cities and placing immense strain on ageing water and sewage infrastructure.

### A Silent Social Crisis



Water contamination disproportionately affects children, the elderly, and the poor. Middle-class households may install filters or buy bottled water, but low-income families depend entirely on municipal supply. When contamination occurs, it quickly escalates into a public health emergency—causing missed school days, mounting medical expenses, malnutrition, and, in extreme cases, death.

These human costs never appear in cleanliness rankings or GDP statistics, yet they steadily erode public trust and deepen inequality.

Accountability remains the weakest link. Investigations are announced, compensation promised, and officials suspended or transferred. But systemic

reform rarely follows. There is little transparency around water quality reports, pipeline audits, or the frequency of contamination incidents. Citizens often learn of danger only after hospitals report spikes in waterborne diseases. A truly “clean” city would publish real-time water quality data and issue immediate alerts, much like air quality warnings.

### Redefining Urban Cleanliness

India’s urban future depends on confronting this blind spot. Investment must shift from surface-level sanitation to underground infrastructure—modernising pipelines, physically separating water and sewage networks, managing

pressure systems, and deploying sensors for early contamination detection. Regular third-party audits and community monitoring should be mandatory, not optional. Above all, water safety must be treated as a public health priority, not merely an engineering concern.

The deaths in Indore and the illnesses in Gandhinagar and Bengaluru are not isolated incidents. They are warnings. Clean streets and awards cannot compensate for poisoned taps. Until Indian cities redefine cleanliness to include safe, reliable drinking water, urban success will remain a hollow promise—one that costs lives instead of improving them.



# “Mamata Leads Kolkata Rally Against ED Raids as BJP Alleges Corruption”

The political confrontation between the Centre and the West Bengal government intensified on Friday after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted raids on the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) and its co-founder Pratik Jain. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee took to the streets of Kolkata in protest, while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accused her of being “knee-deep in corruption,” amplifying an already heated standoff.

The matter also disrupted proceedings in the Calcutta High Court. Justice Suvra Ghosh, who was hearing multiple petitions related to the raids, temporarily left the courtroom, citing excessive crowding. With the high court scheduled to remain closed over the weekend, the case is now set to resume only on Wednesday.

I-PAC, a political consultancy firm, has been actively involved in assisting the Trinamool Congress (TMC) with its strategy for the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections later this year. The ED’s raids on Thursday alleged that Banerjee had walked out with a laptop, phone, and documents from Jain’s residence during the action, which is linked to a coal smuggling case.

In its petition filed with the court, the ED claimed that Banerjee misused her constitutional position by obstructing officials carrying out their duties at the I-PAC office and Jain’s home. The agency also sought a CBI investigation into the matter, including the



chief minister’s role.

In response, Pratik Jain and the Trinamool Congress filed counter-petitions, arguing that the ED’s raids were politically motivated. According to the TMC, the agency was attempting to seize documents related to the party’s election strategy so that they could potentially be handed over to the BJP ahead of the state polls.

While the legal proceedings were underway, Mamata Banerjee led a massive protest rally to demonstrate her opposition to the raids. Starting from Jadavpur and moving towards Hazra Crossing, a distance of roughly six kilometers, the rally saw Banerjee at the forefront, flanked by senior party leaders and surrounded by a large contingent of party workers. Crowds

lined the streets to show support for the chief minister, chanting slogans and waving party flags, underscoring the TMC’s message that the BJP was resorting to all possible means to influence the upcoming elections.

Banerjee and other TMC leaders accused the BJP of desperation in its efforts to secure victory in the Bengal polls, framing the ED raids as part of a broader strategy to undermine their party. “The timing of these actions is clearly aimed at disrupting the democratic process and intimidating political opponents,” TMC sources said.

The BJP, on the other hand, accused Mamata Banerjee of corruption and interference in the enforcement process. Senior party leader Ravi Shankar Prasad called for her

to be formally named as an accused for allegedly intimidating ED officials. “There are multiple suspicious circumstances surrounding Mamata Banerjee’s actions during the raids. It appears she was attempting to rescue sensitive material that implicates her and her party,” he said, emphasizing the need for accountability.

As the political battle unfolds, the standoff has added another layer of tension to West Bengal’s already charged pre-election environment. With the High Court proceedings set to resume on Wednesday and public demonstrations continuing, the confrontation between the Centre and the state government is poised to remain a major flashpoint in the run-up to the assembly elections.

# Ajit and Sharad Pawar Factions Patch Up Ahead of Pimpri-Chinchwad Civic Polls

Mumbai: The two factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) have reportedly reconciled, with tensions within the Pawar family resolved, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar told NDTV in an exclusive interview.

“The workers of both parties want to unite. The two NCPs are together now. All tensions in our family have ended,” he said, signaling a formal truce between his faction and the one led by Sharad Pawar.

The NCP had split two years ago after a mutiny by Ajit Pawar, who subsequently aligned his faction with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and assumed the role of Deputy Chief Minister. The division had also involved a tussle over party symbols: Ajit Pawar retained the NCP’s original name and the iconic ‘clock’ symbol, while Sharad Pawar’s faction adopted the name NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) and a trumpet symbol.

Both factions have now decided to join forces for the upcoming Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation elections. Sharad Pawar’s daugh-



ter and Lok Sabha MP, Supriya Sule, confirmed to NDTV that the alliance was formed at the request of party workers. She clarified, however, that there has been no discussion regarding whether this collaboration will continue beyond the civic polls.

Sule also dismissed rumours linking NCP (SP) to Maharashtra’s BJP-led government or suggesting that she would assume a ministerial post. “Let those who are happy with such rumours talk about them,” she said.

Ajit Pawar also addressed

other controversies, including allegations related to a land deal involving his son, Parth Pawar. “He didn’t give a single rupee. We also didn’t buy any land,” he stated, rejecting the claims outright.

On the political front, Ajit Pawar expressed confidence about the Pimpri-Chinchwad elections despite the recent rapprochement between MNS chief Raj Thackeray and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray. “Raj Thackeray’s speech is like a mimicry show; it gives entertainment for a short time, but nothing can be

achieved with it. Both Raj and Uddhav will not be successful,” he remarked, downplaying any potential threat from the alliance.

Meanwhile, Supriya Sule took aim at the BJP, accusing the party of creating divisions among smaller parties. She also highlighted broader governance concerns, citing controversies like the Enforcement Directorate’s raids on political consultancy I-PAC in West Bengal. “Pollution, pot-holes, and traffic problems are at their peak in Mumbai, and no work has been done on the ground. The public and voters are troubled by the mismatched alliances happening in Maharashtra. How are so many leaders being elected unopposed? This is a disturbing trend,” she said, emphasizing the need for accountability and better governance.

With the Pawar factions now united, the NCP aims to consolidate its position in the Pimpri-Chinchwad polls, sending a strong signal about its intent to present a united front in Maharashtra’s increasingly complex political landscape.

# Sabarimala Gold Theft Probe: Temple Chief Priest Kandamaru Rajeevaru Arrested by SIT

The investigation into the alleged theft of gold from Sabarimala temple artefacts took a dramatic turn on Friday with the arrest of the temple’s chief priest, Tantri Kandamaru Rajeevaru, by the special investigation team (SIT). Rajeevaru is the first member of the Tantri clan to be arrested in the ongoing case, which comes amid the temple’s annual festival.

The SIT, formed by the Kerala High Court, has registered two cases related to the scandal and so far has arrested nine individuals, including senior employees of the Travancore Devaswom Board and CPI(M) leaders who headed the board overseeing the hill shrine. Rajeevaru, a senior priest from the Thazhamon family, has been a key figure at Sabarimala since joining in 1995. His son, Kandararu Brahmadahan, also became a priest at the temple in 2024.

Police allege that Rajeevaru facilitated the entry of the key



accused, Unnikrishnan Potty, into the temple as an assistant to the priests. Potty, who is accused of removing gold-plated temple items under the pretext of “gold covering” in 2019 and 2025, began working at the shrine in 2007-08. Over the years, he allegedly leveraged his position to manage VIP darshan for businessmen, celebrities, and influential visitors, ultimately presenting himself as a sponsor for

the temple’s gold covering ceremonies.

Rajeevaru is expected to be produced before the vigilance court in Kollam, where the case is being heard.

Earlier this week, the High Court, which oversaw the formation of the SIT, classified the investigation into four distinct phases. The first phase focuses on the gold cladding of various artefacts in and around the Sreekovil. The sec-

ond pertains to the replacement of the old gold-plated door of the Sreekovil in 2019. The third phase examines the removal of the gold-clad Dwarapalaka idol plates, side plates, and door frame plates, also in 2019. The fourth phase involves all transactions related to the gold plating of the Dwarapalaka idol plates in 2025.

The High Court noted that the gold was allegedly removed, replaced, or misappropriated through a premeditated and concerted plan by individuals entrusted with safeguarding the temple’s valuables. The next hearing in the case has been scheduled for January 19.

The arrest of Rajeevaru marks a significant development in the case, highlighting the widening scope of the probe and the involvement of senior temple authorities in the alleged misappropriation of gold from one of India’s most revered shrines.

# India Rejects US Commerce Secretary’s Remarks on Trade Talks, Reaffirms Commitment to Bilateral Deal



New Delhi: India has firmly pushed back against comments made by United States Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick suggesting that a long-discussed India-US trade agreement stalled because Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not place a phone call to US President Donald Trump. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) described Lutnick’s remarks as “not accurate,” emphasizing that the two countries have been engaged in sustained, detailed negotiations on a bilateral trade pact for over a year.

MEA spokesperson Randeep Jaiswal clarified that India and the United States had committed to negotiating a trade agreement as early as February 13, 2025, and multiple rounds of discussions have since been held, aimed at reaching a mutually beneficial outcome. “We have seen the remarks. India and the US were committed to negotiating a bilateral trade agreement as far back as February 13 last year,” he said. “On several occasions, we have been close to a deal. The characterisation of these discussions in the reported remarks is not accurate.”

Jaiswal stressed that India remains interested in finalizing a trade pact that benefits both countries. “We remain interested in a mutually beneficial trade

deal between two complementary economies and look forward to concluding it,” he added.

The MEA also addressed any implication that political communication at the highest level had broken down. Jaiswal pointed out that Prime Minister Modi and President Trump have spoken on the phone on eight occasions during 2025, covering various aspects of the wide-ranging India-US partnership. “Incidentally, Prime Minister Modi and President Trump have also spoken on the phone on eight occasions during 2025, covering different aspects of our wide-ranging partnership,” he said, emphasizing that high-level dialogue has remained consistent.

The Centre’s response came in the wake of Lutnick’s interview on a podcast released on Thursday. During the interview, the US Commerce Secretary remarked that negotiations with India failed to reach a conclusion while the United States proceeded with trade agreements with other countries. While Lutnick did not specify the reasons behind India’s stance, he implied that the absence of direct communication at the highest level contributed to the delay.

India, however, has maintained that the negotiations have been ongoing and productive, with both sides

working toward a comprehensive agreement. Officials have repeatedly highlighted that trade discussions involve complex issues, ranging from tariffs and market access to intellectual property rights and investment rules, which require careful negotiation rather than a single phone call to resolve.

Experts suggest that the MEA’s rebuttal seeks to clarify that bilateral negotiations are a matter of process and substance rather than personalities or isolated gestures. They note that framing the delays as a result of a missed call oversimplifies the multifaceted nature of international trade agreements.

Despite the comments by Lutnick, India has signaled its continued interest in concluding a bilateral trade pact with the United States. Both governments appear committed to finding a path forward that strengthens economic ties between the two complementary economies, underlining that the India-US partnership remains robust and multi-dimensional, spanning trade, technology, defense, and strategic cooperation.

With negotiations ongoing, officials have indicated that both countries are exploring ways to address outstanding issues, aiming for a deal that balances mutual interests and fosters deeper economic engagement.

# Madras High Court Stays UA Certification for Vijay’s Jana Nayagan, Release Postponed



The Madras High Court on Friday stayed a single judge’s order directing the Censor Board to grant a UA certificate to Vijay-starrer Jana Nayagan, pushing the matter for hearing on January 21, after the Pongal holidays. The film, widely touted as Vijay’s swansong before he transitions to full-time politics, was originally scheduled for release today, January 9.

Earlier on Friday morning, a single judge had ordered the Censor Board to issue a UA certificate once the filmmakers made the required modifications. The court had also criticized the board for entertaining complaints against the film, terming it a “dangerous trend.”

Soon after, the Censor Board appealed against the order and sought an urgent hearing. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi represented the producers, while Additional Solicitor General A.R.L. Sundaresan and Solicitor General Tushar Me-

hta appeared for the Censor Board.

During the hearing, Sundaresan argued that the board had not been given an opportunity to file a counter affidavit before the earlier order. He also pointed out that the production house’s petition had not challenged the Censor Board chairman’s decision to refer the film to a Revising Committee, yet the single judge had quashed that decision. The Chief Justice raised concerns over how such an order could be issued without allowing the board to respond.

Rohatgi, representing the filmmakers, questioned how a member of the Examining Committee could lodge a complaint against the film. The Chief Justice also criticized the producers for announcing the release date before the certificate was officially granted, suggesting that they had pressured the court.

The Censor Board has previously stated that Jana

Nayagan includes emblems related to the armed forces, which, according to the board, require expert examination.

The film, produced by KVN Productions, was slated for a worldwide release with screenings in the US, UK, Malaysia, and Canada. However, on January 7, the production house announced the postponement of the release, citing “unavoidable circumstances beyond our control.” The statement expressed regret to fans and stakeholders and requested patience, promising that a new release date would be announced soon.

Jana Nayagan also stars Bobby Deol and Pooja Hegde and has been one of the most anticipated releases of the year, with fans eagerly awaiting Vijay’s last outing on the big screen before his political journey. The filmmakers are reportedly discussing the option of approaching the Supreme Court to expedite the certification process.



Israel Rejects Pakistan’s Role in Gaza Stabilisation Force, Warns Against Hamas Links



Israel has firmly rejected any proposal for Pakistani military involvement in a potential International Stabilisation Force (ISF) for Gaza under US President Donald Trump’s Gaza plan. Speaking exclusively to NDTV, Israel’s ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, said the Jewish state is uncomfortable with Pakistan’s participation due to growing ties between Hamas and Pakistan-based terror groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Azar stressed that any future arrangement for Gaza is contingent on the complete dismantling of Hamas. “There is no way forward unless Hamas is eliminated as a terrorist organisation,” he said. He noted that several countries approached by the US to contribute troops have already expressed reluctance, unwilling to engage in combat against Hamas, rendering the idea of a stabilisation force ineffective under current circumstances.

The envoy highlighted Israel’s priorities in Gaza: retrieving hostages, including the remains of deceased captives, and dismantling Hamas’s military and political infrastructure. He warned that countries sympathetic to Hamas, such as Turkey and Qatar, have attempted to bypass these requirements. “Either Hamas dismantles, or the second phase of any plan cannot be implemented,” he added.

Azar also addressed Pakistan’s potential involvement, noting that countries generally cooperate only with trusted partners with formal diplomatic ties, which he argued Pakistan currently does not meet. He expressed concern over the movement of senior Hamas commander Naji Zaheer, who reportedly visited Pakistan multiple times over the last three years, meeting with operatives of Lashkar-e-Tai-

ba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, including in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Israeli intelligence is closely monitoring these activities, he said, describing the coordination among jihadist groups in the region as “very worrisome.”

While stopping short of directly accusing Pakistan’s government, Azar implied that such movements are unlikely without some form of official approval. He said Israel and allied countries are sharing intelligence with relevant authorities to track evolving terror linkages.

On India, Azar noted the country’s security concerns, particularly regarding past attacks by Pakistan-based terror organisations. He said the threat is being closely monitored, and Indian authorities are taking measures to safeguard national interests. Regarding whether Hamas should be formally banned in India, Azar said the threat is clear but left the decision to Indian authorities.

The ambassador also commented on the ongoing unrest in Iran, describing it as a sign of widespread public frustration with the country’s clerical regime. While he called the protests significant and encouraging, he stressed that Iran’s powerful security apparatus—the Revolutionary Guard and Basij militia—makes immediate political change uncertain. He noted that the demonstrations show Iranian society’s desire for freedom but cautioned that the outcome depends on how both protesters and authorities respond.

In sum, Azar’s statements underline Israel’s position that Gaza’s reconstruction and political processes cannot proceed without dismantling Hamas, while also highlighting deep mistrust of Pakistan’s involvement due to emerging terror links.

Russia Launches Massive Missile and Drone Attack on Kyiv Amid Hypersonic Oreshnik Strike



Russia carried out a large-scale overnight attack on Ukraine on Friday, involving hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles, officials reported. The assault killed at least four people and injured 25 others in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed that the strike included 13 ballistic missiles, 22 cruise missiles, and 242 drones, in addition to the use of Russia’s hypersonic Oreshnik missile. The attack also caused damage to the Qatari Embassy, a key mediator in prisoner exchanges between the two countries.

According to the Russian defence ministry, the attack was a retaliatory response to Ukraine striking Russian President Vladimir Putin’s residence. Kyiv denies carrying out such an attack, and US President Donald Trump also stated that the strike on Putin’s residence never occurred.

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha condemned the attack, calling it “a grave threat to security on the European continent” and “a test for the transatlantic community.” He added that the strike was carried out “in response to [Putin’s] own hallucinations.” Zelensky warned that Russia timed the attack to exploit icy roads in Kyiv, aiming to increase disruption and casualties during the frigid winter conditions.

The hypersonic Oreshnik missile, used for only the second time, has become a focal point of concern for Ukraine and its Western allies. Russian officials claim the missile is ex-

tremely difficult to intercept due to its speed of 13,000 kilometres per hour—ten times the speed of sound. Even with conventional warheads, Putin has described the missile as equivalent in impact to a nuclear weapon. The Oreshnik has a reported range of up to 5,500 kilometres, allowing it to potentially strike targets across Europe. Its first operational use was in November 2024, targeting the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

The European Union’s top diplomat described the strike as a “clear escalation” in the ongoing conflict. The attack underscores the continuous military pressure Russia has applied since launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Despite ongoing diplomatic efforts, including mediation by countries like Qatar, Russia continues daily bombardments, making Europe’s deadliest conflict since World War II far from resolved.

Analysts warn that the combination of conventional missiles, drones, and hypersonic weapons demonstrates Russia’s intent to maintain relentless pressure on Ukraine while signaling its military capabilities to the West. The Oreshnik strike, in particular, represents a new strategic threat, heightening tensions across NATO and European nations as the conflict drags into its fourth year.

As Ukraine reels from the attack, the international community faces renewed challenges in containing the escalation and preventing further humanitarian and geopolitical fallout.

US Offers Venezuela Oil to India Under Controlled Framework, Eases Pressure on Russian Crude Imports

The Donald Trump administration in the United States is reportedly prepared to allow India to purchase Venezuelan crude oil under a new US-supervised framework, as Washington continues pressing New Delhi to reduce its dependence on Russian crude—a major sticking point since the Ukraine conflict. The move follows a recent deal between Caracas and Washington to export up to \$2 billion worth of Venezuelan oil, approximately 30–50 million barrels, to the United States after US forces captured President Nicolas Maduro on January 3.

A senior Trump administration official told IANS that the US is willing to let India buy Venezuelan oil as part of its broader effort to market the country’s crude globally. India had previously been one of the largest buyers of Venezuelan crude before American sanctions restricted trade.

How the Venezuelan Oil Trade Will Work

US Energy Secretary Christopher Wright explained that Venezuelan crude would be sold through a structure designed and overseen by the US government. “The oil is allowed to flow, but it will be marketed by the United States government. The money will go into ac-



counts and then back to Venezuela in a way that benefits the Venezuelan people, not corruption or the regime,” he said in an interview with Fox Business.

Wright added that there is strong interest in Venezuelan crude from buyers in the US, Europe, and Asia, noting that many US refineries were historically designed to process Venezuelan oil. The policy ensures that sales are not restricted to a limited set of countries and emphasizes oversight and en-

US Oversight and Enforcement

forcement to prevent illegal transactions. Framing the approach as part of Trump’s broader strategy to reform Venezuela’s oil sector, Wright stressed that only “legitimate and lawful energy commerce, as determined by the US, will be permitted.” He referenced recent US actions against sanctioned oil tankers to underline that the framework will be strictly enforced. The US plans to market

the stored 30–50 million barrels of Venezuelan crude and continue sales of future production. Additionally, the US will provide diluents and necessary equipment to stabilize and grow Venezuela’s oil output, working closely with energy companies interested in returning to the market.

India’s Role and Benefits

India, one of the world’s fastest-growing energy consumers, was previously a major importer of Venezuelan crude, particu-

larly for its complex refineries configured for heavy oil. Access to Venezuelan oil under this US-controlled framework could help India diversify its energy imports while reducing reliance on Russian crude.

With Venezuela holding the world’s largest proven oil reserves, the renewed trade opportunity offers India a strategic option to strengthen energy security amid rising domestic demand.

Trump Administration Considers Cash Payments to Greenlanders to Encourage Independence from Denmark

The Trump administration in the United States has held internal discussions about offering direct cash payments to residents of Greenland as part of efforts to persuade the Arctic territory to break away from Denmark and possibly join the United States, according to a Reuters report. These discussions have intensified in recent days, despite repeated statements from both Greenland and Denmark that the island is “not for sale.”

What Is Being Proposed

US officials have considered sending lump-sum payments to Greenland’s roughly 57,000 residents, with figures discussed ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000 per person. The final amount, method of payment, and any formal plan have not been agreed upon, and details remain unclear. If payments were made at the higher end of the range, the total cost to the US government could be nearly \$6 billion.

The idea of offering di-

rect payments is seen as one way Washington might try to influence public sentiment in Greenland and encourage support for secession from Denmark, which currently controls the territory’s foreign affairs and defense. Before American sanctions limited trade, Greenland was also seen as having vast strategic value, particularly for its location in the Arctic and its natural resources.

Why the US Is Interested in Greenland

President Donald Trump has repeatedly emphasised Greenland’s strategic importance, arguing that the United States needs the island for national security reasons, given its location near the Arctic and proximity to potential geopolitical rivals. US officials say the payments would form part of a broader effort to realign Greenland’s ties more closely with Washington.

In addition to the idea of cash payments, officials have also discussed other



non military options for closer ties, such as a Compact of Free Association (COFA)—an agreement the US has with several Pacific island nations that includes defence obligations and access to certain services, in exchange for strategic military and economic benefits. However, such a mechanism would normally require Greenland to gain full independence from Denmark before entering into it.

Strong Opposition from Greenland and Denmark

Leaders in both Greenland and Denmark have

firmly rejected the notion of selling the island or being coerced into changing their relationship. Greenland’s Prime Minister Jens Frederik Nielsen responded forcefully to recent US statements, saying “Enough is enough... No more fantasies about annexation.” European countries including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Britain, and Denmark issued a joint statement emphasising that only Greenland and Denmark can determine the territory’s future.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt

confirmed that Trump and his national security team have been exploring what a potential purchase might look like, though no formal offer has been made. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is scheduled to meet Denmark’s foreign minister to discuss Greenland. Denmark’s embassy has declined comment, and Greenland’s representative office in Washington did not respond to requests for comment.

What Greenlanders Think

Polls suggest that while many Greenlanders support eventual independence from Denmark, most do not want to become part of the United States. Concerns about the economic impact of independence have so far prevented local lawmakers from calling a referendum.

The discussions highlight the complexity of US ambitions in the Arctic, as well as the diplomatic sensitivities involved in any attempt to shift the political status of Greenland.

Mass Protests Rock Iran as Citizens Demand Freedom Amid Economic Crisis



Widespread protests against Iran’s Supreme Leader Seyyed Ali Hosseini Khamenei and the ruling Islamic regime have intensified in Tehran, fueled by soaring living costs, economic instability, and a history of government crackdowns. Iranians took to the streets shouting slogans against the theocratic regime, calling for freedom and expressing frustration over the faltering economy.

As the demonstrations escalated, Iran’s govern-

ment, under President Masoud Pezeshkian, cut off internet access and international telephone lines to curb communication. Both the judiciary and security forces issued stern warnings, signaling a harsh response if unrest continued.

Some protesters appear to have responded to a call from exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, whose father fled Iran just before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Pahlavi had urged Iranians to demonstrate at 8

p.m. local time on Thursday and Friday, prompting neighborhoods across Tehran to erupt in chants like “Death to the dictator!” and “Death to the Islamic Republic!” Some even hailed the former monarchy, shouting, “This is the last battle! Pahlavi will return!” Thousands joined the protests before communications to Iran were completely cut off.

Pahlavi called on European leaders and US President Donald Trump to “hold the regime accountable” and urged international intervention to restore communication channels so the voices of Iranian citizens could be heard. While demonstrators praised the Shah, it remains unclear whether this reflects support for Pahlavi himself or nostalgia for pre-revolution Iran.

The unrest has spread across cities and rural towns nationwide, with markets and bazaars shutting down in solidarity.

Human Rights Activists News Agency reports at least 42 fatalities and more than 2,270 arrests so far. Analysts note the protests are largely leaderless, and it remains uncertain how Pahlavi’s calls will influence their course.

The protests erupted last month at Tehran’s Grand Bazaar, initially driven by shopkeepers protesting the collapsing rial and rising inflation. By December, inflation reached 52% year-on-year, according to official statistics, deepening economic despair. The civilian government acknowledges economic hardships but accuses foreign-linked networks of fueling unrest. President Pezeshkian has urged dialogue with protesters and pledged measures to improve livelihoods, but rapid currency depreciation limits the government’s ability to act effectively.

The demonstrations have occasionally turned violent. Reports indicate

security personnel have been attacked or killed, including incidents in Khorasan Razavi, Kermanshah, and Lordegan. Despite these clashes, Iranian authorities have not launched a large-scale crackdown.

Former US President Donald Trump has warned that the US would intervene if the Iranian regime violently targets peaceful protesters, cautioning Tehran that any such action would carry severe consequences.

The protests reflect growing discontent over economic mismanagement, political repression, and social restrictions, marking the most significant wave of dissent in Iran in three years. Whether these protests will lead to lasting change remains uncertain, but the unrest underscores the deep frustration of ordinary Iranians with their government.





# Sensex, Nifty Slide for Fifth Straight Session as US Tariff Fears and FII Outflows Rattle Markets

Indian equity markets extended their losing streak for a fifth consecutive session on Friday, weighed down by renewed concerns over potential US tariff actions and sustained foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows. Investor sentiment remained fragile despite a brief rebound in early trade.

The benchmark Sensex slipped 604.72 points, or 0.72 per cent, to close at 83,576.24, while the Nifty50 fell 193.55 points, or 0.75 per cent, to settle at 25,683.30. The decline followed a sharp sell-off in the previous session, as global trade uncertainties continued to cloud the outlook for risk assets.

Heavyweight stocks such as ICICI Bank, Adani Enterprises, and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone were among the top losers on the Nifty50, shedding up to 2 per cent. On the other hand, ETERNAL and Oil & Natural Gas Corporation outperformed, gaining as much as 3 per cent. Market breadth remained decisively negative, with 2,919 stocks declining, 863 advancing, and 127 remaining unchanged.

Persistent FII selling remained a major drag on the markets. On Thursday alone, foreign investors sold equities worth 3,367.12 crore, marking the fourth straight session of net outflows following a brief pause earlier this month.

Investor caution was further heightened ahead of a key US



Supreme Court ruling on the legality of tariffs imposed during former President Donald Trump's tenure. If the court declares the tariffs illegal, the US government may have to refund nearly \$150 billion to importers. Market participants are closely watching whether the verdict leads to a partial rollback or a complete invalidation of the tariffs.

Adding to the uncertainty, Trump has hinted at imposing higher tariffs on Indian goods over New Delhi's continued pur-

chase of Russian crude. Over the past four sessions, the Sensex and Nifty have declined 1.8 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively. Meanwhile, a newly approved bipartisan Russia sanctions bill could allow tariffs as steep as 500 per cent on countries importing Russian oil, further unsettling markets.

Rising crude oil prices also weighed on sentiment. Brent crude climbed 0.53 per cent to \$62.32 per barrel, raising concerns over India's import bill and inflationary pressures. The

rupee weakened alongside equities, slipping 7 paise to 89.97 against the US dollar amid continued FII outflows and higher oil prices.

From a technical perspective, analysts warned of further downside risks. The Nifty has breached key support levels, including its 50-day exponential moving average. Experts see immediate support around the 25,700 mark, while the 26,000-26,050 zone is expected to act as strong resistance in the near term.

# TCS Set to Kick Off Q3 Earnings Season; Brokerages Expect Modest Revenue Growth and Stable Deal Pipeline

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) is set to kick off the third-quarter earnings season for India Inc. on Monday, with brokerages anticipating steady growth in both revenue and profit, supported largely by its international operations. Analysts believe demand from developed markets, particularly in the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) and hi-tech verticals, will be key drivers during the quarter.

According to consensus estimates compiled by Business Standard, TCS is expected to post a 1.21 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) increase in revenue to ₹66,595 crore in Q3. Growth is likely to be led by overseas markets, while the domestic business may remain under pressure.

On the profitability front, the company's net profit is projected to rise by 6.9 per cent QoQ to ₹12,908.7 crore, despite expectations of some margin compression. On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, net profit is estimated to grow by an average of 4.27 per cent. Analysts also expect the total contract value (TCV) for the quarter to stay in the range of \$10-11 billion, indicating a stable deal pipeline.

In the previous quarter, TCS reported a net profit of ₹12,075 crore, marking a 1.4 per cent YoY increase. Revenue grew 2.4 per cent to ₹65,799 crore, beating market expectations.

Market participants will closely track management commen-



tary on measures to accelerate revenue growth, visibility on the deal pipeline, client spending patterns, and progress on planned investments in data centres and artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure.

Brokerages largely expect muted sequential growth. One brokerage estimates a 0.7 per cent QoQ rise in international revenues, which could be partly offset by a sharp decline in the India business in constant currency terms. Margins are expected to remain largely

stable, as higher investments may be balanced by rupee depreciation.

Kotak Securities expects TCV to remain within the \$10-11 billion range and believes investor focus will be on TCS's renewed growth strategy and increased investments aimed at improving momentum.

Another brokerage anticipates a 0.5 per cent QoQ revenue growth in constant currency, driven by international business growth and ramp-up of the BSNL project. Management

guidance on near-term demand, client technology budgets, AI-led data centre opportunities and deal wins will be key.

Motilal Oswal expects Ebit margins to decline by about 30 basis points sequentially due to wage hikes, BSNL project costs and redundancy-related expenses, though recent acquisitions could support near-term growth.

Overall, analysts see Q3 as a stable quarter for TCS, with modest growth and strong focus on future demand signals.

# Adani Enterprises' ₹1,000-Crore NCD Issue Fully Subscribed Within 45 Minutes

Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) saw overwhelming investor interest in its Rs 1,000 crore public issue of non-convertible debentures (NCDs), which was fully subscribed within 45 minutes of opening, according to stock exchange data.

The base issue of Rs 500 crore was subscribed in just 10 minutes, while total bids crossed Rs 1,000 crore, including the green shoe option, in under an hour. Data from the BSE showed that by the end of the first day, AEL had received bids for 2.19 crore NCDs against an issue size of 50 lakh debentures.

The issue opened on Tuesday and will remain open until January 19, 2026, with allotment being made on a first-come, first-served basis. The NCDs offer an effective yield of up to 8.90 percent per annum, making them attractive compared to similarly rated debt instruments and fixed deposits.

The issue comprises a base size of Rs 500 crore along with a green shoe option of an additional Rs 500 crore. The NCDs are



proposed to be listed on both the BSE and NSE and carry a 'AA-' rating with a stable outlook from ICRA and CARE Ratings.

This marks AEL's strong second showing in the debt market, following its Rs 1,000 crore NCD issuance in July 2025, which was fully subscribed within three hours on the first day, reflecting sustained investor confidence.

The company said that at least 75 percent of the proceeds from the current issue will be used to repay existing debt, while the remainder will be allocated to general corporate purposes.

The NCDs are available in tenors of 24, 36, and 60 months, with quarterly, annual, and cumulative interest payment options across eight series, cater-

ing to a wide range of investor preferences.

Adani Enterprises continues to expand its infrastructure portfolio across India. Key projects include the Navi Mumbai International Airport, which was inaugurated on October 8, 2025, and became operational on December 25, 2025. In October, Google and AdaniConnex announced a partnership to develop India's largest AI data centre campus along with supporting green energy infrastructure in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

The company also operationalised the Nanasa-Pidgaon HAM road project in September 2025, its seventh active road project, and recently received letters of award for three new infrastructure projects, including a ropeway connecting Sonprayag and Kedarnath in Uttarakhand, and two road projects in Bihar under the hybrid annuity model.

The issue is being managed by Nuvama Wealth Management, Trust Investment Advisors, and Tipsons Consultancy Services.

# Ashok Leyland Shares Rally 3% on Strong Volumes as CV Demand Outlook Improves



Shares of Ashok Leyland rose sharply on Friday, gaining nearly 3 per cent to touch an intraday high of ₹190.70 on the BSE, even as broader markets traded under pressure. At around 2:01 pm, the stock was trading 2.3 per cent higher at 188.75, outperforming the BSE Sensex, which was down 0.74 per cent at the same time.

The rally was supported by strong trading activity, with volumes more than doubling compared to the daily average. A combined 20.42 million equity shares were traded across the NSE and BSE, reflecting heightened investor interest. Earlier in the week, on January 5, 2026, the commercial vehicle maker had touched a fresh record high of 191.80.

Ashok Leyland has significantly outperformed the broader market across multiple timeframes. Over the past one month, the stock has surged 18 per cent, while the Sensex declined 1.3 per cent. In the last six months, Ashok Leyland has rallied 50 per cent, compared to a marginal 0.04 per cent rise in the benchmark index. On a year-on-year basis, the stock has zoomed 76 per cent, far exceeding the Sensex's gain of 7.7 per cent.

The strong performance comes amid robust sales momentum in India's automotive sector. Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) reported healthy volume growth in December 2025, largely driven by sustained demand following GST rate cuts that re-

duced vehicle prices. The commercial vehicle (CV) and tractor segments outperformed peers during the month, with visible recovery across both medium and heavy commercial vehicles (M&HCVs) and light commercial vehicles (LCVs).

Ashok Leyland led the growth within the CV segment, reporting a 27 per cent year-on-year increase in total sales to 21,533 units in December 2025. M&HCV volumes rose 29.2 per cent to 14,830 units, while export volumes jumped 35 per cent year-on-year to 1,678 units.

The company noted a smooth transition of M&HCV trucks to air-conditioning mandates, highlighting growing acceptance of improved safety and comfort standards in the trucking industry. Management also pointed out that GST 2.0 boosted demand by reducing GST on trucks and buses from 28 per cent to 18 per cent, while rate cuts in other goods categories are expected to support higher freight demand.

Looking ahead, Ashok Leyland's management remains optimistic about CV industry growth in the second half of FY26, supported by improving consumption, infrastructure spending, higher fleet utilisation, and interest rate transmission. Analysts at ICICI Securities expect margins to improve in H2FY26 and reach mid-teen levels over the medium term, though near-term volume visibility remains a key monitorable.

# Manappuram Finance Shares Tumble 7% After RBI Flags Concerns Over Bain Capital Deal



Shares of Manappuram Finance Ltd declined sharply on January 9, sliding nearly 7 percent, after a Reuters report said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised concerns over Bain Capital's proposal to acquire a controlling stake in the non-banking financial company (NBFC).

At around 2:40 pm, Manappuram Finance shares were trading 7 percent lower at Rs 287.30 on the stock exchanges.

Bain Capital, which announced its proposed investment in the gold loan-focused NBFC in March last year, is reportedly exploring a phased divestment of its stake in Tyger Capital, a smaller NBFC, to address the RBI's objections, according to sources cited by Reuters.

The RBI has consistently discouraged investors from exercising control over multiple lending entities, whether banks or non-bank lenders. In the past, private equity firms holding 20 percent or more stakes in NBFCs have been compelled to reduce their holdings following regulatory pushback.

While Bain has already received approvals for the Manappuram transaction from market regulator SEBI and the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the RBI remains the final authority for approving significant stake acquisitions in banks and NBFCs.

Under the proposed deal, Bain plans

to acquire an 18 percent stake in Manappuram Finance for approximately Rs 4,400 crore, followed by an open offer to purchase an additional 26 percent. If completed, Bain would become one of the two controlling shareholders, with the ability to influence key management decisions. The investment is planned through two Bain funds—BC Asia Investments XXV and BC Asia Investments XIV.

Bain currently holds a 93 percent stake in Tyger Capital, formerly known as Adani Capital, which it acquired from the Adani family in 2023 through its Special Situations fund. Although Bain has argued that its investments are managed by separate funds and teams, sources indicated that this explanation is unlikely to satisfy the RBI.

Manappuram Finance operates a loan book of around Rs 31,500 crore, primarily focused on the rapidly expanding gold loan segment. In comparison, Tyger Capital has a smaller asset base of Rs 7,320 crore, spanning business, agricultural and home loans.

India's financial services sector has witnessed strong foreign investor interest over the past year. In December, Japan's MUFG announced plans to acquire a 20 percent stake in Shriram Finance for \$4.4 billion, while Blackstone agreed in October to invest around \$700 million for a 9.9 percent stake in Federal Bank.





## Noida Entrepreneur’s Post on ‘Everyday Luxuries’ Abroad Sparks Online Debate



A Noida-based entrepreneur has triggered a lively online discussion after questioning why many everyday comforts taken for granted in several foreign countries still feel like luxuries in India. Her post has drawn widespread attention, prompting conversations around cleanliness, civic sense, public hygiene, and overall quality of life.

Neha Nagar shared her reflections on X, drawing from her travel experiences. She wrote that travelling abroad often highlights how basic amenities in India are still not universally available or consistently maintained. According to her, one does not need to travel far to notice the difference, as similar contrasts are visible in popular destinations such as Bali and Vietnam.

In her post, Neha pointed out several areas where the gap is most apparent. These include cleaner public spaces, better hygiene standards

in street food, stricter regulation on plastic usage, improved air quality, and safer environments for women, particularly at night.

While acknowledging that no country is without flaws, Neha noted that India continues to struggle with providing basic civic amenities to all its citizens. At the same time, she expressed optimism about the country’s potential to improve. She highlighted India’s rich history, spirituality, food, art, culture, and people as strengths that could support meaningful progress.

Neha concluded by emphasising that real change would require intention, care, and accountability at every level—from governance to everyday civic behaviour.

### Social Media Reactions

The post sparked mixed reactions online. Some users agreed with her observations, sharing similar experiences from

their travels. “Just back from Malaysia—amazingly clean with great infrastructure,” one user commented. Another added, “Travelling abroad often sharpens our eye for what works better elsewhere.”

Others pushed back against the comparison. One user questioned the choice of countries, writing, “Why compare India with Vietnam? Compare it with the US. In India, we get grocery delivery in 15 minutes, affordable healthcare that’s far better than in America, UPI payments without carrying cash, easily available domestic help, and even medicines delivered at home.”

The discussion continues to divide opinion, reflecting broader debates on how India measures quality of life, what benchmarks it should aspire to, and how everyday convenience compares with long-term civic and environmental well-being.

## A First Flight, A Lifetime Dream: Son’s Gesture Moves Social Media



A heartwarming video of an Indian man fulfilling a long-cherished dream for his parents has struck an emotional chord with social media users across the country. The short clip, shared on Instagram by a man named Vishnu, shows him taking his parents on their first-ever flight—a moment that resonates deeply with countless middle-class families in India.

The video opens with Vishnu standing proudly in front of an IndiGo aircraft alongside his parents, a simple yet powerful image that symbolises years of aspiration, sacrifice, and perseverance. In subsequent shots, the trio can be seen walking through the airport terminal, taking in the surroundings with visible excitement. Vishnu’s parents appear delighted, smiling as they experience the unfamiliar yet thrilling world of air travel for the first time. Vishnu, meanwhile, carries a quiet sense of fulfilment, watching his par-

ents enjoy a moment he had long hoped to give them.

Overlay text in the video reads, “Every boy’s dream, finally made it,” while Vishnu’s caption echoes the sentiment: “Finally the dream comes true.” Though brief, the video encapsulates a powerful story—one that reflects the emotional milestones many families hold dear but rarely articulate.

For many viewers, the clip represents more than just a first flight. It symbolises years of parental sacrifice—working tirelessly, putting their children’s needs above their own, and postponing personal dreams so the next generation could move forward. For the children, moments like these become a way to give back, offering not luxury, but experience, dignity, and joy.

The response on social media has been overwhelmingly positive. Users flooded the comments section with messages of admiration and emotion.

“Pure love and gratitude. This is what success looks like,” one user wrote. Another commented, “Such a proud moment. So happy to see this.” A third user summed up the sentiment shared by many, saying, “It’s every middle-class family’s dream.”

The video’s appeal lies in its simplicity. There are no dramatic gestures or extravagant displays—just a son quietly fulfilling a promise he carried in his heart. In a country where millions grow up watching planes fly overhead, imagining what it would be like to be inside one, this moment reflects the quiet victories that define real success.

In an age dominated by curated luxury and viral trends, Vishnu’s video stands out as a reminder that the most meaningful achievements are often deeply personal. For many who watched, it wasn’t just a video—it was a reflection of their own dreams, hopes, and the love that binds families together.

## “I Love Bengaluru, But I Can’t Take It Anymore”: Viral Post Sparks Debate on City’s Declining Quality of Life

A heartfelt social media post by a Bengaluru resident has ignited a widespread debate about the city’s present-day reality, increasingly shaped by relentless urbanisation, crumbling infrastructure, and a steadily declining quality of life. The post, shared on Reddit and now widely circulated, captures the growing frustration of residents struggling with poor roads, chronic traffic congestion, and over-stretched civic services.

Titled “Bengaluru is my city, I love it. But I just can’t take it anymore,” the post struck a chord with thousands. The author, a lifelong resident, expressed deep emotional attachment to the city while lamenting how everyday living has become exhausting.

“Dear Bengaluru government, please do not make me hate this city. I’ve lived here all my life and loved every bit of it. I have not lived in any other city, and I have no problem with that. Bangalore is my city. But in the past few years, everything has gotten worse—the traffic, the air, the water, and most impor-



tantly, the roads,” the resident wrote.

One of the key concerns raised was the severe traffic congestion along the Outer Ring Road (ORR), particularly the stretch from Silk Board to Mahadevpura, where commuters routinely spend hours stuck in gridlock.

“I just can’t anymore. The traffic has gotten so terrible. I’ve tried everything—office cabs, switching between multiple metro lines, buses, my personal car, and even a bike. Every option

has its pros and cons, but the problem remains the same across all modes of transport,” the post said.

Calling for stronger government intervention, the resident urged authorities to address poor lane discipline, fix deteriorating roads, and deploy more traffic police to manage congestion at key choke points.

“I agree that we citizens must play our part. But the government needs to intervene more. Do more. Be more. We pay nearly 30 per cent of our income in taxes for a

reason,” the post added.

As the post gained traction, social media users were divided. Many echoed the resident’s frustrations, while others argued that meaningful change would require sustained public action rather than online complaints.

“The only thing that will save this city is mass protests. None of these politicians are working for us. Every MLA, MP, contractor, and bureaucrat is only filling their pockets,” one user commented.

Another wrote, “Instead of ranting online, we should come together and stage large-scale protests for days.”

Others pointed to structural issues. “Bengaluru desperately needs a new extension city like Navi Mumbai, Gurgaon, or Noida. No city—especially one that grew as unplanned as Bangalore—can handle continuous population growth for decades,” another user observed.

Residents also flagged persistent power outages as an additional burden. “Don’t forget the power cuts. I’ve been waiting for over three hours in the middle of a workday for electricity to return. Maintenance happens randomly during office hours, and despite that, we still face 10–30 minute power cuts almost every day,” one commenter said.

The viral post has reignited conversations about Bengaluru’s future—raising difficult questions about governance, infrastructure planning, and whether India’s technology capital can reconcile rapid growth with livable urban conditions.

## AI Cuts a Year of Coding to a Month, Leaves Zoho Chief Scientist Stunned

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how software is designed and built, and Zoho co-founder and Chief Scientist Sridhar Vembu recently offered a compelling glimpse into just how transformative this shift could be. Sharing details of an internal demonstration at Zoho, Vembu said he was “blown away” by what a single engineer managed to accomplish using advanced AI tools.

According to Vembu, the engineer independently developed an entire device over the course of just one month—without any formal directive or team support. “I did not know he was building it,” Vembu wrote, adding that he was astonished by both the scope and sophistication of the tool. What stood out even more was the speed of execution. Vembu noted that the same project would traditionally have required a team of three to four engineers working for at least a year.



The key driver behind this dramatic acceleration, the engineer explained, was the Opus 4.5 AI model. Vembu said the engineer described the model as a “game-changer” that fundamentally altered his approach to AI-assisted development. Until encountering Opus 4.5, the engineer had reportedly been sceptical of AI-generated code and unconvinced of its practical value. That scepti-

cism, however, was quickly replaced by enthusiasm once he saw the model’s capabilities in action.

This experience, Vembu suggested, highlights a broader transformation underway in the software industry. Powerful AI systems are no longer just assisting developers with small tasks but are beginning to rival traditional, labour-intensive development processes. Drawing

a vivid analogy, Vembu compared the shift to the arrival of machine looms during the Industrial Revolution, which challenged skilled handloom weavers. “Powerful machine looms have arrived for software development,” he wrote, warning that the implications would be far-reaching.

At Zoho, Vembu said, this moment is being met with both excitement and urgency. He empha-

sised the company’s long-standing culture of experimentation, where engineers are encouraged to explore new ideas independently. “This is how we learn in Zoho—we let smart people experiment and find new pathways,” he noted, suggesting that such freedom is essential in an era of rapid technological change.

However, Vembu also acknowledged the pressure this transformation brings. As Zoho’s Chief Scientist, he said the rise of increasingly capable AI tools presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the company. “At Zoho, we have our work cut out,” he wrote candidly. “The implications are enormous.”

Ending his reflection on a hopeful note, Vembu added, “Wish us luck,” underscoring that while AI may redefine software development, navigating this new landscape will require adaptability, curiosity, and sustained innovation.

## 62-Year-Old Chinese Woman’s Pregnancy After Son’s Death Sparks Emotional and Medical Debate Online

A 62-year-old woman in China has sparked widespread discussion on social media after revealing that she is six months pregnant and believes the unborn child represents the return of her only son, who passed away earlier this year. The story, first reported by the South China Morning Post, has drawn both emotional responses and medical concern from online users.

The woman, who lives in Songyuan city in northeast China’s Jilin province, has come into the public eye largely through videos shared by her younger sister on a major Chinese social media platform. Under the username “Xiao Wei,” the sister regularly posts updates about the pregnancy, documenting hospital visits, health check-ups, and the emotional journey of the expectant mother.

This is the woman’s second pregnancy. She lost her only son in January 2025, though details about his age and the cause of death have not



been publicly disclosed. Several months later, she conceived through in vitro fertilisation (IVF), a decision that has generated intense public interest given her age.

In a video posted in late December, the woman shared that she felt the baby might arrive prematurely. She also described feeling frequent kicks and noted that the baby becomes particularly active when she eats sweets. In China,

doctors are legally prohibited from revealing the sex of an unborn child due to longstanding concerns over sex-selective abortions. However, the woman said many people around her had suggested that her cravings for sweets indicated she was carrying a boy. She referred to the unborn baby as “the return of my son,” a remark that has stirred emotional debate online.

Due to her age, the woman undergoes prenatal check-ups more frequently than younger pregnant women. Her sister accompanies her to every appointment and continues to share updates online. For specialised examinations, the woman must travel approximately 170 kilometres to Changchun, the provincial capital, where larger and better-equipped medical facilities are available.

Medical experts have cautioned against pregnancies at an advanced age. Dr. Chen Min, a senior gynaecologist at Harbin No. 1 Hospital in Heilongjiang province, told local media that pregnancy in older women carries significantly higher risks. These include complications such as hypertension, gestational diabetes, and a greater likelihood of requiring a caesarean section, which itself poses additional dangers.

Dr. Chen advised that women considering childbirth later in life should undergo comprehensive medical evaluations before conception, strictly adhere to medical guidance throughout pregnancy, and plan delivery at a major hospital with advanced emergency care facilities.

While the woman’s story has touched many emotionally, it has also reignited discussions about reproductive health, grief, and the medical and ethical challenges surrounding late-age pregnancies.



# KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer: India’s Perfect Middle-Order Duo

For decades, India’s cricket success has been built on stellar top-order batsmen, but history shows that behind every title-winning team lies a strong, reliable middle order. Kapil Dev’s “devis” had Yashpal Sharma and Sandeep Patil at four and five. MS Dhoni’s champions could slot anyone from himself to Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, or Virat Kohli. In the post-2019 World Cup era, India has finally discovered a consistent 4-5 combination in KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer.

Since joining forces during the post-World Cup rebuilding phase, the pair has scored 823 runs in 14 innings at an average of 64, with roughly one in three partnerships crossing the 100-run mark. Their partnership is a fascinating study in contrasts—attitude, temperament, approach, and strokeplay.

Shreyas thrives on risk, frequently altering his stance to suit bowlers and conditions. He is particularly devastating against spin, using his feet and strong wrists to disrupt lengths, making him a nightmare for bowlers, as Australia painfully realized in the 2023 World Cup final. Rahul, on the other hand, is a stabilizer. Calm under pressure, he can anchor an innings when



wickets fall early, allowing Shreyas to rebuild momentum—or accelerate if the top order has already laid a foundation.

Their complementary strike rates ensure India’s innings never stagnate. Shreyas hits at 99.07 while batting from 4 to 7, dispatching a boundary every ninth ball. Rahul, with a strike rate of 94.72, finds the fence every 11th ball. This blend of muscle, momentum, stability, and scoring speed makes them central to India’s ODI aspirations.

One defining example

of their synergy came in Hamilton, 2020, where they stitched a 136-run partnership in 101 balls. Arriving at 156 for 3 in the 29th over, Rahul anchored while Shreyas accelerated, setting India up for a massive 347 for 4. Even partnerships of 60-70 runs from this duo can swing a match. With Hardik Pandya’s return, India’s top six could become a fearsome force capable of capturing the World Cup that eluded them in 2023.

Their differences in technique are equally

compelling. Shreyas slashes short balls aggressively, sometimes leg-side; Rahul cuts them delicately through slips. Shreyas is the aggressor in crises, while Rahul excels as an accumulator, enforcer, or attacker as the situation demands. Since 2020, no middle-order batsman has averaged higher than Rahul’s 61.72 at No. 5 (minimum 20 innings).

Both are master field manipulators and run-accumulation experts, especially strong on the leg side. Their combined skill

set forces bowlers to constantly adjust lines and lengths. While Shreyas was groomed for the middle order, Rahul’s journey—from opener to floater in a crowded top order—has forged his versatility. Together, they are the muscle, momentum, and stability India needs in the middle overs. Like Yuvraj Singh and Suresh Raina before them, Rahul and Shreyas have proven that a dangerous middle-order pair doesn’t always need to be left-right—they just need to complement each other perfectly.

## Mumbai Fall Short Against Punjab, Set Up Vijay Hazare Trophy Quarterfinal Clash with Karnataka

Mumbai missed an opportunity to top Group C in the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26 after collapsing from 201/5 to 215 against Punjab in their final group match on Thursday at Jaipuria Vidyalaya Ground, Jaipur. The defeat handed Punjab the top spot in the group, setting up a quarterfinal clash with Madhya Pradesh, while Mumbai will now face rivals Karnataka in Bengaluru on January 12.

Chasing a modest total of 216, Mumbai were well placed before the dismissal of captain Shreyas Iyer sparked a dramatic collapse. Punjab’s spinners—Mayank Markande, Harpreet Brar, and Haroon Singh—exploited Mumbai’s fragile tail as the last five wickets fell for just 14 runs, leaving Mumbai all out in 26.2 overs.

Mumbai’s innings, however, had bright moments. Sarfaraz Khan produced a blistering knock, scoring the fastest List A fifty by



an Indian off just 15 balls, finishing with 62 from 20 deliveries that included seven boundaries and five sixes. Shreyas Iyer also contributed a well-paced 45 off 34 balls. Despite their efforts, Mumbai’s collapse meant the team couldn’t chase down the target.

Earlier, Punjab had

posted 216 in 45.1 overs, thanks to 74-ball 72 from Ramandeep Singh and a solid 57 from Anmolpreet Singh. With Shardul Thakur already ruled out and Shreyas Iyer expected to join India’s ODI squad against New Zealand, Mumbai will enter the knockouts without two key players.

In other Group C action, Ruturaj Gaikwad starred for Maharashtra, scoring 134 off 131 balls to lift the team from 16/4 (later 25/5) to a competitive 249/7. Support from Vicky Ostwal (53) and Rajvardhan Hangargekar (32\*) helped Maharashtra post a defendable total, which was backed by Ramakrishna

Ghosh’s final-over maiden. Leg-spinner Prashant Solkanki claimed 4/56 as Maharashtra held on for victory.

Group A saw Madhya Pradesh overcome Karnataka comfortably. Left-arm wrist-spinner Shivang Kumar dismantled Karnataka’s batting, restricting them to 207 in 47.4 overs. Venkatesh Iyer’s unbeaten 65 guided Madhya Pradesh to a seven-wicket win in 23.2 overs. Kerala, meanwhile, faltered against Tamil Nadu; despite a strong start at 117/1, they collapsed to 217 in 40.2 overs, chasing TN’s 294/8, anchored by N Jagadeesan’s 139.

In Group B, Uttar Pradesh topped the table on net run-rate after Vidarbha’s 160-run win over Assam edged out Baroda, who had defeated Chandigarh by 149 runs. In Group D, Delhi and Saurashtra secured their spots in the quarterfinals.

## Bangladesh Cricket’s T20 World Cup Dilemma: Between Passion and Precaution

With less than a month to go before the T20 World Cup, Bangladesh cricket finds itself in a tense and emotionally charged situation. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has, for the second time in recent weeks, written to the ICC expressing discomfort with traveling to India for the tournament and requesting that the team’s matches be relocated to Sri Lanka. On the surface, this appears to be a logistical issue, but the concerns run much deeper.

At its core, the BCB’s correspondence reflects not just administrative worries but a sense of unease among fans and players alike. Recent controversies, including the high-profile dropping of Mustafizur Rahman from the IPL, have fueled a feeling that Bangladeshi cricket is often sidelined in global decision-making. Public sentiment is sensitive, and the board’s request is as



much about national pride as it is about tournament arrangements.

Stripped of rhetoric, the BCB’s primary demand is security. The board is reportedly seeking individual assurances for every member of its World Cup contingent—from players to coaches, support staff, and officials. The ICC has responded by presenting its

comprehensive security plan and a range of options, while leaving the final decision to Bangladesh. Yet, reports suggest that the ICC has rejected the idea of relocating matches and warned that refusing to travel could result in forfeited points.

For the ICC, the situation is complicated. The tournament schedule is fixed, broadcasters are

committed, and logistics across multiple Indian cities are already in motion. Granting one team special treatment could set a precedent the governing body is keen to avoid. Efforts are ongoing to find a compromise, but time is running short.

For Bangladesh, the stakes go beyond fixtures and clauses. Cricket is woven into the country’s cul-

tural and emotional fabric—moments on the field unite millions, inspire debates, and foster national pride. Any decision to pull out of the World Cup would carry profound repercussions at home, far beyond the sport itself.

At the same time, no cricket board can ignore genuine safety concerns. The BCB must weigh the potential risks carefully, aware that even a minor incident in India could have serious ramifications. This episode is less about defiance and more about trust—how much reassurance is enough, and whether empathy can coexist with the rigid schedules of billion-dollar tournaments.

Bangladesh’s commitment to participating is clear, but the next few days will be crucial in determining whether the gap between caution and ambition can be bridged—or whether this controversy leaves scars that last far beyond the World Cup.

## Anand’s Enduring Brilliance and Arjun’s Miraculous Swindle Highlight Tata Steel Chess India



Kolkata, long celebrated for its passion for sports, has always embraced chess with equal fervor. Since its inception in 2018, the Tata Steel Chess India Rapid and Blitz tournament has been a fixture of pride for the city, drawing hundreds of enthusiasts each year. This edition, however, initially lacked the buzz of previous years, with the absence of Magnus Carlsen—whose 2024 visit had electrified the city—and D Gukesh leaving the atmosphere noticeably subdued.

Thursday, however, proved different. The Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium was nearly full, brimming with energy as Arjun Erigaisi prepared to face Viswanathan Anand. The matchup between Anand, the veteran of Indian chess, and Arjun, the “lightning kid,” promised fireworks, as the two were the only players to have finished on the podium at the recent World Rapid and Blitz Championship.

Chaos, unsurprisingly, ensued. Anand opened with a classic Ruy Lopez—1.e4 e5—before developing his knight and bishop and castling kingside. Arjun, playing Black, revealed an extraordinary line of preparation, staying ahead on the clock for 18 moves. It wasn’t until an en passant decision on move 19 that he paused to seriously deliberate.

The middle game, however, brought trouble. A seemingly careless rook-taking-b3 pawn allowed Anand to trade rooks and capture Arjun’s other rook for a passive knight, securing a decisive material advantage. Arjun admitted after-

ward that the position felt nearly hopeless. Yet recalling a similar situation at the Jerusalem Masters just weeks earlier, he remained cautiously optimistic.

Remarkably, Arjun turned the tables. Anand overlooked a pawn promotion, allowing Arjun to regain a rook through a queen check. What seemed like a lost position became a miraculous swindle, echoing his earlier escape in Jerusalem.

Despite the hiccup, Anand’s day was impressive. At 56, he remained tied for the lead with Nihal Sarin, having scored brilliant wins over Hans Niemann and Volodar Murzin. Arjun expressed admiration for Anand’s longevity: “It’s impressive to see him playing at this level at his age. I’m not sure how many of us will achieve the same.”

For Arjun, Thursday marked a turnaround after a poor start, including losses to Vidit Gujrathi and R. Praggnanandhaa and a near-defeat to Nihal Sarin. Luck favored him again with the swindle against Anand and a victory over an over-ambitious Wei Yi. Yet Arjun remained self-critical: “Honestly, I was still playing badly. I was lost against Anand, and Wei Yi over-pushed, which gave me the win. My best game was actually against Aravindh Chithambaram—I played well but didn’t convert it into a win.”

The day highlighted the drama, unpredictability, and enduring talent that make the Tata Steel Chess India tournament a showcase of world-class chess.

## “PV Sindhu Cruises into Malaysia Open Super 1000 Semis as Yamaguchi Retires Injured”



PV Sindhu continued her dominant run at the Super 1000 Malaysia Open, following a commanding performance against Tomoka Miyazaki, as she faced world champion Akane Yamaguchi in the quarterfinals. However, the match ended abruptly after the first set, with Yamaguchi conceding due to an injury that severely affected her movement. Sindhu’s relentless attacking game, coupled with Yamaguchi’s discomfort, made the result almost inevitable, as the Japanese player retired after losing the opening set 21-11.

Yamaguchi, entering the court with a knee brace, struggled from the very beginning. Sindhu immediately imposed her pace with aggressive strokes, including short-back swings, sharp down-the-line shots, and precise smashes, quickly establishing a commanding 10-2 lead. Known for her defensive prowess, Yamaguchi found herself unable to move freely and expressed visible frustration as errors mounted. Her strategy, which aimed to restrict Sindhu to the backcourt and neutralize her attacking elevation, only yielded 11 points and proved insufficient against the Indian’s fluid game.

Sindhu, meanwhile, appeared relaxed and confident on court, striking the shuttle with precision and variety. Her high clears, powerful

smashes, and crisp drop shots left Yamaguchi with little room to recover. Within just over ten minutes, Sindhu had wrapped up the first set convincingly, prompting Yamaguchi to concede and handing the Indian her first Super 1000 semifinal appearance in three years.

Looking ahead, Sindhu faces a challenging semifinal against either Wang Zhiyi or Putri Kusuma Wardani. Wardani, who has defeated Sindhu twice in recent encounters, including at the Paris World Championships, poses a threat, but Sindhu’s improved speed and tactical variety make her far from unbeatable. On the other hand, Wang Zhiyi, the World No. 2 from China, represents Sindhu’s most significant scalp in recent times, having fallen to the Indian at the World Championships.

Earlier on Thursday, Sindhu had dispatched 19-year-old Tomoka Miyazaki in a dominant 21-8, 21-13 victory that lasted just 33 minutes. Her commanding display ensured she reached her first Super 1000 quarterfinal of the season, carrying momentum and confidence into the semifinals. With her attacking flair and court awareness at peak levels, Sindhu looks well-positioned to challenge for the title, continuing her resurgence on the international badminton stage.



Veteran Producer Thummalapalli Ramasatyanarayana Sets Another Historic Milestone with Seven Trailer Launch



Tollywood stalwart Thummalapalli Ramasatyanarayana, celebrated for his extraordinary career spanning over 114 films in just two decades, has once again made headlines with a record-breaking feat. Following his historic launch of 15 films simultaneously on August 15 last year, the veteran producer recently unveiled the trailers of seven of these films on the same day at a grand event held at Prasad Labs, Hyderabad. Trailers for the remaining eight films are set to be released shortly, generating anticipation among fans and industry insiders alike.

The grand trailer launch drew a star-studded audience from the film fraternity, including prominent personalities such as Suman, Saikumar, V. Vijayendra Prasad, K. S. Rama Rao, Relangi Narasimha Rao, Yandamoori Veerendranath, J. K. Bharavi, Veera Shankar, Chandra Mahesh, K. L. Damodar

Prasad, T. Prasanna Kumar, K. Ashok Kumar, Kavitha, Kalva Sujatha Gupta, and V. Vijay Kumar, who graced the occasion as chief guests and extended their best wishes to the directors, cast, and crew for achieving this extraordinary milestone.

The trailers unveiled included films such as Mahanaga directed by Uday Bhaskar, Yandamoori Kathalu directed by Ravi Basara, Maa Nanna Hero directed by Vijay Erramsetti, Robo-47 and Mahabaludu directed by Nuthan, Rudra Thandavam directed by Harsha, and Man-am-2036 directed by Sai Ramesh. The directors were felicitated by the dignitaries, along with music director duo Dr. A. J. Sandhyavarshini and Dr. V. R. A. Pradeep, who have composed music for all 15 films. PRO Dheeraj Appaji, responsible for publicity across all the films, and Creative Head Thallada Sai Krishna were also honored, while cast and crew

members from the entire Bhimavaram Talkies lineup attended in large numbers, creating a celebratory and enthusiastic atmosphere.

Speaking at the event, Thummalapalli Ramasatyanarayana praised the directors for completing the shooting and trailer work at a record pace through meticulous planning. He announced that release dates for each film will be revealed soon and expressed confidence that all 15 films will be released by August this year, setting yet another industry record. He concluded by expressing heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of the event.

Through this ambitious initiative, Thummalapalli Ramasatyanarayana continues to redefine productivity and scale in Tollywood, reinforcing his position as one of the most respected and visionary producers in the Indian film industry.

Star Director Buchi Babu Sana Unveils Fun-Filled Teaser of ‘Purushaha’



**TPN Bureau | Hyderabad, January 2026**

The upcoming entertainer Purushaha has already generated considerable buzz with its quirky first-look posters and humorous promotional lines, and the excitement skyrocketed when star director Buchi Babu Sana, known for hits like Uppena and Peddi, unveiled the film’s teaser. The film marks the debut of Pavan Kalyan as a lead actor, supported by a vibrant ensemble including Saptagiri, Kasireddy Rajkumar, Vaishnavi Kokkura, Vishika, and Hasini Sudheer. Presented by Battula Saraswathi under the Kalyan Productions banner and produced by Battula Koteswara Rao, the film is directed by Veeru Ulavala and is gearing up for a lively theatrical release.

The teaser opens on an intriguing note, featuring a dramatic voiceover that introduces the three

protagonists as valiant warriors battling to conquer the world. However, the narrative soon takes a hilarious turn, revealing that these “mighty warriors” are comically tossed around by their wives. Frustrated and exasperated, the trio decides to head to court seeking a divorce, setting the stage for a rib-tickling comedic journey.

Director Veeru Ulavala has been praised for crafting a relatable premise and presenting it with sharp, contemporary humor. The witty dialogues and lively characterizations immediately connect with the audience, while the comic trio of Pavan Kalyan, Saptagiri, and Kasireddy Rajkumar deliver standout performances that anchor the film’s humor. Vennela Kishore’s natural comedic timing further enhances the fun quotient, and the leading ladies—Vaishnavi Kokkura, Vishika, and Hasini Sudheer—add their own

spark, complementing the film’s playful tone. The supporting cast, including Sri Sandhya, Gabi Rock, Anaira Gupta, Rajeev Kanakala, Pammi Sai, and VTV Ganesh, also contribute with impeccable comic timing.

On the technical front, Satish Muthyala’s colorful cinematography captures the lively spirit of the film, while Shravan Bharadwaj’s peppy musical score elevates the light-hearted mood. Editor Koti ensures smooth pacing, and art director Ravi Babu Dondapati’s sets add visual polish to the production.

With its quirky premise, youthful dialogues, and engaging comic performances, the teaser of Purushaha successfully raises expectations, promising a fun-filled cinematic experience. The film, backed by Kalyan Productions, is now one of the most anticipated entertainers of the year.

Legendary Actor Nandamuri Balakrishna Joins Hands with Anvita Group as Brand Ambassador

Hyderabad: Legendary actor and Padma Bhushan awardee Nandamuri Balakrishna has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Anvita Group, the company announced recently. The announcement was made by the company’s Chairman and Managing Director, Achyutarao Boppana, who also unveiled the group’s new brand films at a special event held in Hyderabad on Friday.

Speaking to the media, Achyutarao Boppana highlighted Balakrishna’s five-decade-long journey in cinema and his extensive social contributions in the fields of education and healthcare. “Balakrishna’s integrity and unwavering principles make him an ideal representative of Anvita Group’s core values,” he said. He added that the actor’s agreement to serve as the brand ambassador was a matter of pride for the company.

Boppana emphasized that ‘Build Happiness’ is the guiding philosophy of Anvita Group, and Balakrishna perfectly embodies the spirit of bringing joy and creating lasting value in society. “His participation in our journey to build a legacy filled with happiness strengthens our mission significantly,” he noted.

Anvita Group has completed over four million square feet of construction in residential, commercial, and hospitality projects across Dubai and Abu Dhabi over the past two decades. The company is currently developing a lifestyle community in Dallas, USA, and continuing construction of 8 million square feet across three major projects in Hyderabad.

Highlighting the company’s recent achievements, Boppana noted that the Anvita Ivana project in Kolluru received its occupancy certificate ahead of schedule, with 400 units ready



for handover in the first phase. He also mentioned the ongoing Anvita High Nine and Anvita Parkside projects in Medchal, which are set to redefine urban living in the city.

Looking ahead, Anvita Group plans to expand with world-class projects not only in Hyderabad

but also in Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam. In Vijayawada, the group is set to construct the city’s tallest buildings near Benz Circle. Over the next five to six years, Anvita Group aims to deliver approximately a thousand units annually to buyers, underlining its rapid growth and ambi-

tious vision.

The event was attended by Anvita Group directors Nagabhushanam Boppana, Srikant Boppana, Vijayaraju, and Murali, Director of Happy Homes, among others, celebrating the partnership with the iconic actor and the unveiling of the new brand films.

Nivetha Pethuraj Graces the Grand Launch of VCare Center of Excellence in Jubilee Hills!



Hyderabad, January 2026: Tollywood sensation Nivetha Pethuraj kickstarted the new year with a glamorous appearance at the grand inauguration of the VCare Center of Excellence (CoE) in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. Radiating elegance, the actress officially opened the center, which marks a significant milestone in India’s advanced skin and aesthetic care industry. Speaking at the event, Nivetha expressed her excitement about international-standard treatments now being accessible in Hyderabad, particularly the much-coveted ‘Korean Glass Skin’ technology.

**The Magic of Single-Day Facial Architecture**

For the first time in India, the center introduces the ‘Single-Day Facial

Architecture’—a revolutionary glass-skin-focused protocol. This unique method integrates seven advanced laser technologies using a three-dimensional approach. It is designed to provide visible results from day one, with significant skin improvement continuing over 90 days. This breakthrough technology has quickly become the talk of the town among beauty and wellness enthusiasts.

**Led by Industry Pioneers**

The center is led by E. Carolin Praba, Founder and Managing Director of VCare Group, who holds the distinction of being India’s first female Trichologist. Joining her was VCare CEO Mukundan Satyanarayan, a veteran with over

22 years of leadership in Trichology and Cosmetic Sciences. Together, they highlighted how the center bridges the gap between traditional wellness and research-driven innovation using FDA-approved technologies.

**Global Standards in Hyderabad**

“World beauty standards are evolving, and so are we,” stated the leadership team. By targeting the skin at a structural level through personalized, multi-step procedures, the center aims to be a premier destination for aesthetic excellence. With Nivetha Pethuraj’s star power and VCare’s cutting-edge technology, the Jubilee Hills center is set to become the ultimate hub for those seeking world-class skin transformations.

Sivakarthikeyan’s Parasakthi Cleared for Release with U/A Certificate



**TPN Bureau | January 2026**

Sivakarthikeyan’s much-anticipated period drama Parasakthi has officially received a U/A certificate from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), clearing the way for its release on January 10, 2026. The certification comes just a day before the film’s scheduled theatrical debut, much to the delight of fans and theatre owners alike.

Directed by Sudha Kongara, Parasakthi features an ensemble cast including Ravi Mohan, Atharvaa, and Sreeleela. The film had faced scrutiny from the censor board in recent days amid wider certification delays affecting Tamil cinema’s festive releases. With the U/A rating now secured, the production team can proceed with advance bookings and final preparations for its release.

Reports indicate that the film underwent a few modifications, including minor cuts and adjustments to certain visuals and dialogues, to ad-

dress the board’s content concerns. These steps ensured the film met the certification requirements in time for its launch during the Pongal season.

Originally slated for a later release, the film’s release was advanced to January 10 to capitalize on the holiday audience. With its certification cleared, Parasakthi joins the festive slate of Tamil releases, offering viewers a mix of historical drama, strong performances, and engaging storytelling.

The clearance also comes amid a backdrop of certification challenges for other big-ticket Tamil films, highlighting the industry’s ongoing efforts to meet CBFC guidelines while keeping holiday releases on schedule.

With its U/A certification in place, Parasakthi is now ready to premiere in theatres worldwide, raising high expectations among audiences for both its critical reception and box office performance.

Prabhas’ The Raja Saab Release Sparks Fan Frenzy with Crocodile-Themed Celebrations



Telugu superstar Prabhas’ much anticipated film The Raja Saab hit theaters worldwide today, and the release day celebrations have taken an unexpectedly wild turn as fans turned their excitement into a full on spectacle. Enthusiastic supporters of the “Rebel Star” brought crocodile props and dummies into cinemas to recreate an iconic moment from the film’s trailer, creating a buzz that’s grabbing attention across social media and in theaters.

The craze stems from a striking scene in The Raja Saab trailer, where Prabhas’ character engages in a fierce face off with a crocodile. Inspired by this action packed moment, fans arrived at screenings carrying fake crocodiles, inflatable reptiles, and plush replicas, lifting them above their heads and cheering loudly as they entered auditoriums. Videos shared online show moviegoers chanting, posing for photos, and even mimicking battle stances, adding a playful and surreal energy to the release day atmosphere.

Inside theaters, some fans took the celebration further by moving toward the screen with their props during the crocodile fight scene, humorously re enacting the on screen mayhem. Fellow audience members were taken by surprise, initially mistaking the

props for real animals; however, it quickly became clear that the crocodiles were harmless replicas used in good fun. Many moviegoers embraced the spirited spectacle, turning the ordinary viewing experience into an interactive celebration of fandom.

The trend — playfully dubbed the “crocodile craze” — underscores the unmatched devotion of Prabhas’ fanbase and highlights the unique cultural phenomenon that surrounds his film releases. Social media platforms have been flooded with clips of fans holding their reptilian tributes high, prompting jokes, memes, and widespread discussion online about the extraordinary measures some devotees take to show support for their favorite star.

Alongside the crocodile celebrations, The Raja Saab is making a strong commercial impact. Early box office figures indicate that the film has recorded significant earnings on opening day across multiple languages, reflecting its pan Indian appeal and the fierce anticipation built up through promotions.

With its mix of fantasy, action, and larger than life visuals, The Raja Saab is already proving to be more than just a movie — it has become an event celebrated in its own unique and unforgettable way by Prabhas’ passionate fans.