



# TRUE POINT

## BUZZ POINTS

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## CM Revanth Reddy Launches Rs.50-Crore Assistive Devices Programme for Persons with Disabilities

Hyderabad, January 12, 2026—TPN Bureau

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday reaffirmed that the Telangana government is working with a strong humanitarian approach to ensure that persons with disabilities (Divyangs) live with dignity, self-respect, and equal opportunities in society.

Addressing a programme organised at Praja Bhavan, the Chief Minister launched the free distribution of retrofitted motorised vehicles, battery-operated tricycles, battery wheelchairs, laptops, hearing aids, mobile phones, and other advanced assistive devices to persons with disabilities under the aegis of the Divyan-

gula Sahakara Samstha. For the first time in the State's history, the government has allocated a massive 50 crore for this initiative.

Revanth Reddy said the government had earmarked 50 crore with the resolve to stand by persons with disabilities like a family member and provide them confidence and support. He asserted that Divyangs would be provided their rightful reservation in education and employment and announced that the government had decided to extend financial assistance of 2 lakh for the marriage of persons with disabilities.

Highlighting the government's commitment to inclusivity in sports, the Chief Minister said that a girl who excelled at the Paralympics was given a government job as encouragement. He

On social welfare ini-

tiatives, he said the government was establishing "Pranam" day-care centres for senior citizens and proposed a law to ensure that 10 per cent of the salary of government employees who neglect their parents is directly credited to their parents' accounts based on complaints.

Reiterating the government's broader vision, the Chief Minister said Telangana aims to provide 100 per cent healthcare coverage and would introduce a comprehensive health policy in the upcoming budget session. He said Telangana has emerged as a model State in social justice by conducting a caste census and implementing SC sub-categorisation, and concluded by calling upon all sections to work together to make Telangana an ideal welfare State in the country.

## Revanth Reddy Betrayed Telangana's Water Rights on Polavaram–Nallamala Sagar Issue: Harish Rao

Hyderabad, Jan 12, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Former Minister and senior BRS leader T.

Harish Rao on Sunday launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, alleging that the Telangana government had deliberately weakened the state's legal position in the Supreme Court on the Polavaram–Nallamala Sagar project, thereby facilitating Andhra Pradesh's interests at the cost of Telangana's water rights. Harish Rao said the "true face and betrayal mindset" of Revanth Reddy had been exposed before the Supreme Court after the state government filed what he described as a "legally unattainable and weak petition."

He contrasted the present government's approach with the past, recalling that during the Palamuru–Rangareddy project dispute, effective legal action, including writ petitions filed with the support of farmers, had secured a stay against Andhra Pradesh projects.

"Didn't the govern-

ment's legal team or senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi advise the Chief Minister that such a petition was not even maintainable?" Harish Rao asked. He questioned the need for the Irrigation Minister to travel to Delhi in formal attire merely to defend a flawed legal strategy. The former minister alleged that by withdrawing the writ petition and stating that a civil suit would be filed instead, the Telangana government was effectively granting Andhra Pradesh crucial time to complete the Nallamala Sagar project. He warned that involving multiple states—Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka—in prolonged hearings would only delay justice, during which Andhra Pradesh could finish construction and divert water irreversibly. Harish Rao termed the weak petition filed in the Supreme Court as a "Sankranti gift" from Revanth Reddy to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. He alleged

that the Congress government had been consistently cooperating with Andhra Pradesh, citing instances such as attending Delhi meetings despite claiming no agenda, discussing controversial projects like Banakacharla, signing agreements after initially denying them, and forming committees that allegedly legitimized Andhra Pradesh's water diversion. "After tenders were finalized, the government approached the Supreme Court, indirectly signalling consent to the Nallamala Sagar project," he charged. He accused Revanth Reddy of misleading the people by promising to block the project and fight legally, only to file a weak case that harmed Telangana's interests.

Harish Rao warned that the BRS would not remain silent, asserting that the party would take the issue to the public domain and wage a determined fight to protect Telangana's rightful share of Krishna and Godavari waters.

## Telangana Government Boosts Welfare for Divyang Couples and Persons with Disabilities

Hyderabad, Jan 12, 2026 | TPN Bureau

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti

Vikramarka emphasized the government's strong commitment to the welfare of persons with disabilities during a distribution program for assistive devices held at Praja Bhavan on Monday.

Addressing the gathering, he highlighted the state administration's progressive policies under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's leadership, noting that the government has expanded support for Divyang couples, providing 2 lakh as financial assistance for marriages. Deputy CM Vikramarka stated that unlike previous governments, which allocated funds to a limited number of welfare schemes, the current administration

ensures financial support across all departments while giving special focus to the needs of persons with disabilities. "We promised during the election campaign that once our government came to power, we would significantly increase funding for Divyang welfare programs," he said.

He pointed out that in the last ten years, the previous government spent 60 crore on disability welfare, whereas the present government has allocated 100 crore in just two years.

As part of this initiative, the government provides retrofitted motorized vehicles, battery-operated tricycles, battery wheelchairs, and other assistive devices at no cost to the beneficiaries. "These tools are meant to empower persons with disabilities and

help them achieve greater independence," the Deputy CM said. Highlighting inclusive employment measures, Vikramarka noted that the government has issued GO 34, which ensures that persons with disabilities are posted in locations where they are currently employed, enabling continuity and convenience.

He stressed that the government actively identifies the specific needs of Divyang individuals and takes proactive steps to meet them. Deputy CM Bhatti

Vikramarka reiterated that the Telangana government's policies are designed to strengthen the dignity, self-reliance, and opportunities for persons with disabilities, reflecting the administration's commitment to inclusive development and social justice.



## Telangana Govt's Integrated Residential Schools: A Role Model and Game Changer



TPN Bureau | January 07:

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Monday emphasized the state government's flagship Integrated Residential Schools project as a "dream initiative" and a game changer in the education sector. Addressing a video conference with district collectors and Chief Secre-

tary, he reviewed the construction progress and set clear directives to ensure timely completion of these schools.

The Deputy CM stressed that district collectors hold full responsibility for completing the construction of Integrated Residential Schools in their jurisdictions. He instructed that groundbreaking and foundation ceremonies be conducted with ministers or local MLAs

present once tenders are finalized, and a strict construction calendar must be fixed. Collectors were also asked to conduct weekly progress reviews and to visit the school sites at least once a month for on-site inspections.

Vikramarka clarified that funding is not a constraint, with payments being released every 15 days to contractors. He highlighted that historically sepa-

rate SC, ST, BC, and Minority residential schools will now be integrated, sending a powerful message of social unity to the nation. These schools are envisioned to meet international standards, enabling students from Telangana to compete globally.

To ensure accountability, the Deputy CM directed that if contractors do not begin work within 15 days of sign-

ing agreements, appropriate action must be taken. He also instructed that local land and administrative issues should be resolved by engaging with MLAs, CCLA, or the Chief Secretary. Additionally, a third-party quality check agency will monitor construction at the site, with weekly progress reports submitted to the Chief Secretary.

The Deputy CM emphasized that the aim is to make the maximum number of schools operational by the next academic year, ensuring quality infrastructure and holistic education for all students. The video conference was attended by Minister Attuluri Lakshman, MP Balaram Naik, Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, Principal Secretary of Finance Sandeep Kumar Sultana, TG WDC MD Ganapathi Rao, and other senior officials.

The initiative positions Telangana's Integrated Residential Schools as a national role model in inclusive education and social integration, combining resources to provide world-class facilities under one roof.

## Minister Seethakka Launches Three Landmark Welfare Initiatives for Disabled, Children and Elderly

Hyderabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau): State Minister Seethakka on Monday described the launch of three major welfare programmes as a "historic and deeply humane initiative" aimed at strengthening social security and dignity for vulnerable sections of society. Acting on the directions of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, the government has rolled out a comprehensive package focusing on persons with disabilities, children, and senior citizens.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister announced the launch of three flagship initiatives: distribution of as-

sistive devices to persons with disabilities with an outlay of 50 crore, the "Bala Bharosa" programme for children, and "Pranam" day care centres for senior citizens. She said these programmes reflect the government's commitment to inclusive growth and compassionate governance.

Explaining the Bala Bharosa scheme, Seethakka said the government would take full responsibility for identifying and treating health and developmental issues among children at the Anganwadi level itself. "Children's physical and developmental challenges will be identified early, and



complete treatment, including surgeries wherever required, will be provided free of cost,"

she said. The initiative aims to ensure timely intervention and holistic development of children

from economically weaker backgrounds.

Highlighting the government's focus on the

welfare of persons with disabilities, the Minister said unprecedented priority was being accorded to their empowerment and self-reliance. She recalled that during her earlier tenure as minister, job portals were introduced to improve employment opportunities for the disabled, and a cash incentive of 1 lakh was provided for marriages between persons with disabilities.

"Our objective is not charity, but dignity. We want persons with disabilities to stand on their own feet and live with self-respect," Seethakka said. She noted that the government was providing tricycles, scooters,

and three-wheeler vehicles free of cost to enable mobility, livelihoods, and small business opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The Minister pointed out that in the past, only around 1 crore was allocated annually for assistive devices. "For the first time ever, the Chief Minister has shown great compassion by increasing this allocation to 50 crore," she said, thanking CM Revanth Reddy for the decision. She also expressed gratitude to Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka for allocating a special budget for the welfare of persons with disabilities in line with the Chief Minister's

## Minister Seethakka, MLAs Meet DGP Shivadhar Reddy; Discuss Issues of Tribal Police Battalion



Hyderabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau): State Minister Seethakka, along with MLAs Koram Kanakaiah, Tellam Venkata Rao, and Jare Adinarayana, met Telangana Director General of Police Shivadhar Reddy at the DGP's office on Monday and discussed several issues related to the Tribal Police Battalion at Sathupalli.

During the meeting, the Minister and the

MLAs brought to the notice of the DGP the various challenges being faced by personnel of the Tribal Police Battalion, particularly in matters related to new recruitments, promotions, postings, transfers, and local cadre issues. They explained that the lack of timely recruitment and promotions was affecting morale among the tribal police personnel and deserved special attention. The MLAs ech-

oed her views and requested the DGP to take necessary administrative steps to ensure justice to the personnel serving in the battalion.

Responding to the representations, DGP Shivadhar Reddy reportedly reacted positively and assured the delegation that the issues raised would be examined carefully. He stated that the police department would take appropriate measures

within the framework of rules to address genuine grievances related to recruitment, promotions, and transfers.

The meeting also focused on security arrangements for the upcoming Medaram Maha Jatara. Minister Seethakka requested the DGP to ensure strong and foolproof security for the massive tribal festival, which attracts lakhs of devotees from across the State and neighbouring regions. She suggested that additional police personnel be deployed if required to manage crowds and ensure the safety of devotees.

As part of the interaction, Minister Seethakka formally presented the invitation for the Medaram Maha Jatara to the DGP and extended a special invitation to police personnel and their families to attend the historic festival. She said the Medaram Jatara was a symbol of Telangana's rich tribal culture and called for collective efforts from all departments to ensure its smooth and successful conduct.

## Sri Venkateswara Swami Annual Brahmotsavams to be Celebrated Grandly in Karimnagar



TPN Bureau  
Karimnagar, January 12, 2026:

She elaborated that continuous electricity supply, cultural programs, medical camps, sanitation, and cleaning arrangements in the temple premises would be ensured. Several donors pledged their contributions to support the organization of the festival.

The meeting was attended by key officials and leaders, including RDO Maheshwar, Karimnagar Cooperative Urban Bank Chairman Karra Rajashekhar, Additional DCP Venkataratnam, temple chairpersons Chakilam Srinivas and Chakilam Gangadhar, ACP Venkataswami, E.O. Sudhakar, RTA member Padala Rahul, and other officials.

With meticulous planning and coordination, the Karimnagar administration aims to conduct the Brahmotsavams in a manner that combines devotion, cultural heritage, and public convenience, ensuring a memorable and spiritually enriching experience for all attendees.

## Minister Jupalli Krishna Rao Invites CM Revanth Reddy to "Celebrate the Sky" Festival



TPN Bureau  
Hyderabad, January 12, 2026: Minister Jupalli Krishna Rao, along with senior officials, formally invited Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to grace the upcoming "Celebrate the Sky" festival, organized by the Tourism Department.

Minister Jupalli emphasized that the event reflects Telangana's commitment to promoting tourism and providing vibrant recreational experiences for residents. Senior officials coordinating the festival assured that all arrangements, includ-

ing safety and logistical measures, have been finalized to ensure a memorable experience for participants.

"Celebrate the Sky" is expected to attract large crowds from across the state, offering an opportunity to showcase Telangana's scenic beauty and innovative recreational initiatives during the festive season.

## CM Revanth Reddy Highlights Road Safety Awareness at "Arrive Alive" Program

TPN Bureau  
Hyderabad, January 12, 2026:

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy addressed students and officials during the "Arrive Alive" road safety awareness program, emphasizing the critical need to prevent road accidents and strengthen traffic management across the state.

The Chief Minister lauded the police department for devising effective plans to curb road accidents, noting that every minute, a road accident occurs somewhere in India. He stressed that road safety education should begin at the student level to cultivate awareness early and foster responsible behavior on roads.

Highlighting broader law enforcement initiatives, CM Reddy said that the police system is being strengthened in line with evolving social challenges, including the rise of cyber crimes and drug-related offenses. He noted the state's proactive measures, such as establishing a dedicated cyber crime control framework and the Eagle Force to address drug threats, which has earned Telangana Police recognition

nationally and internationally.

CM Reddy also cited the state's environmental initiatives, including the protection and restoration of lakes, ponds, and canals under the HYDRA program, linking community awareness events such as the kite festival to ecological conservation.

Addressing the severity of road accidents, he

remarked that fatalities from road crashes surpass those in wartime, affecting both ordinary citizens and public figures. He underscored the importance of automatic penalties for traffic violations, suggesting fines should be deducted directly from the vehicle owner's account.

CM Reddy called for modernizing the traffic

system using technology and skill development, pointing out that while cyber-crime, drug abuse, and violent crimes are serious concerns, violations of traffic regulations have emerged as a major public safety issue. He stressed the need for awareness campaigns, better traffic signal management, and reinforcement of traffic po-

lice systems as top priorities.

The Chief Minister concluded by reaffirming that road safety will be treated as a top-priority public issue, with the government committed to strengthening traffic enforcement, leveraging technology, and educating the community to reduce accidents and save lives.

alike, the program aims to combine entertainment with the cultural spirit of Sankranti.

Minister Jupalli empha-

ized that the event reflects Telangana's commitment to promoting tourism and providing vibrant recreational experiences for residents. Senior officials coordinating the festival assured that all arrangements, includ-

# Talasani Has No Standing to Speak on CM Revanth Reddy: Saikumar

Hyderabad, January 12 — TPN Bureau: Hyderabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau): Telangana Fisheries Corporation Chairman Mettu Saikumar launched a sharp attack on former minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, accusing him of corruption, intimidation politics, and acting as an agent of the KCR family. Addressing the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Saikumar said Talasani lacked the stature and credibility to comment on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. Referring to Talasani as "Vasool Raja," Saikumar alleged that the former minister was

known for illegal collections and strong-arm tactics during his tenure. "Before making allegations against the Chief Minister, Talasani should first remember his own history of extortion and questionable dealings," he said. Saikumar questioned Talasani's political and moral standing, remarking that he was not "Talasani Srinivas Yadav but Talasani Srinivas Rao," and accused him of functioning merely as a "gumasta" of former chief minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao's family. "He blindly executed their orders and protected their interests. Such a person has no right to lecture others," he asserted. Strongly



condemning Talasani's remarks against Revanth Reddy. Saikumar said the former minister did not even have the courage to touch the Chief Minister, "not even his cutout." He added that Revanth Reddy was not a leader who resorted to threats and intimidation like KCR. "Revanth Reddy confronts challenges boldly and is committed to rebuilding Telangana," he said. Praising the Chief Minister's leadership, Saikumar stated that Revanth Reddy was focused on correcting the damage caused by the previous regime and steering the State towards transparent and people-centric governance. "Telangana is witnessing reconstruc-



## Congress Leaders Strengthen Education and Local Administration in Nagar Kurnool

TPN Bureau  
Nagar Kurnool, January 12, 2026: Congress MP Dr. Mallu Ravi and Achaempet MLA Chikkudu Vamsikrishna took part in two significant development initiatives in the Nagar Kurnool parliamentary constituency on Monday, focusing on education and local administration.

In Polkampalli village, Vanguru mandal, the leaders inaugurated the foundation for additional classrooms at the government school. The program included a traditional Bhoomi Puja and Shankusthapana ceremony, marking the official start of construction. Speaking at the event, Dr. Mallu Ravi and MLA Vamsikrishna emphasized the Congress government's commitment to strengthening govern-

ment schools and providing better infrastructure for students in rural areas. They highlighted that improving educational facilities in remote villages has always been a priority under their leadership. The initiative was warmly welcomed by the local community, who expressed gratitude to the public representatives for responding to their educational needs. A large number of Congress party leaders, officials, local representatives, and villagers attended the event.

In a separate initiative at Charakonda mandal headquarters, the newly constructed Tehsildar office was formally inaugurated by MP Dr. Mallu Ravi. MLA Chikkudu Vamsikrishna also participated in the ceremony.



## BRS Alleges Large-Scale Irregularities in 'Bhu Bharati', Demands Probe

Hyderabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau): Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader Dudimetla Balaraju Yadav on Monday alleged that a real estate mafia was operating across Telangana under the guise of the newly introduced 'Bhu Bharati' land management system. Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan, he accused the Congress government of facilitating large-scale irregularities despite claiming that Bhu Bharati would usher in transparency.

Balaraju Yadav said the government, which had earlier levelled several allegations against the Dharani portal, had now turned Bhu Bharati into a hub for illegal transactions. "The government boasted that Bhu Bharati would bring transparency. Today, it is clear what is actually happening across the State," he alleged.



Raising serious questions over financial transactions, the BRS leader claimed that while 52 lakh slots were booked, the money corresponding to around 4,300 slots had allegedly been diverted. "Where did this money go? Into whose bank accounts was the government money transferred? The State government

must give clear answers," he demanded. He further alleged that illegal land transactions had taken place in Yadadri, Rangareddy, and Jangaon districts, and sought details of the beneficiaries of these transactions. Balaraju Yadav asked Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy to explain why funds

meant to be credited to the treasury were allegedly being diverted to private accounts.

The BRS leader also alleged that in Rangareddy district, lakhs of acres of land were placed under the prohibited list and later subjected to illegal registrations. He claimed that farmers were suffering due to these is-

sues and pointed out that several farmers had approached the courts after failing to receive promised loan waivers.

"Courts have issued notices to the Yadadri district collector and agriculture department officials. This reflects the gravity of the situation," he said, adding that farmer suicides were continuing across the State due to mounting distress.

Questioning the government's intent, Balaraju Yadav asked why Bhu Bharati had gone "off track" after replacing Dharani, which the Congress had previously criticised for causing hardships to people. He alleged that in the proposed Future City area, assigned lands were being taken away from the poor. "This is not a Future City, but a Real Estate City. Assigned lands are being grabbed by those in power," he charged.

## Key Reforms Implemented in Stamps and Registration Department: Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy

Hyderabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau): The Telangana government has initiated far-reaching reforms in the Stamps and Registration Department to make it fully transparent, corruption-free, and citizen-centric. State Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said on Monday. The reforms are being implemented in line with the vision of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, with a strong focus on protecting government and poor people's lands and cracking down on illegal encroachments.

The Minister laid the foundation stone for an Integrated Sub-Registrar Office being constructed by SSR Builders at Kukatpally in Medchal-Malkajgiri district. Speaking on the occasion, he said the government was developing modern, corporate-standard integrated sub-registrar offices across the State in a phased manner to ensure public convenience and smooth administration.

According to the Minister, the first phase of construction will cover areas within the Outer Ring Road (ORR), the



second phase will focus on district headquarters, and the third phase will extend to constituency headquarters. In the initial phase, 39 sub-registrar offices across Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri, and Sangareddy districts are being grouped into 12 clusters for integrated building construction.

He noted that the foundation stone for another integrated sub-registrar office was already laid at the Telangana Academy of Land Information and Management (TALIM) building in Gachibowli by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and the fa-

cility is expected to be inaugurated by June. Significantly, these integrated buildings are being constructed without imposing any financial burden on the State exchequer. Builders are undertaking both construction and maintenance, with a mandatory provision requiring them to maintain the buildings for at least five years.

Minister Ponguleti emphasized that the new facilities would be fully equipped to cater to the needs of newly married couples registering marriages, mothers visiting with young children, and economically weaker sections,

ensuring a comfortable and inclusive environment. He clarified that the government views the Registration Department not merely as a revenue-generating entity, but as a public service center.

Highlighting the government's pro-poor approach, the Minister said several reforms introduced over the past two years were aimed at safeguarding lands allotted to the poor as well as government lands. Illegal activities and land grabbing would be dealt with firmly. He added that if the government ever needs to reclaim assigned lands, it would ensure fair compensation

or alternative land for the affected beneficiaries. The Minister also appealed to people to participate in the upcoming Medaram Jatara, stating that extensive infrastructure development had been undertaken to modernize the venue. Several public representatives and officials, including Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender, Kukatpally MLA Madhavaram Krishna Rao, Legislative Council Chief Whip Patnam Mahender Reddy, senior officials of the Stamps and Registration Department, and representatives of the construction agency, were present at the event.

## Telangana Prisons Department Leads in Prisoner Reformation: DG Soumya Mishra

Hyderabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau):

The Telangana Prisons Department is emerging as a national leader in prisoner reformation and rehabilitation. Director General of Prisons Soumya Mishra said on Monday. Releasing the department's Annual Report at the Chanchalguda Jail premises, she highlighted several transformative initiatives aimed at reforming inmates and enabling their reintegration into society.

Soumya Mishra revealed that as part of literacy and educational programmes, nearly 23,220 illiterate prisoners were made literate across Telangana prisons. Emphasising the department's focus on skill development and economic empowerment, she said that 212 prisoners employed at prison-run outlets, petrol bunks, and "My Nation" units were paid wages amounting to 3 crore 79 lakh 70 thousand during the year 2025.

Providing details of the prison population, the DG said that a total of 42,566 prisoners are currently lodged in various jails across the State. Among them, 36,627 are undertrial prisoners, while 5,856 are convicted prisoners. The inmate population includes 4,176 prisoners booked under the POC-SO Act, 7,040 under the NDPS Act, 1,784 involved in cyber crime cases, and 2,833 in drunk-and-drive cases. Compared to the previous year, the



number of offenders increased by 11.8 per cent in 2025, she noted.

Highlighting alternative dispute resolution efforts, Soumya Mishra said that 44 Jail Adalats were conducted during

2025. As a result, 985 prisoners were released on personal bonds out of 1,558 cases taken up for hearing. She added that the department was actively focusing on vocational training, with

prisoners being trained in 28 different skill-based trades, including bakery units, bangle making, and fashion designing. So far, 4,615 prisoners have completed such training, with

arrangements made to support them after release through employment linkages and bank loans. The DG said special emphasis was also being placed on technical training. Expert-led classes are being conducted in IT skills, reception portal management, and prison website portal development to equip inmates with modern, job-oriented capabilities. On infrastructure, she informed that the under-construction Siddipet jail, once completed, would accommodate an additional 415 prisoners, though barracks construction is still pending. A new firing range has also been

made available for prison staff at Vikarabad. Addressing healthcare, Soumya Mishra said special focus was being given to prisoners' health, with monthly medical camps organised in coordination with Osmania Hospital, along with regular in-house health camps.

She concluded by stating that products made by prisoners were receiving a positive response at exhibition stalls, and efforts were underway to expand "My Nation" stalls and petrol bunks across Telangana, further strengthening rehabilitation and self-reliance initiatives.

### Rajasthan-to-Hyderabad Opium Smuggling Busted; ₹6.5 Lakh Contraband Seized



TPN Bureau  
Hyderabad, January 12, 2026:

The Secunderabad Detective Task Force (DTF) busted an interstate opium smuggling racket involving transportation of contraband from Rajasthan to Hyderabad and seized 2.22 kilograms of opium (OPM) worth ₹6.5 lakh. Two persons were taken into custody in connection with the case.

According to officials, while Rajasthan-based traders are traditionally known for their presence in various businesses across Telangana, some individuals have allegedly ventured into illegal activities by smuggling opium from Rajasthan and selling it to Rajasthani families residing in Hyderabad. Acting on specific intelligence, the Secunderabad DTF team led by CI Soujanya conducted a special operation and successfully unearthed the racket.

Investigations revealed that the accused procured opium worth approximately ₹1.50 lakh in Rajasthan and

transported it by buses to Hyderabad, where it was sold for prices ranging between ₹3 lakh and ₹4 lakh. The total value of the opium seized at both locations was estimated at ₹6.50 lakh.

The accused, along with the seized contraband, motorcycle, and mobile phones, were handed over to the Narayanguda Excise Station for further legal action, said Assistant Excise Superintendent Srinivas Rao. Officials clarified that while opium may not be prohibited in certain contexts in Rajasthan, its possession, sale, and consumption are strictly banned in Telangana under the NDPS Act.

Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Reddy and Excise Superintendent Panchakshari commended CI Soujanya and the DTF team for their swift and effective action in cracking the smuggling racket.

### Multiple Cannabis Seizures Across Telangana: Seven Arrested, Cases Filed



TPN Bureau  
Hyderabad, January 12, 2026: The Special Task Force (STF) teams have conducted a series of successful cannabis busts across Telangana, seizing large quantities and arresting multiple suspects involved in illegal drug sales.

At Nampally Railway Station and Maneguru Bastion, STF A Team apprehended three individuals—Kamble Ratna, Kasab Karan, and Upadhyam Amar—who were allegedly selling cannabis. Authorities recovered 2.11 kilograms of cannabis from the suspects, along with a bike and mobile phones. Additional suspects, including Kamble Vandana, Ajay, U. Madhu, and another Ajay, have also been named in the case. The arrested individuals and the seized contraband were handed over to the Nampally station.

In another operation near Fathenagar, under the Balanagar Excise Station, STF A Team arrested Sa-

karthi Sayiraj, recovering 1.4 kilograms of cannabis. The investigation revealed links to another individual, Kalawala Ravinder, who has also been named in the case. The recovered drugs and the accused were taken to the Balanagar Excise Station.

These coordinated actions by the STF teams reflect Telangana police's continued commitment to curbing illegal drug trafficking and ensuring public safety across the state. Authorities have assured strict legal action against the accused and further investigations are ongoing to dismantle the network involved in cannabis sales.

Similarly, STF B Team, under SI Balajaru, arrested three individuals from Maharashtra, Mahesh,

## Swami Vivekananda Inspires Youth on National Youth Day in Quthbullapur

TPN Bureau  
Quthbullapur, January 12, 2026:

The spirit of Swami Vivekananda resonated strongly among the youth in Quthbullapur on Sunday as the GHMC 295 Division, Bowrampet, celebrated National Youth Day to commemorate the 163rd birth anniversary of the spiritual leader. Division leaders garlanded the statue of Swami Vivekananda and paid homage, marking the occasion with messages of inspiration and motivation for young people.

Speakers at the event highlighted Swami Vivekananda's timeless guidance for youth, emphasizing self-confidence, courage, and patriotism. They reminded attendees of his famous exhortation: "Arise, awake, and stop not until the goal is reached." This call to perseverance and dedication, they noted, continues to serve as a moral compass for to-



day's youth.

The speakers further stressed that education, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not merely the accumulation of book knowledge but the cultivation of character and personal integrity. Young people were

encouraged to follow his teachings, imbibe discipline, and apply their talents to constructive pursuits, thereby contributing positively to society. Prominent participants in the event included Bowrampet P.S.C.S. Chairman Middela Bal Reddy, leaders Middela Yadireddy and former Bowrampet Councilor Narla Krishna Reddy, Vishnuvardhan Reddy, Dundigal Circle BJP President Pisari Krishnareddy, along with leaders Prabhakar

Reddy, Krishna Reddy, Prashanth, Atish Babu, and BJYM district secretary. They engaged with local youth and emphasized Swami Vivekananda's message as a source of guidance in both personal and professional life. The event served not only as a commemoration of a great Indian thinker and philosopher but also as a platform to inspire young citizens of Quthbullapur to uphold the values of courage, discipline, and service to the nation. The leaders urged the youth to draw strength from Vivekananda's teachings, to face challenges with confidence, and to strive relentlessly towards their goals. Through such celebrations, organizers aim to cultivate a generation of self-reliant, principled, and motivated individuals who can contribute meaningfully to the development of Telangana and the country at large.

## Online Trading Scam in Hyderabad: Victim Loses Rs27 Lakh via Fake App and WhatsApp Group

**JAGRUT HYDERABAD - SURAKSHIT HYDERABAD**

**CYBER CRIME AWARENESS**

**FRAUD TRADING & INVESTING**

**RED FLAGS**

- Unsolicited investment offers
- Pressure to act quickly
- Request for sensitive information

**HOW IT WORKS**

- Fraudsters use fake websites and apps
- They offer guaranteed high returns
- They provide misleading information
- You are asked to transfer money

**ALWAYS VERIFY BEFORE INVESTING**

**IF YOU ARE A "VICTIM" DIAL IMMEDIATELY 1930**

[www.cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.cybercrime.gov.in)

TPN Bureau  
Hyderabad, January 12, 2026:

A 38-year-old resident of Asifnagar, Hyderabad, has reportedly lost ₹27,05,000 in a sophisticated online trading scam involving a fake mobile application and a WhatsApp group. The victim came across a trading page on Facebook and was subsequently added to a WhatsApp group managed by fraudsters. The group admins convinced him to invest by promising high returns and showing fabricated profit screenshots.

The victim was asked to download a trading app called ADVPMA, where he initially invested ₹10,000. Gradually, he invested a total of ₹27,05,000. The app falsely displayed a balance of ₹81,69,600, which included supposed profits. However, when he tried to withdraw the funds, access was denied, and the scammers demanded an additional ₹50 lakh. It was at this stage that the victim realized he had been defrauded and reported the incident to authorities.

The Hyderabad Cyber Crime Police have issued a public advisory, urging citizens to verify the authenticity of any online trading platform

before investing. They cautioned against promises of quick or guaranteed profits, emphasized the importance of protecting personal banking information, and warned against paying extra "processing" or compliance fees. Citizens are advised to report suspicious activity immediately to the National Cybercrime Helpline (1930) or via [cybercrime.gov.in](http://cybercrime.gov.in). Updates and awareness campaigns are also available through the official social media channels of Hyderabad Cyber Crimes. The Dy. Commissioner of Police, Cyber Crimes, Hyderabad, stressed that such cases highlight the increasing sophistication of online frauds and the need for vigilance among investors. This incident serves as a reminder to carefully assess online investment opportunities and to avoid sharing sensitive information with unknown individuals. The authorities confirmed that steps are being taken to investigate the case and apprehend the perpetrators, while also urging the public to remain alert and report any suspicious online activity.

## Congress to Hoist Its Flag Across Telangana in Upcoming Municipal Polls: TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar



Nizamabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau):

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president Mahesh Kumar Goud on Monday expressed confidence that the Congress party would achieve a sweeping victory in the upcoming municipal elections, not only in Nizamabad district but across the entire State.

Addressing a media conference in Nizamabad, he said the recent Panchayat election results reflected growing public support for the Congress under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Mahesh Kumar Goud stated that Congress had won a majority of sarpanch positions in Nizamabad district, mak-

ing it one of the first five districts in the State to achieve this milestone. He asserted that the party was well-positioned to capture the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation and several other municipalities in the forthcoming elections, likely to be held in February.

Describing Revanth Reddy as a visionary leader, the TPCC chief

said the State was moving from "destruction to development" under his leadership, with active cooperation from all ministers. He alleged that during the decade-long BRS rule, people from all sections of society faced discrimination, while former chief minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao pushed the State into a debt trap and later confined himself to his farmhouse.

Mahesh Kumar Goud admitted that the Congress had suffered limited losses in the Panchayat elections due to rebel candidates but said the party had drawn lessons from the experience. "With a clear strategy, we will coordinate old and new leaders and ensure that tickets are given to those who are constantly active in public life," he said, adding that Congress would secure a strong majority in municipal bodies, including Nizamabad municipality. Highlighting governance achievements, he said people would once again support Congress after witnessing its development and welfare initiatives. He claimed Telangana had set a na-

tional example in welfare schemes, citing free bus travel for women, distribution of fine rice, ration cards, Indiramma houses for the homeless poor, and free electricity benefiting nearly 80 per cent of households in the district. He also pointed to large-scale investments secured through global summits and the Davos visit led by CM Revanth Reddy and Minister Sridhar Babu, stating that investments worth several lakh crores had flowed into the State. Special focus was being given to education, healthcare, sports, roads worth nearly 600 crore, and the establishment of long-pending engineering and agriculture colleges in the district.

Criticising the BJP, Mahesh Kumar Goud accused it of indulging in religious politics during elections and asked what the party had achieved in its 12 years of rule at the Centre. He said people should teach a fitting lesson to those seeking votes in the name of religion and reaffirmed that Congress was committed to changing the lives of the poor beyond caste and religion.

## Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Reviews Arrangements for Sri Venkateswara Swamy Annual Brahmotsavams in

Karimnagar, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau):

State Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Monday chaired a preparatory review meeting for the annual Sri Venkateswara Swamy Brahmotsavams at Karimnagar Old Bazaar and called upon people to participate in the festivities in large numbers and make the event a grand success. The Brahmotsavams are scheduled to commence on January 23, while the grand procession (Shobha Yatra) will be held on February 1. Addressing the meeting, the Minister said the Brahmotsavams were being organised with the spirit of devotion and unity, transcending political affiliations. "These celebrations are beyond politics. They are meant for the spiritual well-being of the people and for the prosperity of Telangana," he said. He added that he was praying to Lord Venkateswara for the happiness, good health, abundant crops, and timely rains for the people of the State.

The preparatory meeting was attended by District Collector Pamela Satpathi, Karimnagar Urban Development Au-



thority (KUDA) Chairman Komatireddy Narayana Reddy, Karimnagar Cooperative Bank Chairman Karra Rajasekhar, the temple chairman, Executive Officer, senior leaders, and officials from various departments. Minister Ponnam Prabhakar urged all government departments to work in close coordination to ensure that devotees do not face any inconvenience during the Brahmotsavams. He stressed the need for proper arrangements related to traffic management, sanitation, drinking water, lighting,

security, and medical facilities. Special emphasis was laid on crowd management during peak days of the festival. Recalling the tradition, the Minister said the Brahmotsavams were originally initiated with the intention of ensuring the prosperity and well-being of Karimnagar residents. "Since then, these celebrations have been conducted every year with great devotion and grandeur. This year too, they should be organised in an even more impressive manner," he said.

He also instructed temple authorities to ex-

tend special invitations to donors who have been supporting the temple and the Brahmotsavams over the years. Expressing gratitude to the donors, the Minister said their cooperation was vital for the success of the event. However, he made it clear that all expenditures must be made in a transparent and systematic manner, and that not a single rupee should be drawn from the temple funds improperly. The Minister called upon Members of Parliament, including Bandi Sanjay, local MLA Gangula Kamalakar, and MLAs Kavvampalli

Satyanarayana and Medipalli Satyam, along with other public representatives, to actively participate and contribute to the success of the Brahmotsavams. He also directed the authorities to make arrangements for annadanam (free meals) for devotees during the festival days. "The people of Karimnagar should come together with their families and celebrate the Brahmotsavams in a spirit of devotion and harmony," the Minister said, expressing confidence that the event would be conducted smoothly and successfully.

## Swami Vivekananda Jayanti and Road Safety Programme Held at Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Adilabad

Adilabad, January 12, 2026 (TPN Bureau):

Swami Vivekananda Jayanti and a Road Safety awareness programme were jointly organised on Monday at Sri Saraswati Shishu Mandir School, located in Ichoda mandal headquarters of Adilabad district. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, local representatives, and officials. Newly elected Ichoda Major Gram Panchayat Sarpanch Kodappa Jalay Jaku, Ward No. 13 member Kolluri Chandrasekhar, Senior Motor Vehicle Inspector Ali Srinivas, along with officials Pradeep Kumar and Shwetha, attended

the event as chief guests. They paid floral tributes to the portrait of Swami Vivekananda and recalled his contributions to the nation.

Speaking on the occasion, speakers Oraganti Istarti, Mittapalli Dattatreya, and Pilli Naresh described Swami Vivekananda as an eternal source of inspiration for today's youth. They said his teachings on self-belief, discipline, and service to humanity continued to guide generations. The speakers highlighted that Vivekananda was a great social reformer and patriot whose services to India were unparalleled. They also recalled the role of the Ramakrishna Mis-

sion, founded by Swami Vivekananda, which continues to serve people across India and abroad through education, healthcare, and social service initiatives.

As part of the Road Safety Month celebrations, Motor Vehicle Inspectors Alli Srinivas, Pradeep Kumar, and Shwetha created awareness among students and youth about traffic rules and road safety measures. They explained the importance of following traffic signals, wearing helmets and seat belts, obeying speed limits, and using signboards correctly to prevent road accidents. The officials also elaborated on common causes

of road accidents and the precautions that need to be taken to ensure personal and public safety.

Students and participants were administered a road safety pledge, committing themselves to follow traffic rules and promote road safety awareness in society.

The programme was attended by school secretary Samampelli Sudarshan, Headmaster Marathi Santosh Kumar, teachers Usharani, Sujatha, and Bharathi, along with ABVP leaders Sudhakar, Arun, Aravind, Venkatesh, Lakshman, Sai youth members, and a large number of students. The event concluded with a call to imbibe Swami Vivekananda's ideals in daily life while ensuring responsible behaviour on roads.



## MP Chamalaa Kiran Kumar Reddy Distributes Subsidized Agricultural Machinery to Farmers in Aleru

TPN Bureau  
Aleru, January 12, 2026:

Bhuvanagiri MP Chamalaa Kiran Kumar Reddy on Monday participated in a grand distribution programme of subsidized agricultural machinery at the market yard in Aleru town. The event, aimed at promoting agricultural mechanization and enhancing farmers' incomes, was organized by the Telangana state government under its ongoing agricultural mechanization scheme.

he said. The MP also highlighted the government's focus on comprehensive farmer welfare, noting that the initiative is part of a larger strategy to strengthen the agricultural sector across Telangana.

Accompanied by Aleru MLA and Government Whip Beera Aiyalaya, the MP personally handed over machinery to the beneficiaries and interacted with farmers to understand their concerns. Officials from the Agriculture Department and local public representatives were also present, along with a large number of farmers.

Criticising the BJP, Mahesh Kumar Goud accused it of indulging in religious politics during elections and asked what the party had achieved in its 12 years of rule at the Centre. He said people should teach a fitting lesson to those seeking votes in the name of religion and reaffirmed that Congress was committed to changing the lives of the poor beyond caste and religion.



duce manual labor and increase efficiency during the cultivation process. Officials from the Agriculture Department explained that the scheme covers all aspects of mechanization, ensuring that farmers can use these machines effectively to improve productivity. MP Chamalaa and other leaders reiterated that the Telangana government is prioritizing farmer welfare, rural development, and modernization of agricultural practices. They encouraged farmers to adopt mechanized methods and make full use of the government's subsidy programmes to increase output, reduce costs, and ensure sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.

The event concluded with officials and farmers expressing satisfaction over the initiative, and a commitment from the government to continue supporting mechanization and innovation in agriculture throughout the state.

## MP Chamala Reviews Cheriyal Town Development Initiatives



TPN Bureau  
Siddipet District, January 12, 2026:

Bhuvanagiri Parliament member Sri Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy conducted a comprehensive review of development projects at the Cheriyal Municipal Office on Monday. The meeting, attended by municipal officials and local representatives, focused on assessing ongoing works and planning new initiatives to enhance public infrastructure and amenities.

Among the key projects inspected was the beautification and restoration of Cheriyal's main tank, aimed at improving the town's environment and providing better facilities for residents.

Speaking during the review, MP Chamala

highlighted the importance of prioritizing public welfare over politics, urging municipal authorities to focus on completing projects efficiently and addressing the immediate needs of citizens. He emphasized that development must be continuous and transparent, and that officials should actively monitor progress to ensure timely completion.

Funds sanctioned under the AMRUT scheme were specifically discussed, with officials providing updates on ongoing works related to water supply, sanitation, and public utilities. MP Chamala suggested several measures to expedite project execution, including close coordination between municipal au-

thorities and the water resources department.

The MP also appealed to leaders across political parties to collaborate in furthering Cheriyal's development, underscoring that the collective efforts of representatives and officials are essential for sustained progress. Highlighting a longstanding public demand, he assured that he would raise the matter of creating a separate revenue division for Cheriyal with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and work toward its realization, aiming to provide better administrative services and promote regional development. Residents expressed appreciation for the MP's hands-on approach, noting that such direct engagement ensures accountability and faster completion of civic projects. The review underscored a continued commitment to improving urban infrastructure and enhancing the quality of life for Cheriyal's citizens.

## MP Chamala Reviews Cheriyal Town Development Initiatives

TPN Bureau  
Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District, January 12, 2026: Bhuvanagiri Parliament Member Sri Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy along with Aleru MLA and Government Whip Sri Beera Aiyalaya participated in special poojas at the renowned Sri Someshwara Swamy Temple located in Kolanupaka. During the

visit, they attended a review meeting focused on the temple's development. Discussions were held with officials regarding enhancing the temple's aesthetics, improving facilities for devotees, upgrading infrastructure, road access, and sanitation. Both leaders emphasized the importance of preserving the temple's historical significance while carrying out development works.

Sri Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy and MLA Beera Aiyalaya assured that the government would provide all necessary support to enhance the temple as a major spiritual center for devotees in Kolanupaka.

# Trump's Unilateralism and the Unravelling of the Global Order

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

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

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



as trade and development bodies like UNC-TAD and ECOSOC.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As part of this power projection, Trump has

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## When Cinema, Silence and Strategy Collide in Tamil Nadu Politics

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

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

Ironically, the develop-

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

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

Where Vijay chose si-

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

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

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

In most Indian states,

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

The Congress, in partic-

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

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

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

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



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

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## PM Modi Strengthens Diplomatic Ties Through Informal "Car Diplomacy" with World Leaders

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

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

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

**The Rise of PM Modi's Car Diplomacy**

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



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

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

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

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

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

### BJP Issues Direct Challenge

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



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

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

not afraid of legal action.

**FIR in Punjab and the Delhi Fallout**

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

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

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

### BJP MPs Join the Fray

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

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

## ED Moves Supreme Court Against "Wrongful Restraint" During I-PAC Raids in Kolkata

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

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

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



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

The petition also seeks a stay on four FIRs filed by the West Bengal Police against ED officials following the high-voltage face-off during the raids. The ED further alleged that a hawala operator connected to the coal scam facilitated tens of crores of rupees in transactions to Indian PAC Consulting Private Limited, the registered company of political consultancy firm I-PAC, linking the firm to alleged hawala dealings.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

police had resorted to lathi charges to control the crowd.

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

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

When Vijay finally arrived, approximately 5,000 supporters who had been following his campaign bus merged with the waiting crowd, creating a chaotic situation. The resulting stampede led to the deaths of 41 people, including nine children. Eyewitnesses and reports indicate that the delay and mismanagement at the venue significantly contributed to the tragedy.

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

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

## Trump's "Acting President of Venezuela" Claim Sparks Global Attention



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Trump Weighs 'Strong Options' as Iran Faces Widespread Protests and Mounting Death Toll



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

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

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

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

**Trump's Open Backing for Protesters**

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

peated warnings to Tehran, unsettling both US allies and adversaries. On January 2, he said the US was "locked and loaded" and warned Iranian authorities against killing peaceful demonstrators.

On Friday, he went further, stating that the US would "start shooting" if Iranian forces opened fire on protesters.

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

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

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

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

### Options Under Consideration

According to The Wall Street Journal, US military and diplomatic officials are expected to brief Trump on Tuesday on a range of options, including cyber operations and possible military action.

One proposal under discussion involves sending Starlink satellite internet terminals—owned by Elon Musk—into Iran to help protesters bypass the government's internet shutdown. Trump said he plans to speak with Musk about the idea.

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

Other options include tightening sanctions, launching cyberattacks

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

### Why Military Action Remains Risky

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

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

Several US lawmakers have urged caution. Republican Senator Rand Paul said bombing Iran may not achieve the intended outcome, while Democratic Senator Mark Warner warned that an attack could rally Iranians against an external enemy rather than weaken the regime.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

we are determined to get there," he said.

### Trade, Security and Strategic Cooperation

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

Responding to questions about the stalled trade agreement, Gor confirmed that both sides remain actively engaged. "Many of you have asked for an update on the trade deal negotiations. Both sides continue to engage, and the next call on trade will take place tomorrow," he said. "I hope the President will be visiting India soon, hopefully in

agreement would require persistence and mutual understanding.

### Trump-Modi Relationship and Possible India Visit

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

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

the next year or two."

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

### No Partner More Essential Than India

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

### India to Join Pax Silica

#### Alliance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

### Gold Rally, Oil Steady

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

Both benchmarks had gained more than 3 per cent last week—their strongest weekly rise since October—as Iran intensified on Monday that the situation was "under total control."

### Trump vs Powell

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### expansion.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

expansion.

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



during the morning session, with no trading activity scheduled.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Stock Market Holidays in 2026

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

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

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



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

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

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

### Key Drivers Behind the Market Recovery

#### 1) India–US Trade Deal Optimism:

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

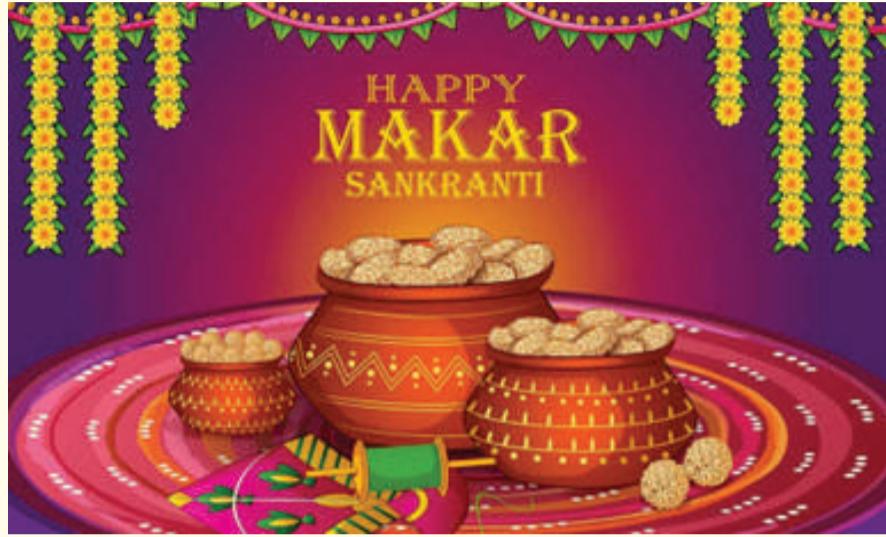
The exchange advised investors and the general public not to rely on or act upon such videos, messages or links. It urged market participants to seek information only through BSE's official communication channels and from SEBI-registered intermediaries for any market-related guidance.

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

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

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

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



Makar Sankranti is one of India's most widely celebrated harvest festivals, observed across the country with great enthusiasm and regional diversity. In 2026, Makar Sankranti will be celebrated on Wednesday, January 14. The festival marks the Sun's transition into the zodiac sign of Capricorn (Makara), an event of immense astronomical and cultural importance in Hindu tradition. It symbolises gratitude for a bountiful harvest and reverence for the Sun God, believed to be the source of life, prosperity and well-being.

Unlike most Hindu festivals that follow the lunar calendar, Makar Sankranti is based on the solar cycle, making it one of the few festivals with a fixed date each year. Astronomically, it marks the Sun's northward journey, known as Uttarayan, and signals the end of the winter solstice. The gradual lengthening of days is seen as a transition from darkness to light, ignorance to

knowledge, and hardship to abundance.

Historically, Makar Sankranti is deeply rooted in India's agrarian culture. Closely tied to the harvest season, the festival reflects the intimate relationship between human life and nature. Ancient texts and folklore link the day to auspicious beginnings and mythological narratives, including Lord Vishnu's victory over the demon Sankarasura, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.

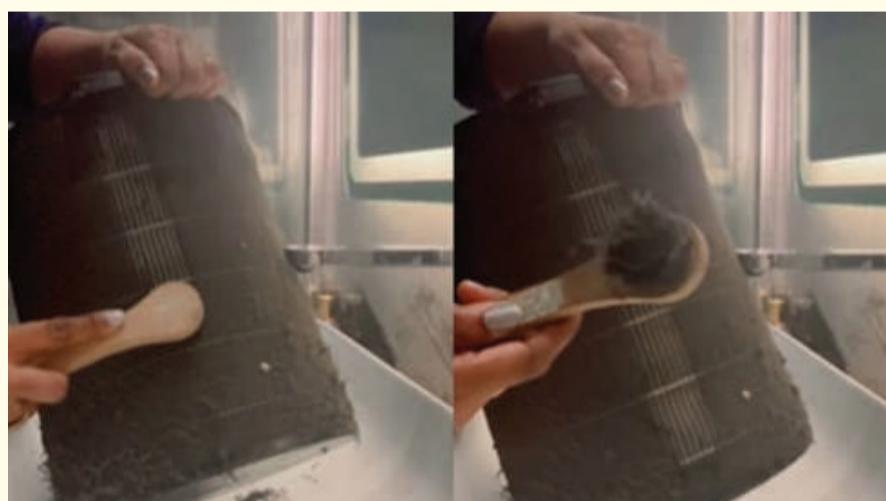
Religious rituals form an essential part of Makar Sankranti celebrations. Devotees take holy dips in sacred rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery, believing it cleanses sins and brings spiritual merit. The Purnima Kaal, considered the most auspicious time for rituals, typically begins early in the morning and lasts till late afternoon, though exact timings vary by region. People offer Surya Arghya (water to the Sun), chant

prayers, and engage in acts of charity by donating sesame seeds, jaggery, food, clothes and blankets to the needy.

Makar Sankranti is celebrated under different names across India, each reflecting local traditions. In Punjab, it coincides with Lohri, marked by bonfires, folk songs and energetic dances. Gujarat and Rajasthan host vibrant kite-flying festivities during Uttarayan, filling the skies with colour. In Tamil Nadu, the festival is celebrated as Pongal, a four-day thanksgiving ritual centred on cooking a sweet rice dish. Maharashtra observes the day by exchanging sesame and jaggery sweets with the greeting, "Tilgul ghya, god god bola." In Assam, Magh Bihu is celebrated with community feasts, games and bonfires.

Together, these diverse traditions make Makar Sankranti a festival that unites India through shared gratitude, renewal and joy.

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



A viral Instagram video featuring a foreign resident in Delhi cleaning his air purifier filter has once again brought the capital's worsening air quality into sharp focus. The clip, shared by Andy Evans—popularly known on social media as "Aussie Bhai"—has garnered thousands of views and reactions, with users expressing shock at how polluted the air has become in just two months.

In the video, Evans is seen removing the filter from his air purifier and showing it to the camera. Typically, such filters remain white or light grey after regular use. However, the filter in Evans' purifier was almost entirely black, caked with thick layers of dust, soot and pollutant particles. The striking visual served as a stark illustration of the level of air contamination residents are breathing daily in the national capital.

Evans explained that he had been thinking throughout the night about cleaning his air purifier and decided to do so first thing in the morn-

ing. "Look at this, brother," he says in the video. "This is a filter from just two months in Delhi. It's completely filled with dust and pollution." His candid reaction underscored the alarming speed at which pollutants accumulate indoors, even in homes equipped with air purification systems.

Adding a touch of dark humour, Evans pointed out that the filter was from only one of the three air purifiers running in his house. He joked that the thick layer of dust collected on the filter was so dense it could be spread across the floor like a carpet or even used to keep the house warm. While light-hearted, the comment only reinforced the seriousness of the underlying issue.

The video quickly triggered widespread reactions on Instagram, with many users expressing disbelief and concern over Delhi's air quality. Several commenters shared their own experiences of frequently cleaning air purifier filters, while others called for urgent steps to tackle

pollution levels in the city.

"Don't touch it, lol," one user commented, reacting to the visibly grimy filter. Another wrote, "Recycling pollution won't be a bad idea," highlighting the scale of the problem. A third user added, "That is why I try to check it every two weeks—it's crazy."

The viral clip has reignited conversations around Delhi's chronic air pollution problem, particularly as winter approaches and air quality often deteriorates further. Environmental experts have repeatedly warned about the health risks associated with prolonged exposure to polluted air, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

While Evans' video

was shared in a casual, personal tone, its impact has been far-reaching—serving as a visual reminder of the urgent need for sustained policy action, improved urban planning and greater public awareness to address one of Delhi's most pressing environmental challenges.

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



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

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

emphasised character-building, fearlessness, compassion and service as the foundations of a strong society.

The significance of National Youth Day lies in reconnecting young Indians with these ideals. Across the country, schools, colleges and universities mark the day with debates, speeches, essay competitions and cultural programmes focused on leadership, ethics and social responsibility. Youth conferences, seminars and workshops

are organised to discuss issues such as innovation, entrepreneurship, nation-building and civic engagement. Community service initiatives are also conducted by organisations like the National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) and various youth groups, encouraging students to contribute positively to society.

National Youth Day is not merely commemorative; it is forward-looking. The day serves as a platform to encourage

young people to think critically about India's future and their role in shaping it. Swami Vivekananda's teachings—such as "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached"—continue to resonate strongly in a rapidly changing world where youth leadership and innovation are crucial.

On the occasion of National Youth Day 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the concluding session of the Viksит Bharat

Young Leaders Dialogue 2026 on January 12 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, at around 4:30 PM, according to an official government release. The Prime Minister is expected to interact with approximately 3,000 young leaders from across the country. Youth representatives from the Indian diaspora are also expected to be present, reflecting the global dimension of India's youth engagement.

The government release noted that selected participants will make final presentations to the Prime Minister across ten thematic tracks, sharing youth-driven perspectives and practical ideas on key areas of national importance. These discussions aim to channel the creativity, energy and innovation of young Indians toward the vision of a Viksит Bharat (Developed India).

National Youth Day thus stands as a powerful reminder that India's future rests in the hands of its youth—and that Swami Vivekananda's vision remains as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

## Magh Bihu 2026: Significance, Rituals and Celebrations in Assam



Magh Bihu, one of the most important festivals of Assam, marks the joyous conclusion of the harvesting season and celebrates abundance, community and renewal. Observed in the Assamese month of Magh, which falls between January and February, the festival is also known as Bhogali Bihu or Magh Bihu. In 2026, Magh Bihu will be celebrated on Thursday, January 15. The festival coincides with Makar Sankranti and symbolises a subtle shift in the Earth's cycle that signals the end of harsh winter and the gradual arrival of spring.

Magh Bihu is one of the three major Bihu festivals of Assam, the others being Rongali Bihu in April and Kati Bihu in October. The name Bhogali is derived from the word bhog, meaning enjoyment and feasting, which aptly reflects the spirit of the celebration. Young men build temporary huts known as Bhelaghar using bamboo, straw, grass and banana leaves. Large bonfires,

come together to indulge in food, music, dance and social bonding.

Preparations for Magh Bihu begin a day earlier on Uruka, the last day of the month of Pausha. This night is dedicated to grand community feasts. Young men build temporary huts known as Bhelaghar using bamboo, straw, grass and banana leaves. Large bonfires,

called Mejhi, are also constructed in open fields. Women prepare traditional Assamese delicacies in the Bhelaghar, including rice-based sweets such as til pitha, sunga pitha, narikol ladu (coconut laddus) and other seasonal dishes.

On the night of Uruka, families and villagers gather around the Bhelaghar and Mejhi, singing

folk songs, performing traditional dances, and sharing meals. The atmosphere is filled with warmth, joy and togetherness. People customarily bathe before participating in the festivities, symbolising physical and spiritual purification.

The following morning

marks the main day of Magh Bihu. Devotees take an early bath and light the Mejhi bonfire, offering prayers as the flames rise. The burning of the Mejhi symbolises the end of winter and the casting away of negativity. Offerings of rice cakes and agricultural produce are made to the fire as a gesture of gratitude to nature and ancestral spirits.

Several traditional rituals are associated with Magh Bihu. Tekeli Bhonga, the breaking of earthen pots, is performed as a symbolic act of discarding the old. In rural areas, traditional games and events such as buffalo fights are organised, reflecting Assam's agrarian culture. Prayers are also offered to ancestral deities, seeking blessings for prosperity, health and a good harvest in the coming year.

Magh Bihu beautifully captures the essence of Assam's cultural heritage, celebrating abundance, harmony with nature and the enduring bonds of community life.

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



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

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

The video has become a lightning rod for broader anger over reckless driv-

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

and dangerous," the post added.

The term "Thartards mentality" trended briefly as users debated what they see as a pattern of aggressive and irresponsible driving associated with certain owners of high-powered SUVs. Many, however, were quick to point out that the problem lies not with the vehicle itself, but with the mindset of some drivers.

"The problem isn't the Thar or the Scorpio. It's

the entitlement some drivers think comes free with it," one user commented. Another suggested harsh penalties for repeat offenders, writing, "If anyone is caught driving recklessly, fine them heavily, seize the vehicle, sell it, and use the money to employ people to clean our public places."

A third user argued that the issue goes beyond a single car model, stating, "It's not just Thar owners—it's every entitled driver today. Civic sense

on Indian roads is going to zero."

The controversy has gained traction partly because it follows a series of recent, high-profile traffic violations involving Mahindra Thar vehicles. In December 2025, a driver in Ballabgarh was fined ₹7,000 after being caught driving a Thar using his feet. In March 2025, a Thar driver in Noida was arrested and fined ₹38,000 for driving on the wrong side of the road and ramming into multiple vehicles following an altercation. Earlier, in December 2024, a Thar was impounded in Ghaziabad after its driver was caught performing stunts on a pedestrian walkway for social media content.

Together, these incidents have reignited debate over road safety, enforcement of traffic laws, and the growing culture of social media-driven recklessness. Many users have urged authorities to act swiftly and decisively, warning that failure to do so could encourage more such behaviour and put lives at risk.

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



## Most Player of the Match Awards in International Cricket

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

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

appeared primed for a struggle. Yet, true to his reputation, Kohli bounced back emphatically, delivering match-winning performances and collecting Player of the Match awards along the way.

On Sunday, the 37-year-old achieved a milestone, earning the 71st Player of the Match award of his 558-match international career spanning 18 years.

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

with 76 awards, 62 of which came in ODIs, while Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya ranks second in ODIs with 48, just three ahead of Kohli.

Kohli shared a personal insight, revealing that he sends most of his awards home to his mother in Gurugram.

Player of the Match awards have been officially recorded in interna-

tional cricket since the 1980s, leaving out performances from nearly a century of matches prior. Nonetheless, Kohli's tally places him firmly among the sport's all-time greats.

Kohli's relentless consistency and match-winning prowess continue to cement his place among cricket's elite, and his record suggests that the best may yet be ahead.

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

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is expected to respond to the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) request to move their T20 World Cup 2026 matches from India between Monday and Tuesday this week. The BCB cited "security concerns" in its official plea, requesting that the games be shifted to Sri Lanka.

The request followed the release of Bangladesh fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders, reportedly on the suggestion of the BCCI. However, sources indicate that the ICC is unlikely to approve a move out of India. Instead, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram have been suggested as alternative venues. Bangladesh is currently scheduled to



play their group stage games in Kolkata and Mumbai.

Earlier, BCB president Aminul Islam stated that while Chennai had been proposed as an option, the board would need govern-

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

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

Bangladesh umpire

Sharuddoula Saikat officiated in the first ODI between India and New Zealand in Vadodara on Sunday. Both Saikat and fellow Bangladeshi umpire Gazi Sohel are expected to feature as match officials during the T20 World Cup, a point the ICC may cite when responding to the board's security concerns.

With less than four weeks remaining until the tournament begins and teams scheduled to arrive in India in the first week of February for practice, the ICC is keen to resolve the venue issue promptly. The governing body is expected to provide clarity on the matter this week, bringing an end to the uncertainty that has dominated headlines over the past few days.

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



Questions about whether KL Rahul is batting too low in India's ODI order have surfaced frequently since head coach Gautam Gambhir took charge in mid-2024. Yet the Karnataka wicket-keeper-batter remains unfazed, consistently delivering match-winning performances from the crucial No. 5/6 spot.

Rahul has been entrusted with this "floating" role because of his proven ability to handle the pressure of death overs. Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan praised Rahul's composure, especially under the new ODI rules that allow only one new ball after the 34th over, which has challenged many batters.

In India's 301-run chase against New Zealand in Vadodara on Sunday, Rahul took his time to settle but eventually guided the team to a four-wicket victory. He finished the game in style with a winning six—only the sixth time in his career—joining MS Dhoni, who has achieved it nine times in ODIs for India.

Pathan also highlighted Rahul's strategic approach, noting how he rotated the strike early, paced the innings perfectly, and targeted the final overs to finish the game with two boundaries followed by a six. Rahul's blend of patience, timing, and power continues to make him one of the most dependable finishers in world cricket today.

Rahul has excelled in

this role ever since taking it up during the previous ODI World Cup year in 2023, maintaining an average close to 60 in the positions. His reliability is evident in India's record—every time Rahul has remained unbeaten in a chase, India have won, a streak that now stands at 13 victories.

Pathan also highlighted Rahul's strategic approach, noting how he rotated the strike early, paced the innings perfectly, and targeted the final overs to finish the game with two boundaries followed by a six. Rahul's blend of patience, timing, and power continues to make him one of the most dependable finishers in world cricket today.

Michael Carrick has emerged as the leading candidate for Manchester United's interim managerial position, reportedly winning the endorsement of club legend Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Red Devils are currently without a head coach following a 1-2 FA Cup defeat to Brighton, which added pressure after the club recently parted ways with Ruben Amorim.

Carrick, a former United midfielder, has overtaken Ole Gunnar Solskjaer in the race for the role. He brings experience at Old Trafford, having served as assistant coach between 2018 and 2021, and is now considered the frontrunner to steady the club during this transitional period.

The Englishman also enjoys the backing of Ronaldo, who played alongside him during the late 2000s. In 2021, the five-time Bal-

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



lond'Or winner praised Carrick on X (formerly Twitter), writing: "Michael Carrick was a class act as a player and he can become a great coach as well. Nothing is impossible for this guy. Personally, I'm proud to have played with him by my side as well as with him as a manager on our bench."

Carrick's appointment would mark a return to Old Trafford after being replaced by Ralf Rangnick, whose brief stint as caretaker manager ended after just three games. Meanwhile, Darren Fletcher has been temporarily overseeing first-team duties.

According to reports, Carrick was interviewed on Thursday and is expected to take over soon, giving Manchester United a familiar and steady presence as they navigate a turbulent period on and off the pitch.

## Virat Kohli: "Living My Dream" as India Star Reaches 28,000 International Runs



India batting stalwart Virat Kohli on Sunday described his cricketing journey as "nothing short of a dream come true," saying he feels blessed to bring happiness to fans through the sport he loves. The 37-year-old reached another milestone in the first ODI against New Zealand, becoming the fastest player to 28,000 international runs and the second-highest run-scorer in the world, behind Sachin Tendulkar.

He also shared a personal note about his trophies, saying he sends them to his mother in Gurugram, who enjoys keeping them.

Kohli reflected on the crowd's excitement as he came to bat after Rohit Sharma's dismissal, noting the challenge for the outgoing batter. "It's part of the game. I try to focus on what I need to do and stay in the present," he said.

India captain Shubman Gill praised Kohli's effortless batting, saying, "It's tough to start on these pitches. What he does is hard to replicate. Hope he keeps piling on runs." Kohli's blend of skill, composure, and situational awareness continues to make him one of the most dependable players in world cricket.

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



India's spin-bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar has been ruled out of the remainder of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand due to a rib injury, confirmed the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on January 12. Sundar sustained the injury during the series opener in Vadodara, where he displayed signs of discomfort while batting, walking cautiously between the wickets during India's run chase.

"India all-rounder Washington Sundar reported an acute onset of discomfort in his left lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at the BCA Stadium, Vadodara, on Sunday. He will undergo further scans, following which the BCCI Medical Team will seek expert opinion," the BCCI said in an official statement.

With Sundar unavailable, the selection committee led by Ajit Agarkar has handed Delhi all-rounder Ayush Badoni his maiden call-up to the Indian ODI squad. Badoni, 26, will join the team in Rajkot ahead of the second ODI. The all-rounder, who plays for Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), has previously worked with India head coach Gautam Gambhir, who was a mentor at LSG.

Badoni has showcased consistent

performances in domestic cricket and the IPL. In 27 List A games, he has scored 693 runs from 22 innings at an average of 36.47, including a century and five fifties. With the ball, the off-spinner has claimed 18 wickets at an average of 29.72, maintaining an economy rate of 4.54 runs per over. His balanced skill set as a batting and bowling all-rounder makes him a versatile option for India in the middle overs.

The Indian ODI squad for the remainder of the New Zealand series has now been updated as follows: Shubman Gill (c), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (wk), Shreyas Iyer (vc), Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit Rana, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Arshdeep Singh, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel (wk), and Ayush Badoni.

Sundar's absence will be a significant blow to India, particularly in the spin department, given his ability to provide crucial breakthroughs and stabilize the middle order with the bat. Badoni, on the other hand, brings fresh energy and an aggressive approach that could prove valuable in the high-pressure ODI encounters. As India prepare to face New Zealand in the second ODI in Rajkot, attention will now be on Badoni to make a strong impression in his maiden international outing.

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



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

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

"Andhra to Telangana" is a vibrant and upbeat number celebrating the culture and unity of Telugu states. Composed by Mickey J. Meyer with lyrics by Chandrabose, the song features energetic vocals by Dhananjay and Sameera Bharadwaj, while a special dance performance by Shanti Meghana adds a visual highlight. The track blends traditional elements with contemporary rhythms, making it ideal for festive audiences.

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

Set against a rural backdrop with comic

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



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

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

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

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

Chiranjeevi's legendary status with Ravipudi's contemporary commercial sensibilities.

meaningfully to Telugu cinema.

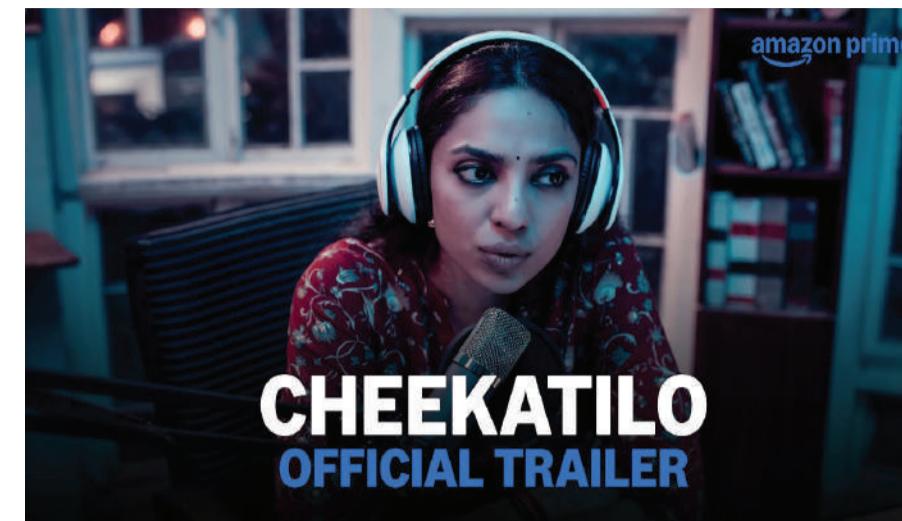
Anil Ravipudi, for his part, has expressed that working with Chiranjeevi was a cherished milestone, one that offered both professional fulfillment and personal joy. He has spoken about how the experience has enriched his perspective as a director and strengthened his commitment to delivering engaging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

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

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

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

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



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

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

a chilling revelation.

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

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

the courage it takes to bring justice to the front. With the trailer now out, audiences can glimpse the tense, suspenseful world we have created. Partnering with Prime Video has been immensely rewarding, allowing us to bring this vision to a global audience, united by our commitment to bold, authentic, and relatable storytelling.

The film's talented cast, with their exceptional performances, has been central in shaping this vision. I can't wait for viewers to experience it when it premieres exclusively on Prime Video on January 23."

Sobhita Dhulipala, who plays the lead character of Sandhya in

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

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



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

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

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

passed Day 2, highlighting extraordinary audience response and engagement.

Directed by Maruthi,

The Raja Saab has

already carved a niche

for itself as the highest-

grossing film in the

horror-fantasy genre, setting

a new benchmark for

commercial and criti-

cal success. The film's grand

storytelling, innovative

visuals, and engaging

narrative have resonated

with audiences across

all age groups and

demographics.

Produced on a global

scale by T. G. Vishwa

Prasad and Krithi Prasad

under the People Media

Factory banner, the film's

production values have

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

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

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

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



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

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

The league then moves to Mysuru on January 23, where all eight teams will continue their battle.

Matches scheduled include exciting face-offs such as Bengal Tigers vs

Kerala Strikers, Telugu Warriors vs Bhojpuri Dabbangs, and Punjab De Sher vs Karnataka Bulldogs, keeping audiences glued to the action and cheering for their favorite stars of all ages.

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

stage will compete in knockout matches, culminating in the championship match on February 1, 2026, to crown the CCL champions.

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

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

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