



TRUE POINT

PRGI REGISTRATION NO. "TGENG/25/A2485"

HYDERABAD | VOL-1 | ISSUE-75 | 18TH JANUARY 2026 | SUNDAY | PAGES 12 | PRICE: ₹5 PUBLISHED FROM: VIJAYAWADA • HYDERABAD • DELHI • BENGALURU

BUZZ POINTS

KTR Slams Congress Government Over Secunderabad Identity, Vows Continued Democratic Struggle

PAGE 02

Tula Arun Kumar Submits Representation to CM Seeking Land Allocation for Munnuru Kapu Hostels

PAGE 02

Jagga Reddy Assures House Sites for the Homeless at Sangareddy Public Meeting

PAGE 03

TPCC Spokesperson Charan Koushik Yadav Targets BRS Leaders Over Secunderabad Corporation Issue

PAGE 04

All Arrangements Completed for Singaraya Jatara: Minister Ponnambalam Prabhakar Appeals to Devotees

PAGE 05

Rohith Vemula Act to Be Introduced in Telangana at the Earliest: Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka

TPN Bureau | January 18:

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Saturday announced that the Telangana government would introduce the Rohith Vemula Act in the state at the earliest possible time. He made the assurance during a meeting with members of the Justice for Rohith Vemula Campaign Committee at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad.

During the meeting, Bhatti Vikramarka said the state government was committed to upholding social justice and protecting students from discrimination in educational institutions. He recalled that Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, had written a letter to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, urging the introduction of the Rohith Vemula Act in Telangana. The Deputy Chief Minister informed the committee that the "people's government" would work towards bringing the legislation after detailed discussions with the Chief Minister.



Members of the campaign committee submitted a draft of the Rohith Vemula Act that had been prepared in Karnataka and requested the Telangana government to consider adopting a similar legal framework. They explained that the proposed legislation aims to prevent caste-based discrimination, ensure institutional accountability, and safeguard the dignity and rights of students, reflecting scholars and faculty members.

On the occasion, committee members placed several representations before the Deputy Chief Minister. They demanded a transparent and impartial inquiry into the Rohith Vemula case and sought justice for Rohith and his family. They also urged the government to introduce the Rohith Vemula Act on the lines of Karnataka, stating that such a law would act as a strong deterrent against discrimination and social exclusion in universities and higher educational institutions.

The Karnataka delegation present at the meeting included senior Ambedkarite leader and lecturer Hulikutte Murthy, Dr. Ashna Singh, Assistant Professor at National Law University, Bengaluru, advocate V. Mrudula, and Rahul from ASA, GVKV, Bengaluru.

From the Hyderabad-based Justice for Rohith Vemula movement, participants included Rohith Vemula's family members Radhika Vemula and Raja Vemula, University of Hyderabad professors Bhanya Bhukya, Sowmya Dechamma, Thirumal and Ratnam, designated senior advocate of the Telangana High Court V. Raghunath, Dr. Dontha Prashanth, and ASA representatives Thirupathi and Vennela from the University of Hyderabad, among others.

Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka reiterated that the government would continue dialogue with stakeholders and take concrete steps to ensure justice, equality and dignity in educational institutions across Telangana.



Kaka Venkataswamy Memorial T20 Cricket Tournament Concludes with Finals at Gymkhana Grounds

TPN Bureau | Hyd- January 18

The Kaka Venkataswamy Memorial T20 Cricket Tournament concluded on a grand note with the finals and prize distribution ceremony held at the Gymkhana Grounds on Friday. Telangana Minister Ponnambalam Prabhakar attended the event as the chief guest and distributed prizes to the winners and runners-up, lauding the tournament for providing a strong platform to emerging cricketing talent in the state. Addressing the gathering, the Minister said the Kaka Venkataswamy Memorial T20 Cricket Tournament was inaugurated on December 22 in Mahabubnagar and had since grown into a major sporting event, attracting wide participation from across Telangana. He recalled that he had personally participated in one of the matches held in Karimnagar district, highlighting the enthusiasm and competitive spirit displayed by players throughout the tournament.

Ponnambalam Prabhakar said nearly 500 players took part in the tournament, making it one of the largest grassroots cricketing events in the region. The finals were held on Friday amid much excitement, with players showcasing impressive skills and dis-

cipline on the field. He said such tournaments play a crucial role in identifying raw talent and nurturing future sports stars.

The Minister stressed that talented players emerging from the tournament should be given advanced coaching and exposure. He said the responsibility of providing professional training rests with the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA), and urged the association to ensure that promising players are groomed to represent the state and the country at national and international levels.

Recalling the contribution of late Kaka Venkataswamy, Ponnambalam Prabhakar said he played a key guiding role in the construction of the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, which today stands as a symbol of Telangana's cricketing excellence. He also appreciated Vivek Venkataswamy for actively sponsoring and promoting sports, continuing the legacy of encouraging young athletes.

The Minister said leaders like Chokkara, Satyanarayana and Venkataswamy had been mentors and guiding figures for many in the districts, inspiring generations through their commitment to public life and sports development.

Highlighting the state government's vi-

sion, Ponnambalam Prabhakar said the Praja Palana government is formulating a comprehensive sports policy to give priority to sports and youth development. He stressed the need to identify and utilise government-recognised lands for sports infrastructure across Telangana. He also called upon the Revenue Minister to take proactive steps to allocate land wherever sports grounds are required.

Urging the Hyderabad Cricket Association to further strengthen its training programmes, the Minister said Telangana can emerge as a leader in sports only if proper facilities and structured coaching are provided at the grassroots level.

He announced that land is being allocated for a cricket ground in the Husnabad constituency and said the responsibility of constructing a stadium there would lie with the Hyderabad Cricket Association. He informed that the land acquisition process for the Husnabad Cricket Stadium has already begun.

Ponnambalam Prabhakar further stated that soon district in-charge minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, present in-charge minister Tummala Nagaswara Rao, former in-charge minister Utam Kumar Reddy and Vivek Venkataswamy

Munneru-Palairu Gravity Link Project to Transform Irrigation in Telangana: Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy

TPN Bureau | Jan 18

State Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy has stated that the Munneru-Palairu Gravity Link Project will play a crucial role in strengthening irrigation infrastructure and ensuring water security across several districts of Telangana. Speaking at Hyderabad, the minister outlined the major benefits and scope of the ambitious project, which aims to utilize surplus river water efficiently through gravity flow.

The project proposes to divert 50 TMC of water through the Munneru-Palairu gravity link, with the State Government allocating 162.57 crore for its execution. According to the minister, once completed, the project will provide irrigation stabilization to nearly 1.38 lakh acres spread across Khammam, Suryapet, and Mahabubnagar districts, offering long-term relief to farmers in drought-prone regions. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the project would significantly benefit the Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) ayacut by assuring irrigation to about 40,000 acres in the upper reaches of the



Palairu reservoir. In addition, it will provide supplementary benefits to the Sriram Sagar Project Stage-II ayacut, thereby strengthening the overall irrigation network of the state.

Highlighting further advantages, the minister noted that under the Bhakta Ramadasu Lift Irrigation Scheme, additional water will be supplied through DBM-60, benefiting an ayacut of 76,308 acres. Similarly, the Mothe Lift Irrigation Scheme in Suryapet district will receive enhanced water availability, ensuring adequate irrigation to around 46,712 acres.

One of the key highlights of the Munneru-Palairu Gravity Link Project, Uttam Kumar Reddy said, is its potential to reduce the financial burden on the government. By relying on gravity flow instead of energy-intensive pumping, the state is expected to save nearly 120 crore annually in electricity costs once the project

Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara Trust Board Constituted in Mulugu

TPN Bureau

Mulugu, January 17:

The Telangana government has constituted the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Mahajatara Trust Board, marking an important step towards strengthening the administration and management of one of Asia's largest tribal religious festivals. As part of the newly formed board, Irpa Sukanya Sunil Dora has been appointed as the Chairperson, while 15 members have been named as Directors.

The oath-taking ceremony for the Trust Board members was held at Medaram on Friday in a grand and solemn manner. Medaram Executive



Officer Veeraswamy administered the oath of office and secrecy to Chairperson Irpa Sukanya Sunil Dora and the Directors. The event witnessed the presence of officials, devotees and local

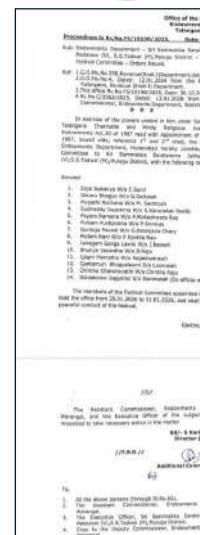
representatives.

Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Seethakka, attended the oath-taking ceremony as the chief guest and extended her greetings to the newly ap-

pointed Trust Board members. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the Mahajatara was not just a religious gathering but a symbol of tribal culture, tradi-

tions and faith. She expressed confidence that the newly constituted Trust Board would work with dedication to preserve the sanctity of the festival while ensuring better facilities for devotees.

Seethakka emphasised the need for systematic planning and transparent administration to manage the massive influx of devotees during the biennial jatara. She said issues related to infrastructure, sanitation, drinking water, crowd management and safety must be addressed with a long-term vision. The Minister assured full support from the state government to the Trust



Board in discharging its responsibilities effectively.

Chairperson Irpa Sukanya Sunil Dora, after taking charge, expressed gratitude to the government for entrusting her with the responsibility. She said the Trust Board would work in coordination with various departments to uphold tribal customs and ensure that the Mahajatara is conducted smoothly and with dignity. She also stressed the importance of involving local tribal communities in decision-making processes related to the festival.

Medaram Executive Officer Veeraswamy said the formation of the Trust Board would help streamline preparations for future jatara events

and ensure accountability in the utilisation of funds. He noted that the board would play a key role in overseeing development works, festival arrangements and conservation of the sacred forest area.

The constitution of the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Mahajatara Trust Board has been welcomed by devotees and tribal leaders, who expressed hope that the new administrative structure would further enhance the spiritual experience of pilgrims while safeguarding the rich cultural heritage associated with the world-famous jatara.

Tula Arun Kumar Submits Representation to CM Seeking Land Allocation for Munnuru Kapu Hostels

Hyderabad, January 17 (TPN Bureau):

AICC Grievance Cell Telangana State Coordinator Sri Tula Arun Kumar on Friday submitted a detailed representation to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, urging immediate resolution of the pending proposal for allocation of government land for the construction of Munnuru Kapu boys' and girls' hostels in Adilabad district.

In his memorandum, Tula Arun Kumar highlighted that the proposal pertains to the allotment of 2.00 acres of government land for the construction of Munnuru Kapu boys' and girls' hostels in Adilabad district.

Despite the completion of all formalities at various administrative levels, Tula Arun Kumar pointed out that the delay in Cabinet approval has resulted in continued hardship for students from backward and marginalized communities. He stressed that the prolonged pendency of the issue is adversely affecting poor students in Adilabad district who are in urgent need of hostel facilities to pursue their education.

He emphasized that



the establishment of Munnuru Kapu boys' and girls' hostels would significantly improve access to education for underprivileged students in the district. "These hostels will provide a safe and supportive environment for students from poor families and contribute meaningfully to social and educational development in the region," he said.

Tula Arun Kumar appealed to the Chief Minister to intervene personally and expedite the Cabinet approval process so that construction work could begin at the earliest. He underlined that timely action would send a strong message about the government's commitment to social justice and inclusive development.

According to Arun Kumar, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy responded positively to the representation and assured

that the matter would be examined sympathetically. He expressed confidence that the state government would soon take a favorable decision in the interest of students and the Munnuru Kapu community.

The representation is being viewed as an important step towards addressing long-pending infrastructure needs for backward class students in Adilabad district.

KTR Slams Congress Government Over Secunderabad Identity, Vows Continued Democratic Struggle



Hyderabad, January 17, 2026 (TPN Bureau):

Bharat Rashtriya Samithi (BRS) Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), along with senior party leaders, addressed a media conference at Telangana Bhavan on Friday, strongly criticising the Congress government for what he termed as an attempt to erase the historical identity of Secunderabad.

KTR said that historically Hyderabad and Secunderabad have grown as twin cities and are globally recognised as such. He alleged that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's decisions were reminiscent of "Tughlaq-style governance," stating that the present government had turned into "a stone in the hands of a madman."

He accused the Congress of coming to power by promising six guarantees and 420 assurances, but instead of implementing them, focusing only on renaming and altering symbols linked to Telangana's identity.

Minister Srinivas Reddy extended his best wishes to all winners and runners-up, encouraging them to continue striving for excellence. He concluded by emphasizing that initiatives like the Kaka Venkata Swami Memorial T20 Tournament play a crucial role in fostering a sporting culture among youth, boosting both skills and confidence.

The event reflects the government's commitment to creating opportunities for athletes and shaping Telangana as a hub of sporting excellence.

tions benefitted the common people and said such moves reflected nothing but misplaced priorities.

Highlighting the BRS government's decentralisation efforts under former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, KTR said governance was taken closer to people through the creation of new villages, mandals, revenue divisions and districts, increasing districts from 10 to 33.

He added that even in Hyderabad, wards and zones were increased and provided with enhanced development funds to ensure balanced growth.

KTR asserted that Hyderabad and Secunderabad are symbols of Telangana's pride and identity. He warned that the current government's "ill-conceived decisions" could completely wipe out Secunderabad's historical recognition.

He said people from all sections of Secunderabad have united and are protesting against the government's move, and that local public representatives—mostly from BRS—were invited by residents to support the struggle.

Referring to the cancellation of a proposed peace rally, KTR said permission was given until late night but later withdrawn, leading to the arrest of thousands of corporators, former corporators,

Kaka Venkata Swami Memorial T20 Cricket Tournament Inspires Young Talents



Hyderabad | 17 January 2026 | TPN Bureau

Telangana Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy praised the state government's visionary sports policy, highlighting its role in promoting young sporting talent across Telangana. Speaking at the Kaka Venkata Swami Memorial T20 Cricket Tournament prize distribution ceremony held at Hyderabad's Gymkhana Grounds, the minister emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for emerging

cricketers to showcase their skills.

The tournament, organized in memory of the late Kaka Venkata Swami, was designed to encourage youth participation and identify talented cricketers from both urban and rural areas. Minister Srinivas Reddy acknowledged the efforts of Kaka Swami's family, particularly his sons, for ensuring that their father's legacy continues through this prestigious tournament. "This initiative is a commendable effort to keep his vision alive and in-

spire young players to excel," he said.

The event saw the participation of Telangana ministers Vivek Venkata Swami, Ponnam Prabhakar, and Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with MP Gaddam Vamsikrishna and MLA Naveen Yadav, who joined Minister Srinivas Reddy in distributing awards to the winning teams. The tournament, which commenced on 22 December, featured 29 teams covering almost all districts of Telangana, providing a platform for talented young players to demon-

strate their skills and gain recognition.

Minister Srinivas Reddy underlined that cricket is not limited to urban centers; rural areas also have immense talent that deserves encouragement. "Recognizing and nurturing these players through competitive tournaments ensures a strong foundation for sports development in the state," he said. He further stated that under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the Telangana government has actively worked to

senior party leaders and common citizens. He termed this as undemocratic and warned the government that power is not permanent.

KTR demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all those arrested and urged the government to stop attempts to undermine Secunderabad's identity. He said that while the government might feel temporary satisfaction in suppressing protests, the BRS would continue its constitutionally guaranteed right to protest peacefully by approaching the courts again.

He also took a swipe at the Chief Minister's future plans, questioning how a "futureless Chief Minister" could speak of building a "Future City," while talking about scrapping existing districts after ten years. He questioned the government's discomfort with smaller districts and integrated collectorates that bring administration closer to the people.

Finally, KTR appealed to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to respond to what he called injustices and unconstitutional actions taking place in Telangana, and to clarify whether such governance aligns with constitutional values.

BJP Holds Vijay Sankalp Sammelan in Secunderabad Ahead of Municipal Elections

TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, January 17, 2026:

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Telangana unit on Friday organised a grand Vijay Sankalp Sammelan at Classic Garden in Secunderabad as part of its preparations for the forthcoming municipal corporation and municipality elections in the state. The meeting was presided over by BJP Telangana State President N. Ramchander Rao and saw the participation of senior national and state leaders, party office-bearers, elected representatives and a large number of grassroots workers.

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, BJP Legislative Party Leader Aleti Maheshwar Reddy, BJP Legislative Council Party Leader AVN Reddy, MPs Etela Rajender, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and Nagesh, along with several



MLAs, MLCs, state in-charges, general secretaries, mohra leaders and senior party functionaries attended the event. Addressing the gathering, N. Ramchander Rao said elections to 10 municipal corporations and 121 municipalities in Telangana could be announced at any moment and asserted that the BJP was fully prepared to face them. He said the Vijay Sankalp Sammelan was organised to ensure that the party remained election-ready at all times,

irrespective of when polls are held. Referring to the recent gram panchayat elections, Ramchander Rao claimed that the BJP had recorded unprecedented growth by winning around 1,000 sarpanch posts, nearly 10,000 ward member positions and between 1,200 and 1,500 deputy sarpanch posts. He said this success, achieved despite contesting a limited number of seats, clearly indicated the party's rising acceptance among rural voters. He alleged that

while the BRS had suffered a sharp decline, the political contest in Telangana was now primarily between the BJP and the Congress. Launching a strong attack on the Congress government, the BJP state president accused it of failing to honour its election promises and alleged corruption, internal rifts among ministers and lack of focus on governance. He questioned the implementation of job creation promises, farmer welfare schemes and wom-

en-centric assurances, claiming that none had been fulfilled so far. He also accused the state government of misleading people about Central welfare schemes and diverting funds released by the Union government. Ramchander Rao credited the Narendra Modi-led Central government with Telangana's development, stating that projects and investments worth over 12 lakh crore had been extended to the state over the past 11 years. He cited infrastructure development, national highways, railway modernisation, AIIMS at Bimbingar and industrial revival initiatives as key examples.

Calling for a "double-engine government," he urged voters to support the BJP in the upcoming municipal and corporation elections, stating that the party was committed to service, transparency and consistent struggle on public issues.

Jagga Reddy Assures House Sites for the Homeless at Sangareddy Public Meeting

Sangareddy, January 17 (TPN Bureau):

TPCC Working President T. Jagga Reddy on Friday gave a strong assurance to the homeless and beneficiaries of house site pattas issued during 2012-2013, promising that every poor family without a house in Sangareddy would be provided an 80-square-yard house site. He was addressing a face-to-face public meeting at Ganj Maidan in Sangareddy, held jointly with TGIC Chairperson Nirmala Jagga Reddy.

Interacting directly with people who had earlier received house pattas as well as those still living without any house sites, Jagga Reddy said he personally understood the hardships of living in rented houses. "I myself lived in a rented house for 22 years. That is why I am making sincere efforts to ensure that every poor family gets its own house site," he said.

Recalling his role in the undivided Andhra



Pradesh, Jagga Reddy stated that in 2013 he had spoken to the then Chief Minister Kiran Kumar Reddy and ensured allocation of 80-square-yard house sites to about 5,500 poor families in Sangareddy. However, he alleged that during the ten-year rule of the BRS government, the house sites allotted at Aliyabad and Togarpalli were diverted for other purposes.

He questioned why none of the beneficiaries had raised their voice over the issue during the past decade. "Not even one person ques-

tioned what happened to the land that was allotted to you," he remarked. Jagga Reddy said he has now taken fresh steps to correct the injustice. He informed that he has already held discussions with the District Collector to acquire around 200 acres of land in Sangareddy and Kandi mandals for distributing house sites again. "The process will begin this January itself and I will ensure it reaches a conclusion by November. Once land acquisition is completed, I will call another meeting with you," he as-

sion earlier, this money would have remained with you," he said.

Speaking candidly about his political journey, Jagga Reddy said he never felt bad about losing elections. "In fact, it turned out to be good in one way. Because I lost, my wife Nirmala became the Corporation Chairperson," he remarked with a smile.

He said he distributes money for people's needs during his tenure but ironically never has money during elections. "If I wanted to give money like others, I could. But that is not my nature," he asserted.

Stating that he now has political strength, Jagga Reddy said his word carries weight with the present government. "Chief Minister Revanth Reddy listens to me," he said, concluding with a firm promise: "As Jagga Reddy, I give you my word—every poor person without a house in Sangareddy will be given an 80-square-yard house site."

TRS Leaders Hold Media Briefing on Secunderabad Issues



Hyderabad, January 17, 2026 (TPN Bureau)

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) Working President K. T. Rama Rao (KTR), along with senior party leaders, addressed the media at Telangana Bhavan to raise concerns regarding the ongoing situation in Secunderabad. The press meet also featured Talasani Srinivas Yadav, who spoke on behalf of

the party.

During the briefing, KTR and Talasani highlighted the historical and cultural significance of Secunderabad, stating that its identity and existence are tied to the rights and self-respect of its residents. They criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the Congress government for attempting to erase the heritage and

identity of Secunderabad in the twin cities, arguing that one of the two cities is being deliberately undermined. Talasani Yadav strongly condemned actions taken by authorities against residents and party activists, noting that while citizens speaking for Secunderabad face arrests and legal action, ministers and leaders responsible

for contentious decisions remain unchallenged. He recounted that efforts to conduct a peace rally in Secunderabad, with prior police approval and a prepared route map, were abruptly canceled at midnight, despite permissions being granted for the past five days.

He described the heavy deployment of police around Secunderabad Railway Station Clock Tower, where thousands of people were reportedly detained and taken into custody, which he termed an affront to the dignity and self-respect of the local population. Talasani emphasized that the TRS will not tolerate actions that undermine the city's heritage and vowed to challenge the Congress government in court if necessary. The TRS leaders assured that they would seek legal permission to conduct a peaceful rally in the first week following court approval and stressed that this would not be the only action.

The media briefing concluded with a firm message from the TRS leadership: the party will continue to advocate for Secunderabad residents and ensure that their historical, cultural, and civic identity is preserved against any administrative or political encroachments.

Etela Rajender Issues Strong Stand on Malakajgiri Corporation Issues

Malakajgiri | 17 January 2026 | TPN Bureau

BJP senior leader and former minister Etela Rajender has raised serious concerns over the ongoing administrative changes in Malakajgiri Corporation, emphasizing that the historical, cultural, and political identity of regions should never be compromised. Addressing media and local stakeholders, Rajender stated that just as the legacy and name of Secunderabad should not be diminished, similarly, Malakajgiri's identity must be preserved. He pointed out that Malakajgiri is currently the largest parliamentary constituency in India, and any attempt to merge or minimize its significance under the Secunderabad framework is unjust and unacceptable.

Highlighting the current municipal setup, Rajender said that all corporators in Malakajgiri Corporation are natives of the district, representing the local population. "To suggest incorporating them under Secunderabad is fundamentally wrong. Malakajgiri has its own identity and needs to be recognized as such," he asserted. While appreciating the historical and cultural prominence of Secunderabad, he clarified that honoring one city should not come at the cost of diminishing another. Rajender further criticized the government's inco-

istency, questioning why similar considerations were not applied to Secunderabad in the past, and why dual standards continue to exist.

He accused the ruling Congress government of arbitrary division of administrative boundaries and mis-handling of reservation policies. He said that attempts to manipulate population figures or redraw boundaries to influence election outcomes are a futile exercise. According to him, such moves neither improve governance nor benefit citizens, but serve only to advance political agendas. Rajender also highlighted the failure of the Congress government in addressing municipal and panchayat financial obligations. "Even after two years, the government could not clear pending dues in municipalities and local bodies. They claim there is no money, yet conduct elections only to access central funds. This is governance in name only," he stated. He also criticized the

Telangana Government Orders Major Transfer of 20 IPS Officers

Hyderabad, January 17, 2026 (TPN Bureau)

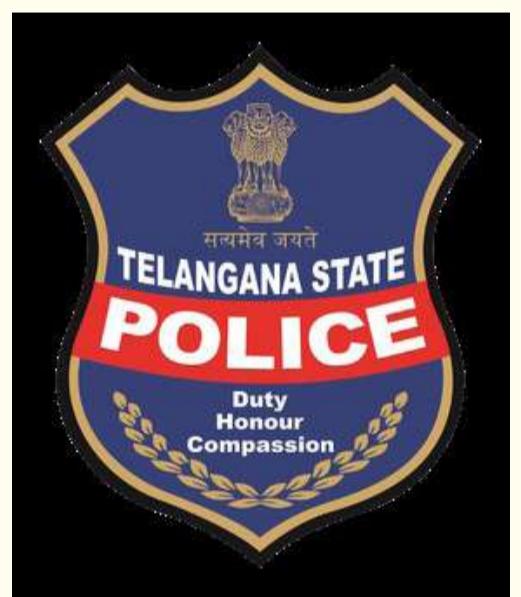
The Telangana government has ordered a significant reshuffle of 20 Indian Police Service (IPS) officers, transferring and posting them across key departments and districts in the state. The move is aimed at strengthening law enforcement leadership and ensuring better administrative efficiency ahead of civic responsibilities and evolving security challenges.

According to official sources, the transfers were issued under the supervision of the General Administration Department, with orders signed by the state's Chief Secretary. The reshuffle includes senior officers being reassigned to new roles in urban commissionerates, intelligence units, vigilance divisions, and traffic and administrative wings to improve coordination and responsiveness.

Among the major postings, Dr. Gajara Bhupal has been appointed as Inspector General of Police (Provisioning and Logistics), with additional responsibility for sports and welfare operations. Abhishek Mohanty has been assigned as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Vigilance and Enforcement, and R. Bhaskaran will now serve as DIG of the Criminal Investigation (CI) Cell in Hyderabad, reinforcing the state's focus on intelligence and

crime prevention.

In the metropolitan zones, leadership roles have also been reassigned. G. Chandana Deepthi will serve as Additional Commissioner of Police (Administration and Traffic) for the Future City Commissionerate, while T. Annapurna has been posted as Deputy Commissioner of Police (Administration) in Cyberabad. These changes are intended to enhance operational efficiency in the rapidly expanding urban areas of Telangana. The government stated that the reshuffle is part of its broader agenda of proactive governance and public safety, particularly with local elections and urban development plans on the horizon. By placing experienced officers in new assignments, the administration aims to bring fresh perspectives to departments requiring fo-



HYDRA Steps Up Action to Prevent Dumping of Soil in City Lakes

TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, January 17:

In a bid to protect lakes and water bodies in Hyderabad, HYDRA Commissioner A.V. Ranganath has directed officials to install fencing around lakes to prevent the dumping of soil and encroachments. He said proper fencing was essential to safeguard the Full Tank Level (FTL) and buffer zones of lakes and ensure their long-term protection.

The HYDRA Commissioner conducted field inspections on Saturday in response to grievances received through the Prajavani public grievance programme. Dur-

ing his visit, local residents showed him instances of soil being dumped within the FTL limits of Mellacheruvu. Taking serious note of the violation, Ranganath ordered the immediate removal of the dumped soil and instructed Raju Yadav, who was found responsible, to clear the encroachment without delay. The Commissioner also inspected Gandipet lake, where soil dumping was reported on the Himayatnagar village side. Expressing strong displeasure, he directed Dr. Khurshid to remove the dumped soil immediately. He warned that strict action would be initiated if the soil was



not cleared within 48 hours. Ranganath reiterated that any en-

croachment or illegal activity within lake FTL and buffer zones would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

As part of his inspections, the HYDRA Commissioner later visited the Manikonda area, where he examined encroachments along the Bulkapur Nala. He instructed officials to identify and remove illegal occupations obstructing the natural flow of the nala, stating that such encroachments contribute to flooding and environmental degradation.

Ranganath also inspected parks located on Jubilee Hills Road Nos. 32 and 33, where he

found several illegal constructions within park premises. He directed officials to remove unauthorised structures built by nearby residents. These included constructions made under the pretext of watchmen quarters and cattle sheds. He also ordered the removal of gates illegally installed by adjacent residents that restricted public access to the parks.

The Commissioner instructed officials to maintain constant vigilance and respond promptly to public complaints, stating that preservation of water bodies and open spaces was crucial for the city's ecological balance and sustainable urban development.

Step Towards Clean Dundigal: Students and Residents Take Cleanliness Pledge



TPN Bureau
Quthbullapur, January 17:

As part of a special cleanliness drive aimed at transforming Dundigal into a cleaner and healthier locality, sanitation officials of the Dundigal Circle, under the directions of GHMC higher authorities, successfully conducted an extensive awareness and sanitation programme on Friday. The drive was carried out across Bahadurpally, Gagilapur, Mallampet and D. Pochampally wards.

During the programme, sanitation teams identified Garbage Vulnerable Points (GVPs) in the area and undertook thorough cleaning operations to remove accumulated waste. Officials ensured complete clearance of garbage at these locations to prevent recurring dumping and to improve overall hygiene in the neighbourhoods.

A key highlight of the initiative was the Swachhata Pledge tak-

en by school students, members of Residents' Welfare Associations and local ward residents along with Dundigal Circle sanitation officials. Through the pledge, participants reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining cleanliness in their surroundings and supporting the city's sanitation efforts. Sanitation officials created awareness among residents, emphasising that cleanliness is a shared responsibility. People were advised to segregate household waste into wet and dry waste and hand it over to the Swachh autos that collect garbage at their doorsteps. Officials stressed that proper waste segregation at source plays a crucial role in effective solid waste management.

Participants were also encouraged to keep their surroundings clean, strictly avoid the use of single-use plastic and refrain from open defecation. Residents were advised to utilise public

toilets wherever necessary to ensure hygiene and public health. Officials highlighted that community participation is essential to sustain cleanliness initiatives and achieve long-term behavioural change. The programme saw active participation from Environment Engineer P. Sathvik, ward-level sanitation staff from Bahadurpally, Gagilapur, Mallampet and D. Pochampally, government school students, members of Residents' Welfare Associations and local residents.

Officials expressed confidence that such collective efforts involving students and citizens would help build awareness from the grassroots level and contribute significantly towards achieving a clean and green Dundigal. They added that similar drives would continue across the circle to reinforce sanitation practices and encourage responsible civic behaviour among the public.

Vikarabad Police Seize 2.57 kg of Dry Ganja, One Arrested



Vikarabad, January 17 (TPN Bureau):

On credible information, the Anti-Extortion Squad (AES) along with the District Task Force (DTF) team of Vikarabad conducted a raid on January 17 in the agricultural fields of Boini Ravi, a resident of Kudukunta village, Marpally Mandal, under the jurisdiction of Mominpet Police

Station.

During the raid, the team found that Ravi had illegally cultivated ganja (cannabis) as an intercrop within his turmeric fields. The authorities seized 2.572 kilograms of dry ganja from the site.

The accused, Boini Ravi, was taken into custody during the operation. The contraband along with all case-related docu-

ments have been handed over to the Station House Officer (SHO) of Mominpet for further legal proceedings.

The Vikarabad police have reiterated their commitment to curbing illegal narcotic cultivation and urged citizens to report any suspicious activities to prevent the spread of illicit drugs in the region.

TPCC Spokesperson Charan Koushik Targets BRS Leaders Over Secunderabad Corporation Issue

TPN Bureau
Hyderabad, January 17:

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) official spokesperson Dr. Charan Koushik Yadav on Friday launched a sharp attack on senior BRS leaders K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR), T. Srinivas Yadav and K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), questioning their commitment to Secunderabad and the long-pending demand for a separate municipal corporation.

Reacting to recent statements by BRS leaders, Dr. Charan Koushik Yadav asked what former ministers had done when KCR was the Chief Minister. Addressing T. Srinivas Yadav directly, he questioned why the issue of Lashkar district or a separate Secunderabad Municipal Corporation was never raised during the BRS regime. "When

KCR was the Chief Minister and you were a minister, why did Lashkar district not come to your mind? Why could you not make Secunderabad a separate corporation despite holding ministerial power?" he asked.

He further alleged that Srinivas Yadav failed even to place the demand before the then Chief Minister. "Why could you not at least ask KCR for a Lashkar district when you were a minister? Was it fear of the 'big boss' that stopped you?" he remarked, accusing BRS leaders of lacking courage to raise genuine public issues within their own government.

Turning his criticism towards former Municipal Administration Minister K.T. Rama Rao, the TPCC spokesperson questioned why Secunderabad Municipal Corporation was never raised during his tenure. "KTR, when you were the Municipal Minister, why did you not form the Secunderabad Municipal Corporation?" he asked, alleging selective decision-making by the previous government.

Established during his tenure, "KTR, when you were the Municipal Minister, why did you not form the Secunderabad Municipal Corporation?" he asked, alleging selective decision-making by the previous government.

Dr. Charan Koushik Yadav also drew a comparison with the bifurcation of Warangal. He pointed out that when Warangal was divided into Warangal and Hanamkonda districts, the BRS government did not hesitate despite the two cities being considered twin cities. "When you were the Municipal Minister, you divided Warangal into Warangal and Hanamkonda. Did it not strike you then that they were twin cities?" he asked, questioning what he termed as double standards in governance. The TPCC leader alleged that the BRS leadership was now at-



tempting to politicise issues which it had ignored during its decade-long rule. He said Congress leaders were being unfairly targeted for problems that accumulated due to the inaction of the previous government. "BRS leaders are speaking now only because they are no longer in power. When they had full authority, they chose silence," he said. Dr. Charan Koushik Yadav asserted that the Congress party remained committed to addressing genuine public aspirations and regional imbalances. He said the party would place people's issues above political convenience and take decisions transparently. His remarks have triggered fresh political debate in Hyderabad, particularly over the demand for administrative restructuring and civic governance in Secunderabad.

Road Safety Awareness Programme Held at Gandimaisamma Crossroads

TPN Bureau
Quthbullapur, January 17:

As part of the National Road Safety Week-2026, a road safety awareness programme was organised at the busy Gandimaisamma crossroads on Friday under the supervision of the Jeedimetla Traffic Police. The programme aimed at educating auto drivers, bikers and the general public on the importance of following traffic rules to prevent road

accidents.

Dundigal Circle Deputy Commissioner Venkateswar Naik and Traffic Deputy Commissioner Ranjan Ratan attended the programme as chief guests. Addressing the gathering, the officials explained how violations of traffic rules often lead to serious accidents, particularly in accident-prone "black spot" areas. They highlighted the causes of frequent mishaps at such locations and stressed the need for

greater caution and discipline among road users. The speakers emphasised the mandatory use of helmets and seat belts and warned against the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol. They also spoke about the risks associated with overspeeding and urged motorists to adhere to speed limits at all times. The officials underlined that most road accidents are preventable if traffic regulations are followed sincerely.



Stating that road safety is a shared responsibility, the officers called upon drivers and commuters to cooperate with traffic police and become responsible road users. They said strict enforcement combined with public awareness could significantly reduce accident rates and save lives.

The programme was attended by Traffic ACP Venkata Reddy, Medchal RTO official Triveni, Jeedimetla Traffic CI Narasimha Rao, DI Bal Reddy, Jeedimetla Traffic SI Sandeep, land order SIs, traffic personnel, auto drivers, two-wheeler riders and local residents.

Participants appreciated the initiative and interacted with officials, seeking clarifications on traffic rules and safety measures. Police officials said similar awareness programmes would be conducted across other major junctions and black spots in the area during the National Road Safety Week to promote safer roads and responsible driving habits.



Hyderabad, Telangana | 2026.01.17 | 12:01

All Arrangements Completed for Singaraya Jatara: Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Appeals to Devotees

Siddipet, January 17, 2026 (TPN Bureau):

State Minister for Transport and Backward Classes Welfare, Ponnam Prabhakar, has announced that all arrangements have been completed for the grand conduct of the Singaraya Jatara and appealed to devotees to participate in large numbers and seek the blessings of the presiding deity.

The annual Singaraya Prataparudra Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Jatara, held atop the scenic Singaraya Hill in Koheeda Mandal of Husnabad Assembly Constituency, will be celebrated with religious fervour on Sunday, January 18. The minister said the government has taken all necessary measures to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of the jatara amid the naturally beautiful surroundings of hills and forests.

He noted that Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, fondly regarded as the "Kongu Bangaram" (beloved deity) of devotees, attracts lakhs of pilgrims every year from the erstwhile Karimnagar, Warangal, and



Medak districts, apart from Hyderabad and various parts of Telangana. Devotees from neighbouring Maharashtra are also expected to attend the festival in large numbers.

To facilitate the convenience of pilgrims, the authorities have made elaborate arrangements, including the provision of adequate drinking water, queue lines for darshan, and strict police bandobast to maintain law and order. Special measures

have been taken to ensure that devotees can have darshan of the deity in a calm and orderly atmosphere, the minister said.

Highlighting the spiritual significance of the festival, Ponnam Prabhakar explained that performing holy baths during the month of Magha in rivers flowing from east to west carries immense spiritual merit. He also spoke about the sacred Moetummeda stream flowing from the surrounding hills and

forests near Singaraya Konda. Taking a holy dip in its medicinally rich waters is believed to offer both spiritual and health benefits.

The minister further mentioned that partaking in the special vegetarian dishes traditionally prepared during the jatara—made with vegetables such as cluster beans, tomatoes, and brinjals—after the holy bath is considered auspicious and beneficial for health.

Appealing to the pub-

lic, Ponnam Prabhakar urged devotees to participate in large numbers and make the Singaraya Jatara a grand success. He assured that the government remains committed to preserving religious traditions while ensuring safety, hygiene, and convenience for all pilgrims.

The statement was issued by the Office of the District Public Relations Officer, Siddipet District.

Blood Donation Camp Organized in Memory of K.S. Surukunti Sridhar Reddy

Adilabad, Ichoda Mandal, January 17, 2026 (TPN Bureau)

A blood donation camp was held at Vivekananda Degree College, Ichoda Mandal, in memory of K.S. Surukunti Sridhar Reddy, a revered social worker and educationist. The camp saw enthusiastic participation from students and youth, with Hon'ble MLA Anil Ja-

dav attending as the chief guest.

The event commenced with MLA Anil Jadav himself donating blood, setting an example for the young attendees. Addressing the participants, he highlighted the importance of voluntary blood donation, particularly in tribal and remote areas where the percentage of donors is relatively low. He

emphasized that such initiatives not only save lives but also create awareness among local youth about the critical need for blood donation. He lauded the courage and commitment of students who volunteered for the cause, calling them role models for others in the community.

MLA Anil Jadav also spoke about the legacy

of K.S. Surukunti Sridhar Reddy, who had envisioned providing quality education to students in tribal regions. To fulfill this vision, he had established the first Vivekananda educational institutions in Ichoda Mandal, creating opportunities for countless students from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve academic excellence. The MLA noted that the dedication and service of Sridhar Reddy have enabled many students to reach higher levels of education and professional success.

The blood donation camp was organized with meticulous planning, ensuring safe and hygienic collection of blood. Medical staff, volunteers, and faculty members supervised the procedures, guiding donors through the process. Students, local residents, and community members actively participated, making the

camp a significant success in both awareness and contribution.

The event was also attended by Correspondent Narayana Reddy, College Principal Nikini Varma, faculty members, and local leaders, who encouraged the youth to continue such selfless acts of service. The organizers expressed their gratitude to all participants for their support and assured that the spirit of voluntary service would continue to be promoted through future initiatives.

The camp reaffirmed the message that "All donations are noble, but blood donation is the greatest gift one can give", inspiring the local community to contribute to this life-saving cause. Through such efforts, the legacy of K.S. Surukunti Sridhar Reddy continues to inspire generations in the region.



BJP Leaders Visit Injured Kondamadugu Sarpanch Pandurang



Malakajgiri | 17 January 2026 | TPN Bureau
BJP leaders MP Etela Rajender and Medchal Constituency MLA and former MPP Anugu Sudarshan Reddy visited HEKA Rehab Hospital today to meet Pan-

durang, the newly elected Sarpanch of Kondamadugu village, who sustained serious head injuries in a recent accident.

Pandurang, who recently took oath as the village Sarpanch after a

decisive victory backed by the Bharatiya Janata Party, underwent brain surgery following the severe head injury and is currently undergoing treatment and recovery.

During the visit, the leaders consulted with

the attending doctors to understand the Sarpanch's health condition and expressed their best wishes for a full and speedy recovery. Both leaders assured Pandurang and his family that the party stands firmly by them during this challenging time and will provide all necessary support.

Etela Rajender and Anugu Sudarshan Reddy also conveyed their encouragement to Pandurang's family, emphasizing the need for patience and confidence during the recovery process. The visit underscores the BJP leadership's commitment to supporting its elected representatives and maintaining close contact with grassroots leaders, especially during times of personal hardship. The leaders highlighted Pandurang's dedication to public service and reaffirmed that once fully recovered, he would continue to work for the development of Kondamadugu village with the backing of the party and its local organizational network.

This gesture reflects the ongoing efforts by political leaders to maintain a strong connect with their representatives at the village level, ensuring that support extends beyond electoral victories to personal and professional well-being.

The hospital visit concluded with the BJP leaders expressing their confidence in the medical team's ability to manage Pandurang's recovery and reiterated their solidarity with him and his family.

MLC Deshapathi Srinivas Expresses Deep Grief Over Teacher Kalpana's Death in Arvapalli Road Accident

Suryapet, January 17, 2026 (TPN Bureau):

Shasanamandal member (MLC) Deshapathi Srinivas has expressed profound sorrow and shock over the tragic death of teacher Kalpana, who lost her life in a severe road accident near Arvapalli in the Tungatutti constituency of Suryapet.

Shasanamandal member (MLC) Deshapathi Srinivas has expressed profound sorrow and shock over the tragic death of teacher Kalpana, who lost her life in a severe road accident near Arvapalli in the Tungatutti constituency of Suryapet.

He further urged the authorities to provide the best possible medical care to the seriously injured teachers, including Headmaster Ravulapalli and Tulasi, who are currently undergoing treatment at the hospital.

The accident occurred on the first day after schools reopened following Sankranti holidays. Kalpana, along with four other teachers, was traveling from Nalgonda to resume her duties. Their vehicle lost control, resulting in a fatal crash in which Kalpana died on the spot, leaving the entire teaching community and local residents in deep grief.

Speaking on the incident, MLC Deshapathi Srinivas said, "It is extremely tragic that teachers, who are the guiding lights for society, lose their lives prematurely. This is an irreparable loss to the teaching community. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased Kalpana and pray that they find strength during this very difficult time."

He further urged the authorities to provide the best possible medical care to the seriously injured teachers, including Headmaster Ravulapalli and Tulasi, who are currently undergoing treatment at the hospital.

The Suryapet district administration has been asked to oversee the welfare of the affected families and monitor the recovery of the injured, ensuring that both immediate and long-term support is provided. Kalpana's untimely demise is mourned by colleagues, students, and the larger community, serving as a stark reminder of the importance of road safety and the invaluable role teachers play in shaping society.

Heavy Police Deployment Ahead of CM's Adilabad Visit



Adilabad, January 17, 2026 (TPN Bureau)

In anticipation of Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's visit to Adilabad district, the authorities have deployed extensive security arrangements to ensure public safety and smooth conduct of the programme. Over 500 police personnel have been mobilized across key locations in Adilabad town, under the supervision of senior police officials, to maintain law and order during the high-profile visit.

The district administration, led by Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan, is closely monitoring all security arrangements. Special emphasis has been placed on crowd management, traffic regulation, and coordination among local police units to prevent any untoward incidents during the CM's tour. Authorities have also engaged volunteers and support staff to assist in logistical arrangements and public coordination, ensuring a smooth experience for residents and visitors alike.

Security personnel have been instructed to work in close coordination with the district administration to ensure that all planned events proceed without disruption. Additional arrangements have been made at key venues to address crowd-related challenges and facilitate the smooth passage of the Chief Minister's convoy.

Authorities emphasized that the deployment reflects the importance of the visit as well as the commitment to maintaining law and order. They also highlighted that such measures are standard protocol for visits by top state officials, particularly in areas expecting large public participation.

Residents expressed hope that the visit will bring renewed attention to local development needs and provide opportunities for community engagement with state leadership. The district administration has assured citizens that every possible measure is being taken to ensure safety, accessibility, and smooth execution of the Chief Minister's programmes.

The visit is being closely watched by both officials and residents, with security arrangements forming the cornerstone of the preparation, ensuring that the



BMC Elections 2025: The Fall of the Thackeray Fortress and Mumbai's Political Realignment

The results of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections have delivered a decisive and symbolic blow to the Thackeray legacy, reshaping Mumbai's political landscape in ways once considered unthinkable. The Mahayuti alliance has breached what was long regarded as an impregnable Shiv Sena stronghold, ending decades of Thackeray dominance over India's richest municipal body. For the first time in the civic body's history, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is poised to secure the mayor's post—an outcome that marks a profound shift in both power and political narrative in the country's financial capital.

The BJP-Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) alliance secured 118 seats, crossing the majority mark of 114, while the alliance of Shiv Sena (UBT), Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), and Sharad Pawar's NCP faction managed only 72 seats. The Congress, contesting independently, won 24 seats. These numbers do more than reflect an electoral defeat; they underscore the collapse of a political strategy rooted in nostalgia, identity politics, and outdated assumptions about Mumbai's electorate.

The Crumbling of a Political Citadel

For decades, control of the BMC was the cornerstone of Shiv Sena's power. The civic body, with an annual budget running into thousands of crores—larger than that of several Indian states—was not just an administrative institution but a symbol of Marathi pride and political authority. From Bal Thackeray to Uddhav Thackeray, the BMC served as the Sena's financial and organisational backbone.



The Mahayuti's victory represents the end of that era. The BJP's emergence as the dominant force within the alliance, and its imminent claim to the mayor's chair, signals a changing hierarchy in Maharashtra politics. Mumbai, once governed through emotional appeals to identity and legacy, has decisively voted for governance, development, and stability.

The Failed Thackeray Reunion

In a dramatic political gamble, estranged cousins Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray reunited after nearly two decades, hoping to consolidate the Marathi vote and halt the Mahayuti's advance. Joined by Sharad Pawar's NCP faction, the alliance was projected as a formidable counterforce, banking heavily on linguistic pride and shared regional identity.

Instead, the results exposed the limits of such a strategy. Despite the emotional symbolism of the Thackeray reunion, voters were unconvinced. The alliance failed to generate momentum beyond its traditional base and struggled to adapt its message to the realities of a modern, aspirational metropolis.

The Marathi Vote Is No Longer Monolithic

One of the most striking revelations of the election was the fragmentation of the Marathi vote. The assumption that a UBT-MNS alliance would automatically consolidate the "Marathi mannos" proved incorrect. The Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) alone secured 29 seats, many in Marathi-dominant or Marathi-influenced wards, often defeating UBT candidates in direct contests.

This outcome demonstrates that the Marathi

voter is no longer driven solely by cultural identity. Educated, middle-class Marathi professionals—particularly the youth—are increasingly focused on infrastructure, employment, housing, and quality of life. They no longer respond uniformly to emotional appeals rooted in linguistic pride or perceived threats from "outsiders."

Memories of the MNS's violent agitations against North and South Indians, the disruption of businesses, and the culture of intimidation lingered. What once resonated with a section of voters has now alienated many who see themselves as part of a cosmopolitan Mumbai rather than a besieged regional community.

The Muslim Vote Miscalculation

Equally damaging was the alliance's failure to attract Muslim voters.

The Thackeray camp appeared to assume that Muslims would vote tactically for whichever formation seemed most capable of defeating the BJP. This assumption ignored deep historical mistrust stemming from the Shiv Sena's role during the Babri Masjid demolition and the Mumbai riots of 1992-93.

Raj Thackeray's past rhetoric and the Sena's historical baggage made reconciliation difficult. As a result, Muslim voters largely stayed with the Congress and parties such as AIMIM, SP, and sections of the NCP, even at the cost of splitting opposition votes. The strategy of combining a supposed 40% Marathi vote with a 20% Muslim bloc collapsed completely.

Counter-Consolidation of Non-Marathi Voters

Perhaps the most consequential outcome of the Thackeray strategy

was the counter-consolidation it triggered. Non-Marathi voters—estimated to form around 40% of Mumbai's population—overwhelmingly rallied behind the Mahayuti alliance.

Mumbai's demographic transformation over the past two decades has been profound. Migrants from across India now form the backbone of the city's economy, contributing to industries ranging from finance and entertainment to construction and small businesses. Many among these communities felt directly threatened by the rhetoric and historical record of the MNS and sections of the Shiv Sena.

The irony was unmistakable: a campaign meant to assert Marathi identity ended up uniting everyone else against it.

Development Over Identity

The Mahayuti alliance,

under the leadership of Devendra Fadnavis, recognised a fundamental truth that the Thackerays missed—Mumbai's voters are increasingly issue-driven. Infrastructure development, road quality, drainage, housing, public transport, and civic amenities dominated voter concerns.

While the Mahayuti spoke the language of growth and governance, the opposition remained trapped in grievance politics and cultural anxiety. As a result, Muslim voters largely stayed with the Congress and parties such as AIMIM, SP, and sections of the NCP, even at the cost of splitting opposition votes. The strategy of combining a supposed 40% Marathi vote with a 20% Muslim bloc collapsed completely.

Women and Welfare as Decisive Factors

Targeted welfare schemes, particularly the Ladki Bahin Yojana, played a significant role in consolidating female

voters behind the Mahayuti. Tangible benefits mattered more than ideological positioning. In several closely fought wards, women voters proved decisive, reinforcing the alliance's advantage.

The Congress and a Fragmented Opposition

The Congress's ambiguous strategy further weakened the opposition. While it secured a notable 10-12% vote share, its refusal to align with the MNS in Mumbai—despite partnering with it in other municipal corporations—confused voters and split the anti-BJP vote.

In many wards, opposition votes were divided three or four ways, allowing Mahayuti candidates to win comfortably with pluralities. Organisational rivalries and historical animosities prevented the emergence of a coherent alternative.

A Narrative That Failed to Evolve

Ultimately, the Thackerays lost because they failed to offer a forward-looking narrative. Their campaign relied on fear, nostalgia, and identity at a time when Mumbai's electorate is navigating the complexities of a global, 21st-century city.

The BMC election results are not just a verdict on political alliances but a reflection of Mumbai's evolving identity. The city has chosen development over division, governance over grievance, and the future over the past. The Thackeray fortress has fallen—not because voters rejected Marathi pride, but because they demanded more than symbolism in a city that never stops moving forward.

The Mandal Moment That Never Was: How the Congress Lost a Transformational Opportunity

A Lost First-Mover Advantage

The irony of history is unmistakable. When Prime Minister V.P. Singh implemented the Mandal Commission recommendations in 1990, it altered the grammar and arithmetic of Indian politics forever. "Mandal politics" brought caste firmly to the centre of power, reshaping electoral alignments and creating a new political vocabulary around representation, social justice, and affirmative action. Leaders such as Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Nitish Kumar, and other backward-class politicians rose to prominence, while regional parties flourished.

Although V.P. Singh's government lasted barely 343 days, the political transformation he unleashed was permanent. In the long run, even the Bharatiya Janata Party benefited from this churn, as it adapted and consolidated new social coalitions. The Congress, however, lost out. When P.V. Narasimha Rao eventually implemented Mandal during his prime ministership, the party reaped no political dividends—having squandered the first-mover advantage and acted under a leader who was personally uncomfortable with caste-based reservations.

The Congress's Uneasy Relationship With Caste

Decades later, the Congress appears to have come full circle. In 2023-24,



Sonia Gandhi told the Congress Working Committee that she was "100% with the caste census" and that it should be the party's highest priority. The CWC passed a resolution supporting a caste-based census and advocating quotas within quotas based on numerical strength.

Yet this shift raises an uncomfortable question: has the Congress truly undergone a change of heart, especially among its upper-caste leadership, or is it responding tactically to Rahul Gandhi's political direction and the compulsions of contemporary electoral politics? From the Indira Gandhi years through the UPA era—par-

ticularly during the 2010-11 debates—caste census and expanded reservations remained taboo topics within the party, often seen as politically explosive and socially divisive.

Indira Gandhi's Quiet Conviction

Shiv Shankar's account complicates the conventional wisdom about Indira Gandhi. As Law Minister in her cabinet, he recalls that she was personally inclined toward implementing the Mandal Commission's recommendations. The Second Backward Classes Commission had conducted an extensive study of communities identified in the Constitution as socially and edu-

cationally backward, laying out a strong empirical case for affirmative action.

However, senior colleagues repeatedly warned Indira Gandhi that implementing Mandal would create "irreversible fissures" in society and spark law-and-order problems across the country. Letters from Rao, Mukherjee, and Venkataaraman cautioned her that riots could erupt "down to the village level."

Shiv Shankar describes his shock when Indira Gandhi showed him this correspondence. He recalls telling her bluntly that rejecting the report would amount to betraying millions who had faced

Shiv Shankar repeatedly warned that backward classes were losing faith in the Congress. Despite winning elections, the party's vote share hovered around 40 percent. "The remaining 60 percent," he told Indira Gandhi, "are likely from the backward classes." If the Congress won their trust, he argued, it could become electorally invincible.

This was a remarkably prescient assessment. Yet the party's entrenched leadership failed to act on it.

B.P. Mandal's Skepticism

Even Mandal himself was sceptical of Congress intentions. Shiv Shankar recounts how Mandal hesitated to continue his work after the fall of the Janata government, fearing that the new Congress regime would not be supportive. His doubts were rooted in historical experience: successive Congress governments had shown little enthusiasm for backward-class empowerment.

Indira Gandhi, to her credit, granted two extensions to the Commission—even though it had been set up by the Morarji Desai government. Yet her political will repeatedly ran into institutional resistance.

The Committee That Never Functioned

A compromise was eventually devised. While acknowledging that Mandal's recommendations would have far-reaching consequences, the government decided to constitute

additional committees—both official and cabinet-level—to study the implications before implementation. Indira Gandhi wanted Shiv Shankar to chair the committee, but the CCPA blocked this too, insisting that P.V. Narasimha Rao take charge instead.

The committee existed on paper until 1989. In practice, it never met.

Shiv Shankar writes with visible frustration about Rao's refusal to convene even a single meeting. Repeated reminders were met with indifference. "His indecisiveness," Shiv Shankar observes, "was actually a decision."

The Cost of Delay

By the time Mandal was implemented in 1990, the Congress had lost moral ownership of the idea. What could have been a defining moment of social reform under Indira Gandhi instead became a symbol of Congress hesitation and elite discomfort. The party ceded political space to regional forces and allowed others to claim the mantle of social justice.

The Mandal moment that never was remains one of the Congress's greatest missed opportunities—one that continues to haunt it as it struggles to rebuild relevance among backward-class voters.

History, as Shiv Shankar's memoir makes clear, offered the Congress a transformative chance. It was not the opposition, but its own leadership, that ensured it slipped away.

BJP Sweeps Maharashtra Municipal Elections, Other Parties Find Silver Linings

The elections for 29 municipal corporations in Maharashtra, including the crucial Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), have delivered a resounding victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), while most other major parties also found areas of encouragement despite setbacks. The only clear losers appear to be Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Parties (NCPs), which failed to reclaim even their traditional strongholds in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, despite contesting in an alliance.

BJP

The BJP has firmly established its dominance in Maharashtra through these elections. Winning 1,425 of 2,869 wards—over 1,000 more than its nearest rival, the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena—the party is poised to secure its first-ever mayor in Mumbai. Strategic victories in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad have further strengthened its political base, providing a platform for future expansion. The overwhelming success also enhances the stature of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, under whose leadership the elections were contested.

Shiv Sena (UBT) and MNS

For Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray, UBT), the results in Mumbai demonstrate that the party retains its legacy in the city despite internal splits and defections. The UBT won 65 wards in the BMC, more



than double the tally of the Eknath Shinde faction, which secured 29. Symbolically, the UBT also won ward 13A in Thane, where Shinde resides. Meanwhile, Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), previously on the verge of political irrelevance, gained six wards in the BMC through its alliance with Uddhav Thackeray, just one short of its 2017 tally.

Congress

Despite being without allies like the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP, the Congress managed a respectable performance, winning 324 wards statewide and emerging as the third-largest party. It also won 25 BMC wards, demonstrating

resilience against the combined strength of the BJP and Shiv Sena factions.

Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde)

The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena failed to unseat the UBT in Mumbai but secured around 30 BMC seats, asserting itself as a key player in negotiations with the BJP, which lacks a majority in the corporation. Shinde's faction also achieved a significant victory in Thane, strengthening its political leverage.

AIMIM

The Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM made its presence felt, winning 95 seats across 29 municipal corporations. The party's strong performance, in-

cluding 24 seats in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar and 20 in Malegaon, indicates growing support among Muslim voters in Maharashtra.

NCPs

For Sharad and Ajit Pawar's NCP factions, their last-minute reunification did little to turn the tide. Their failure to secure Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad is a major setback, particularly for Ajit Pawar, whose political influence in the state ruling alliance may now be in question.

Overall, while the BJP emerged as the clear winner, the election results have provided both opportunities and challenges for Maharashtra's other political players.

PM Modi Campaigns in West Bengal, Highlights BJP's Development Agenda and Promises Change



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a public rally in Malda, West Bengal, on Wednesday, emphasizing the support of India's Gen Z for the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) development-focused agenda. Citing the party's unprecedented success in the recent Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections, he expressed confidence that West Bengal voters would also embrace the BJP in the upcoming state elections, scheduled to be held in a few months.

"At the BMC polls, the people gave a historic mandate to the BJP," Modi said, highlighting the party's first-ever landslide victory in Mumbai's local body elections. "The youth of India, especially Gen Z, believes in the BJP's development mode, and I am confident that the people of Bengal too will choose progress and good governance."

In his speech, Modi sharply criticized the incumbent Trinamool Congress (TMC) government led by Mamata Banerjee. Speaking in Bengali, he declared, "Ei sarkar palano dorkar," which translates to

"this Trinamool government needs to be changed." He accused the state government of being "heartless and cruel," alleging that it was looting public funds and obstructing the flow of central government aid meant for the people of Bengal. "Development will reach every corner of Bengal only when the Trinamool is defeated and the BJP forms the government," he asserted.

The prime minister also ad-

dressed concerns related to illegal immigration in the state. He claimed that the Trinamool government had been shielding infiltrators and promised that "big action will be taken against infiltration once the BJP comes to power in Bengal." Modi emphasized that the party's policies would safeguard the interests of legitimate residents, particularly persecuted communities such as the Matuas and other refugees from neighboring

countries. He highlighted that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protects these communities and assured them that they have nothing to fear under a BJP government.

Modi's campaign focused on combining promises of strong governance, development, and security. He argued that the BJP's approach prioritizes infrastructure, employment, and public welfare over politics and corruption, presenting a stark contrast to the current state administration. By highlighting the party's track record in other states and local elections, Modi sought to reinforce voter confidence in the BJP's ability to bring transformative change to West Bengal.

As the state heads towards elections, the prime minister's rally in Malda underscored the BJP's strategy of leveraging development, youth engagement, and promises of law and order to challenge the Trinamool Congress, presenting a vision of governance that seeks both economic growth and social security.

Rahul Gandhi Visits Indore, Consoles Families Affected by Waterborne Illness Outbreak



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visited Indore, Madhya Pradesh, on Saturday to meet patients and families affected by a recent vomiting and diarrhoea outbreak linked to water contamination in the city. During his visit, Gandhi spent time at Bombay Hospital, a private medical facility, where he met four patients undergoing treatment and inquired about their health, offering words of comfort to both the patients and their family members.

Accompanying him were Madhya Pradesh Congress president Jitu Patwari and senior party leader Umang Singh. The visit also took Gandhi to Bhagirathpura, the locality where the outbreak was first reported last month. There, he interacted with families who had lost loved ones, expressing condolences and consoling them during this difficult time. The gesture was aimed at highlighting the human impact of the crisis and the need for urgent action to prevent such tragedies in the

future.

Authorities in Bhagirathpura made extensive security arrangements ahead of Gandhi's visit, including the installation of barricades at several key points to ensure smooth and safe passage for the Congress leader. Residents of the area claim that the outbreak has so far claimed 24 lives. However, the Madhya Pradesh state government, in its status report submitted to the Madhya Pradesh High Court, has reported seven

deaths, including that of a five-month-old infant.

In addition, a 'death audit' conducted by a committee from the government-run Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College suggested that the deaths of 15 people in Bhagirathpura could be linked to the outbreak in some capacity. The administration has provided compensation of Rs 2 lakh each to the families of 21 individuals who passed away following the outbreak. Officials clarified that while some

deaths were caused by other illnesses or underlying conditions, financial assistance was provided to all bereaved families on humanitarian grounds.

Resort Politics Returns as Shinde Sena Moves to Strengthen Position in BMC



Resort politics has made a comeback in Mumbai, with Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena relocating its newly elected representatives to a five-star hotel, a day after the party emerged as the kingmaker in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections. Sources indicate that the move is motivated by two main considerations: preventing poaching and strengthening Shinde's bargaining position with the BJP, as the Mahayuti alliance prepares to take control of the country's richest civic body.

The BJP-Shinde Sena alliance swept the recent BMC elections, comfortably surpassing the majority mark and ending 25 years of rule by the Thackeray-led Shiv Sena. However, no single party won a majority on its own, leaving room for political maneuvering. The Shinde faction's hotel move comes amid concerns that opposition parties may join forces to challenge the expected BJP-led administration. In such a scenario,

they would require just eight additional corporators to cross the halfway mark of 114 seats and potentially block the alliance from assuming control.

The Numbers Game

The BMC consists of 227 wards, with the majority mark set at 114. The BJP won 89 seats, while Shinde's Shiv Sena secured 29, bringing the alliance total to 118—slightly above the majority threshold. The NCP, led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, contested independently despite being part of the Mahayuti and won three wards.

On the opposition side, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), led by the Thackeray cousins, along with the Sharad Pawar faction of the NCP, collectively won 72 seats—Sen (UBT) with 65, MNS with six, and NCP (SP) with one. Congress claimed 24 wards, AIMIM eight, and the Samajwadi Party two. If all opposition parties unite,

their combined strength would rise to 106, just eight seats short of the majority, raising the specter of horse-trading and potential defections.

A Strategy to Bargain

Sources suggest that the Shinde camp's move is also designed to enhance its bargaining power with the BJP over key positions, particularly the prestigious BMC mayoral post. Traditionally held by the Shiv Sena, the post is a symbol of the party's influence in Mumbai. Many corporators within Shinde's faction are pressuring the deputy chief minister not to compromise, ensuring that a Shiv Sena member occupies the mayoral seat despite the party being the junior partner in the alliance.

With the Shinde faction now in a kingmaker position, these strategic moves underscore the high-stakes politics following the BJP's record victory, highlighting both the fragility and complexity of municipal governance in Mumbai.

Thackeray Cousins Vow to Continue Marathi Identity Politics After BMC Setback



Despite losing control of Mumbai's Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) after 25 years, the Thackeray cousins, Uddhav and Raj Thackeray, have vowed to continue their fight for Marathi identity and the welfare of Maharashtra's native population.

In a post on social media, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) shared a photo of the late Balasaheb Thackeray, the party founder and champion of the Marathi cause, with the caption: "This fight isn't over yet."

The recent BMC elections saw the BJP and Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena emerge victorious, snatching control of the civic body from the Thackerays, who had united last year to challenge the ruling Mahayuti alliance. While the results were a setback to what was expected to be a new chapter in Thackeray politics, both Uddhav and Raj emphasized that their struggle for Marathi pride and identity would continue unabated.

Uddhav Thackeray's party won 65 of the 227 BMC wards. The party assured

supporters that it would persist in advocating for the rights and respect of Marathi. "The fight will continue just like this until the Marathis receive the respect they deserve," the party said, reaffirming its commitment to the Marathi cause.

Raj Thackeray, leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), which won six wards in the BMC, echoed similar sentiments. "This defeat does not mean we will lose heart or give up," he said. "If anything is done against the Marathi people, our corporators will ensure that those in power are held accountable."

He stressed that his fight was for the Marathi people, language, identity, and a prosperous Maharashtra, calling it a long-term struggle essential to the party's very existence.

Raj also accused the Mahayuti alliance of harassing and exploiting Marathis, stating that the ruling powers and their allies often seek to undermine the community. "We must stand firmly behind our Marathi people. Elections will come

and go, but our breath itself is Marathi," he declared. He further promised that the MNS would analyse its shortcomings, take corrective action, and rebuild the party from scratch to continue advocating for its cause.

BJC Elections 2026

The BJP-led alliance had a decisive victory in the BMC elections, winning 118 of the 227 wards, comfortably crossing the majority mark of 114. The BJP alone secured 89 seats, while Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena won 29. The Mahayuti alliance also emerged dominant across 25 of Maharashtra's 29 civic bodies. The BMC elections, held after a nine-year interval and a four-year delay, saw 1,700 candidates contesting 227 seats in India's richest civic body, with an annual budget exceeding Rs 74,400 crore. In the previous 2017 elections, the united Shiv Sena, which included Shinde at the time, had retained control of the BMC, maintaining decades of influence in Mumbai's civic politics.

US FAA Warns Airlines to 'Exercise Caution' Over Mexico, Central and South America Amid Military Activity Concerns"



U.S. aviation authorities have issued a series of warnings urging airlines and pilots to exercise caution when flying over certain parts of Mexico, Central America and South America due to "military activities" that could pose risks to civil aviation, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said Friday. The alerts, issued as Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs), are designed to alert operators to potentially hazardous conditions, including possible interference with global navigation satellite systems (GNSS).

The FAA's flight advisories, which take effect on January 16 and will remain in force for 60 days, cover a wide area of airspace. These include regions above Mexico and other Central American countries, as well as Panama, parts of Ecuador and Colombia, and portions of the eastern Pacific Ocean, including the Bogota, Guayaquil and Mazatlán Oceanic Flight Information Regions. The warnings caution that risks could affect aircraft at all altitudes, not only during overflights but also during takeoff, arrival and departure phases of flight.

An FAA spokesperson described the situation as a "potentially hazardous situation" and advised operators to remain alert, particularly given evolving military activities in the region. While the notices do not prohibit flights over these areas, they serve as a safety precaution so airlines can adjust routes or protocols as necessary.

The warnings come amid heightened regional tensions and recent U.S. military operations in Latin

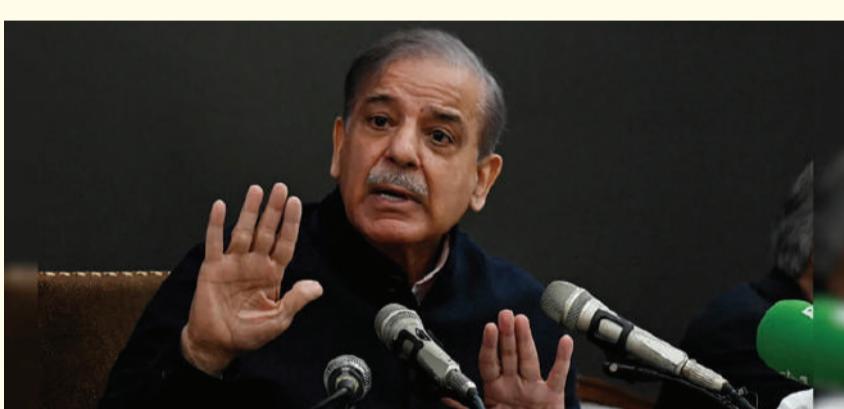
America. In early January, U.S. special forces conducted a raid and airstrikes that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, who were later transported to the United States to face trial on drug-trafficking and other charges.

In addition, U.S. President Donald Trump has publicly suggested the possibility of expanding military actions against drug cartels in Mexico, stating in media interviews that land operations could target cartel infrastructure, a stance that has drawn significant attention due to its implications for Mexico as a U.S. neighbour and trading partner. "We are going to start now hitting land, with regard to the cartels. The cartels are running Mexico," Trump said in a recent interview.

Despite the FAA advisories, the Mexican government has sought to reassure the public and the aviation sector. Officials from Mexico's Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport have said that their national airspace remains fully operational and that no changes have been made to civil aviation operations within the country. They emphasized that the FAA notice is precautionary and does not impose restrictions or affect Mexican airlines or flight paths.

The FAA's move reflects broader efforts to maintain aviation safety in a region experiencing increased military and geopolitical activity. Airlines and aviation authorities will closely monitor developments over the coming weeks as the advisory remains active.

PM Shehbaz Sharif Vows to Eradicate Terrorism, Highlights Pakistan's Strength and Resources



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to combating terrorism, emphasizing that the menace of militancy would be "thrown into the Indian Ocean." He made the remarks during a meeting with senior religious scholars representing the National Paigham-i-Aman Committee, an organization established last year to counter extremism, hate speech, terrorism, and sectarianism in the country.

Addressing the gathering, Shehbaz Sharif underscored that terrorism in Pakistan has been fueled by external actors, describing militants as being supported by the "enemies of Pakistan." Highlighting the human cost of militancy, he noted that over 100,000 Pakistanis have lost their lives to terrorism, a sacrifice he said should be acknowledged by the international community. "We are determined to defeat terrorism, and with the support of the people, we will throw it into the Indian Ocean," the prime minister asserted, reflecting the government's resolve to eliminate extremist violence from the country.

Shehbaz also referenced Pakistan's resilience in the face of regional challenges, recalling the country's strong response during a four-day conflict with India in May 2025. He described this demonstration of strength as a testament to Pakistan's preparedness to defend its sovereignty and maintain peace in the region.

In addition to security concerns, the prime minister highlighted Pakistan's

vast untapped natural resources, estimated to be worth trillions of dollars. He emphasized that effective exploration and utilization of these resources could address pressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, and economic instability. "If we use the hidden treasures, all our problems will end," he said, urging policymakers and citizens alike to prioritize the development of the country's abundant resources for national progress.

The National Paigham-i-Aman Committee, comprising senior clerics from across Pakistan, has played a key role in promoting peace and countering extremist narratives. The committee has consistently condemned militant groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Afghan Taliban, reiterating that terrorism has no justification under any circumstances. During the meeting with the prime minister, committee members affirmed their support for the government's anti-terrorism initiatives and pledged to continue efforts to spread messages of tolerance and harmony throughout the country.

By combining strong governance, public support, and effective utilization of its resources, Pakistan aims to overcome the twin challenges of militancy and underdevelopment. Shehbaz Sharif's remarks signal a determined strategy to secure the nation, foster economic growth, and reinforce Pakistan's commitment to peace and stability both domestically and internationally.

"India Engages U.S. for Sanctions Waiver to Continue Operations at Strategic Chabahar Port"



India is actively engaging with the United States to implement a short-term sanctions waiver that would allow it to continue operations at Iran's strategically located Chabahar port, the Ministry of External Affairs said. The clarification comes amid reports suggesting India might exit the project under U.S. pressure following the Trump administration's threat of a 25% tariff on countries doing business with Tehran.

Chabahar has long been India's only viable western corridor to Afghanistan and Central Asia, as Pakistan blocks overland routes. India is also a key partner in the development of the port, located in Iran's southern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

"As you are aware, on October 28, 2025, the U.S. Department of Treasury issued guidance on a conditional sanctions waiver valid until April 26, 2026. We remain engaged with the U.S. side to work out this arrangement," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

The U.S. had imposed broad sanctions on Iran in September 2025 but granted India a six-month exemption for the Chabahar project. Earlier sources noted that while a short-term waiver was provided to wind up operations, New Delhi does not consider exiting the port an

option. "India continues to engage with the U.S. to work out modalities. The port is of strategic importance, and India aims to comply with the conditions while ensuring continuity," the sources said.

Strategic Importance of Chabahar

Chabahar, meaning "four springs," is about 550 nautical miles from Kandla port in Gujarat and offers India direct access to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Europe. Positioned beyond the Strait of Hormuz, it is insulated from many regional con-

flicts. The port is part of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a 7,200-km multimodal route linking the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and northern Europe via Saint Petersburg. The corridor is expected to reduce shipment times by 15 days compared with the Suez Canal.

In 2024, India signed a 10-year agreement with Iran under which India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) committed \$370 million to Chabahar, signaling New Delhi's long-term commitment. Chabahar is also

central to India's humanitarian assistance efforts in Afghanistan.

India's Next Steps

Reports indicate India is preparing to transfer approximately \$120 million—the amount it had committed—to limit direct exposure to the project while exploring the creation of a new entity to continue its development. This approach would ensure continued Indian support without direct government involvement.

During the Trump administration in 2018, India

had received a rare exemption to continue Chabahar operations despite U.S. sanctions on Iran. The 2025 waiver extension aims to maintain continuity as Washington threatens new punitive measures.

Trade between India and Iran stood at \$1.6 billion last year, with exports of \$1.2 billion and imports of \$0.4 billion. New Delhi is navigating these sanctions amid a complex global landscape, including monitoring implications of U.S. measures on Russian oil companies.

"World Bank President Ajay Banga Named to Trump's 'Board of Peace' to Oversee Gaza Governance"



The White House has announced the formation of a "Board of Peace" under U.S. President Donald Trump to oversee the temporary governance of Gaza, which continues to experience deadly violence despite a fragile ceasefire that came into effect in October. President Trump will chair the board, which notably includes Indian-origin World Bank Group President Ajay Banga.

Who Is Ajay Banga?

Ajay Banga is the 14th President of the World Bank Group. Nominated by former U.S. President Joe Biden in February 2023, his appointment to a five-year term was confirmed in May 2023, and he officially assumed office on June 2, 2023. Under his leadership, the World Bank has undertaken extensive reforms aimed at transforming the institution into a faster, more efficient, and impactful development partner. His focus has been on increasing the bank's lending ca-

pacity, streamlining operations, and implementing practical, scalable development solutions.

Early Life and Education

Born on November 10, 1959, in Khadki, Maharashtra, into a Sikh family, Ajay Banga is the son of an Indian Army officer. He earned a Bachelor of Arts

(Honours) in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, in 1981 and later completed a postgraduate management program at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

From Global Business to Public Service

Before his role at the World Bank, Banga was

Vice Chairman at General Atlantic and previously served as President and CEO of Mastercard, where he led a global workforce of nearly 24,000 employees. During his tenure, he founded the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, promoting equitable and sustainable economic opportunity

worldwide. Banga has also held several prominent global roles. He served as Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce from 2020 to 2022 and has been on the boards of the American Red Cross, Kraft Foods, and Dow Inc. Additionally, he co-founded the Cyber Readiness Institute, focusing on improving global cyber security standards.

Recognition and Awards
Ajay Banga's contributions have been recognised internationally. Among his honours are the Padma Shri awarded by the President of India in 2016, the Singapore Public Service Star in 2022, the Foreign Policy Association Medal in 2012, and the Ellis Island Medal of Honour.

With his extensive experience in global business and public service, Banga brings significant expertise to the Board of Peace, which aims to stabilise Gaza and provide oversight during a challenging period for the region.

"Trump Accepts María Corina Machado's Nobel Peace Prize Medal, Norwegian Committee Clarifies Prize Remains Hers"



Former U.S. President Donald Trump defended his decision to accept Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado's Nobel Peace Prize medal by saying simply, "she offered it to me," and credited his role in ending eight wars. The unusual diplomatic moment unfolded on Thursday when Machado presented Trump with her Nobel Peace Prize medal during a White House

meeting, describing the act as a gesture of respect and gratitude. Trump accepted the physical medal and praised Machado as a "wonderful woman," calling her gesture "a wonderful show of mutual respect."

When asked why he would want someone else's Nobel Prize and what he planned to do with it, Trump replied: "Well, she offered it to me. I thought

it was very nice. She said, you know, you have ended eight wars, and nobody deserves this prize more than – in history – than you do. And I thought it was a very nice gesture." He concluded his remarks with a compliment, referring to Machado as a "very fine woman."

Machado, who won the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to promote democracy and a peaceful

transition in Venezuela, explained after the presentation that she gifted the medal "as recognition for his unique commitment with our freedom." Her visit to the White House also included a closed-door meeting with Trump about leadership and political issues in Venezuela. Speaking to supporters outside the White House, Machado said, "We can count on President Trump," though she did not provide further details.

Despite the headline grabbing moment, the Nobel Peace Prize itself cannot be transferred, shared, or reassigned, the Norwegian Nobel Committee clarified the following day. The award body said that while laureates are free to give away or sell the physical medal, diploma, or prize money, the title of Nobel Peace Prize laureate permanently remains with the original recipient and

cannot be altered by personal gestures. "Regardless of what may happen to the medal, the diploma, or the prize money, it is and remains the original laureate who is recorded in history as the recipient of the prize," the committee stated.

The Nobel Committee also emphasised that it would not engage with the ongoing discussions surrounding the presentation of the medal to a politician. There are no restrictions on what a laureate may do with their prize components once awarded.

Machado's symbolic act sparked international debate, with some critics arguing that it undermined the prestige and intent of the Nobel Peace Prize. However, the event also highlighted the complex interplay between symbolic diplomatic gestures and official recognition by independent award bodies.

“Markets to Open on Sunday, February 1 for Budget 2026 as Investors Pin Hopes on Tax Reforms”



India's leading stock exchanges, the BSE and NSE, have announced that equity markets will remain open for trading on Sunday, February 1, 2026, to coincide with the presentation of the Union Budget. February 1 falls on a Sunday this year, prompting the exchanges to make a special arrangement for live trading.

In a circular issued on January 16, the National Stock Exchange informed market participants that trading on Budget day would follow normal market hours. “On account of the presentation of the Union Budget, members are requested to note that the Exchange shall be conducting a live trading session on February 01, 2026, as per standard market timings (9:15 am to 3:30 pm),” the NSE said. The BSE

issued a similar notification. The Lok Sabha Speaker confirmed earlier, on January 12, that the Union Budget for 2026 would be presented at 11 am on February 1. In recent years, February 1 has become the fixed date for the annual Budget exercise. The Union Budget for 2025 was also presented on the same date.

Budget 2026 will be a significant milestone for Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as it will mark her ninth consecutive Union Budget presentation—placing her among the longest-serving finance ministers to deliver uninterrupted Budget speeches in India's history.

Ahead of the Budget, the Ministry of Finance will release the Economic Survey, which provides a detailed assessment of

the state of the economy. This will be followed by a press briefing led by Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran and senior government officials. The Department of Economic Affairs plays a key role in preparing the Budget documents, which outline the government's estimated revenues, expenditures, fiscal position, and proposed policy initiatives for the upcoming financial year.

Opening markets on weekends for Budget announcements is not unprecedented. Stock exchanges were similarly kept open on Saturday, February 1, 2025, February 1, 2020, and February 28, 2015, to allow investors to react immediately to Budget proposals.

As Budget 2026 approaches,

market participants are voicing strong expectations around tax reforms, particularly in capital gains taxation. Investors, brokers, and tax experts are calling for a reduction in long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax rates, lower securities transaction tax (STT), higher exemption limits, uniform holding periods across asset classes, and the restoration of indexation benefits.

Market participants argue that high taxes discourage long-term investment and erode returns, especially in a year marked by volatility. With investor sentiment under pressure, stakeholders believe that meaningful tax rationalisation could play a crucial role in boosting confidence and encouraging sustained participation in capital markets.

“SEBI Clears Seven Companies, Including Gaudium IVF and Runwal Developers, to Launch IPOs”

Seven companies, including Gaudium IVF, Runwal Developers, and Augmont Enterprises, have received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to move forward with their initial public offering (IPO) plans. The regulator also cleared the IPO proposals of Sillverton Industries, Supreet Chemicals, CJ Darc Logistics, and Lalbaba Engineering, marking a notable development in India's primary capital markets.

SEBI issued its observations on the draft documents of these companies over the course of the week. Sillverton Industries and Augmont Enterprises received approval on January 12, followed by Runwal Developers and Lalbaba Engineering on January 13. CJ Darc Logistics was cleared on January 14, while Gaudium IVF and Women Health received the go-ahead on January 15. Supreet Chemicals obtained approval on January 16.

The issuance of SEBI observations signifies that the companies' Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) documents have been reviewed and that the companies are now permitted to proceed with their IPO launches within the next 12 months. This is a critical step in the regulatory process, enabling companies to raise capital from public investors while complying with



SEBI's guidelines.

Among the approved companies, Gaudium IVF and Women Health, a provider of fertility services, has re-filed its DRHP with SEBI to raise funds through its IPO. The company plans to use the proceeds to fund an aggressive expansion of its network, aiming to strengthen its presence across India and enhance its service offerings in the reproductive healthcare segment.

Runwal Developers, a well-known real estate player, and Augmont Enterprises, a com-

modities and financial services company, are also gearing up to tap capital markets. These IPOs are expected to attract attention from institutional and retail investors seeking diversified investment opportunities.

Other companies cleared by SEBI include Sillverton Industries, which operates in [industry—specifics if available], Supreet Chemicals, specializing in [industry], CJ Darc Logistics, a logistics service provider, and Lalbaba Engineering, which focuses on [industry—specifics if available]. These IPO approvals

reflect ongoing investor interest in sectors ranging from healthcare and real estate to logistics and chemicals.

With India's primary market witnessing renewed momentum, SEBI's approvals indicate that the capital markets regulator continues to facilitate growth and capital-raising for businesses. Investors now have a window to participate in the upcoming public offerings, potentially benefiting from the growth plans and expansion strategies of these seven companies over the next year.

“RIL Q3 Net Profit Rises 1.6% to ₹22,290 Crore on Strong Jio and O2C Performance”

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) reported a marginal 1.6% rise in net profit for the third quarter (Q3) ended December 2025, driven by gains in its digital services and oil-to-chemicals (O2C) businesses. The company posted a net profit of ₹22,290 crore, up from ₹21,930 crore a year ago. However, net profit attributable to shareholders rose only 0.57% to ₹18,645 crore from ₹18,540 crore in the same period last year.

RIL's gross revenue increased 10% year-on-year to ₹293,829 crore, compared with ₹267,186 crore in Q3 FY25. The company's O2C segment delivered a 14.6% rise in EBITDA, supported by higher transportation fuel cracks, increased volumes, and improved sulphur realisations. These gains were partially offset by a decline in downstream chemical margins and elevated feedstock freight costs.

Regarding recent Labour Code changes, RIL said it will evaluate the impact on employee benefits accounting once cen-



crore a year ago, while revenue rose 8.1% to ₹97,605 crore. During the quarter, the retail business expanded its store network with 431 new outlets, taking the total to 19,979 stores covering 78.1 million sq. ft. The registered customer base reached 378 million. The business also completed the demerger of its consumer products division and strengthened its portfolio by onboarding new brands and product lines.

Commenting on the results, RIL Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani highlighted strong performance in the O2C business due to higher fuel margins and operational flexibility, while upstream EBITDA was impacted by lower volumes and prices. He also noted that agile crude sourcing and refinery utilisation helped sustain margins, especially amid US and EU sanctions on Russian refineries.

RIL shares closed almost flat at ₹1,457.60, up 0.06% on the BSE on Friday.

central and state rules are notified. Employee benefit expenses for the quarter stood at ₹7,912 crore, up from ₹7,155 crore a year ago. The company's digital and telecom arm, Jio Platforms, posted an 11.2% increase in net profit to ₹7,629 crore and revenue growth of 12.7% to ₹43,683 crore. The performance was driven by robust subscriber additions, a 2.7% increase in net profit to ₹3,551 crore from ₹3,458

“SEBI Bars 12 Entities for Five Years, Imposes ₹90 Lakh Penalty in Front-Running Case”



Capital markets regulator SEBI has barred 12 entities from accessing the securities markets for five years and imposed penalties totalling ₹90 lakh for their involvement in a front-running case. The regulator has also ordered the disgorgement of unlawful gains amounting to ₹1.07 crore, along with interest at 12 per cent per annum, to be paid jointly and severally to the Investor Protection and Education Fund within 45 days.

In a detailed 102-page final order, SEBI found that a “big client,” identified as Pares N. Bhagat, Chairman and Managing Director of Mangal Keshav Financial Services, placed trades through dealers Ashish S. Parekh and Rajesh Joshi. These dealers were found to be in possession of non-public information (NPI) relating to large, impending client orders.

According to SEBI, Parekh and Joshi shared this confidential information with Nagendra S. Dubey and Chirag Atul Pithadia. The information was then used to place advance trades in the accounts of connected entities—commonly referred to as front-runners—before the big client's orders were executed. These pre-emptive trades allowed the front-runners to profit from the subsequent market impact of the large transactions.

“Therefore, in my view, these trades carried out by the front runners, i.e., Noticees Nos. 1 to 9, in collusion with Noticees Nos. 10 to 13, the information carriers, should be termed as trades carried out by front running the im-

pending orders of the big client,” SEBI Whole-Time Member Kamlesh C. Varshney said in the order.

The front-runners named in the order include Dipa Ashish Parekh, Kashmira Joshi, Nikhil Hirachand Jain, Nikhil Hirachand Jain HUF, Alpesh Hirachand Jain HUF, Nagendra S. Dubey HUF, and Late Sushma Nagendra Dubey through her legal heirs—Jagruti Atul Pithadia and Sahl Atul Pithadia.

SEBI held that the use of non-public information to execute front-running trades amounted to fraudulent, manipulative, and unfair trade practices, in violation of the Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices (PFUTP) regulations. The regulator concluded that the allegations against Noticees Nos. 1 to 13 stood established.

Accordingly, SEBI restrained the entities from dealing in securities for five years, effective from the interim order issued on December 26, 2022. Kashmira Joshi and Rajesh Joshi were also barred for five years. Additionally, Ashish Parekh, Nagendra Dubey, and Chirag Pithadia were prohibited from associating with any SEBI-registered intermediary or listed company for four years, while Rajesh Joshi faced a similar four-year ban.

SEBI also vacated earlier directions against the late Sushma Nagendra Dubey, except for disgorgement through her legal heirs. The order follows an NSE report flagging suspected front running during April–December 2021, leading to SEBI's investigation and subsequent enforcement actions.

“Maruti Suzuki to Invest ₹35,000 Crore in Gujarat Plant, Adds 1 Million Vehicle Capacity”



Indian automaker Maruti Suzuki is set to make a major investment of ₹35,000 crore (\$3.9 billion) to establish a new manufacturing plant in the western state of Gujarat, according to a statement from the state government on Saturday. The move comes as India's largest carmaker seeks to expand production capacity to meet rising domestic demand and growing export opportunities.

The new plant is expected to add production capacity of up to 1 million vehicles annually, further strengthening Maruti Suzuki's position in the Indian automotive market, which is the world's third-largest by sales. With the additional output, the company's total annual production capacity will increase from 2.4 million vehicles to 3.4 million vehicles, enhancing its ability to meet both domestic and international demand.

Production at the Gujarat facility is scheduled to begin in the financial year 2029. The plant will complement Maruti Suzuki's existing manufacturing operations across India, supporting the company's long-term strategy to diversify production locations and cater to evolving consumer preferences, including demand for entry-level and mid-sized vehicles.

Maruti Suzuki is majority-owned by Japan's Suzuki Motor Corporation and has consistently led the Indian car market in terms of sales. The company has seen a surge in demand for its models,

particularly in the entry-level segment. Partho Banerjee, Maruti Suzuki's Head of Marketing and Sales, recently noted that the company has a backlog of approximately one and a half months for its most popular entry-level vehicles, highlighting the strong consumer appetite for its products.

Domestic sales for December also set a record, rising 37% month-on-month to 178,646 units, underscoring the company's robust market performance. These figures come amid growing optimism about the Indian automotive sector, which is benefiting from favorable economic conditions, rising disposable incomes, and supportive government policies for manufacturing and exports.

Maruti Suzuki's board of directors approved an initial investment of ₹4,960 crore to acquire land for the new plant, marking the first step in what is expected to be a multi-year expansion project.

Production at the Gujarat facility is scheduled to begin in the financial year 2029. The plant will complement Maruti Suzuki's existing manufacturing operations across India, supporting the company's long-term strategy to diversify production locations and cater to evolving consumer preferences, including demand for entry-level and mid-sized vehicles.

The announcement reinforces Maruti Suzuki's commitment to sustaining its market leadership in India while simultaneously expanding its footprint in global markets. With the new plant, the automaker aims to address rising demand, reduce delivery backlogs, and position itself for long-term growth in one of the fastest-growing automotive markets in the world.

"A Simple Cake, a Big Smile: 70-Year-Old Family Cook's Birthday Celebration Wins Hearts Online"

Sometimes, it is the simplest gestures that leave the deepest impact. A heartwarming video of a birthday celebration has gone viral on social media, reminding viewers that genuine happiness often lies in small but thoughtful moments. The clip features 70-year-old Ramji Baba, a longtime family cook, celebrating his birthday in what appears to be an intimate and emotional gathering.

In the video, Ramji Baba can be seen cutting a birthday cake and gently blowing out the candles, a shy yet radiant smile lighting up his face. Surrounded by the family he has served for decades, he listens as they sing a birthday song for him in the background. The atmosphere is filled with warmth, gratitude, and affection, making the moment deeply touching for viewers online.

A voiceover accompanying the video notes that this was the happiest the family had ever seen Ramji Baba. His joy, unfiltered and genuine, struck a chord with audiences who were moved by how meaningful the celebration was for him. For someone accustomed to working quietly behind the scenes, the attention and appreciation appeared to be especially special.

The Instagram post introducing the video describes Ramji Baba as a humble, simple man and an exceptional cook who has been associated with the family for many years. Having recently turned 70, he stands as an example that age does not diminish enthusiasm,



asm, warmth, or dedication. The caption further revealed that the family is encouraging him to record a series of his recipes so that his culinary skills and life story can be shared with a wider audience.

"Meet Ramji Baba—a very humble, simple man who is an amazing chef," the post read. "Recently he turned 70 but proves that age is just a number. I'm trying to convince him to record his recipes so you can know more about him. Maybe you'll see him around soon."

The video quickly gained traction on Instagram, with users flooding the comments section with emotional reactions. Many praised Ramji Baba's years of

dedication and the family's thoughtful gesture in celebrating him. Viewers described the clip as touching, wholesome, and a reminder of the importance of kindness and gratitude.

One user commented, "We would learn to love from him," while another wrote, "Working 40 years at the same place is sheer dedication." Others expressed hope that Ramji Baba's recipes and story would soon be shared more widely.

The viral moment serves as a gentle reminder that respect, appreciation, and simple acts of kindness can bring immense joy—especially to those who quietly dedicate their lives to serving others.

"From IIT Delhi to Tokyo: Indian Engineer Shares Candid Insights on Work, Life, and Costs in Japan"



Living and working abroad often comes with a mix of excitement and challenges, and an Indian engineer based in Japan has recently offered a candid glimpse into this experience. Shresth Somya, an IIT Delhi graduate originally from Bihar, shared insights into his professional journey, daily life, and work culture in Tokyo through a video posted by Sunakshi Sharma, an Indian content creator living in the Japanese capital. The video has drawn attention online for its honest and relatable portrayal of life as an Indian professional in Japan.

At the start of the video, Sharma invites Shresth to introduce himself. "I'm Shresth Somya, from Bihar, and I'm currently living in Japan," he says. He goes on to explain that his move to Tokyo came through campus placements at IIT Delhi. "Honda visited our campus for recruitment. I received an offer and moved here last year," he explains, highlighting how global opportunities

can emerge directly from India's top educational institutions.

When asked about his daily life in Tokyo, Shresth describes it as both enjoyable and enriching. He says living in Japan allows him to experience a new culture and environment every day. "It's pretty fun. There's always something new to see, learn, or understand," he notes, adding that the city's efficiency and cultural uniqueness make everyday life interesting.

However, Shresth also speaks candidly about the challenges, particularly the high cost of living in Tokyo. He explains that his monthly expenses increased significantly after moving to the city. "My expenses went from around 100,000 yen to nearly 150,000 yen," he says. Despite being careful with spending—eating out only for lunch and cooking dinner at home—he admits that costs remain high and difficult to cut down further.

One major relief, he adds, is employer support. Shresth reveals that his company covers his housing expenses. "Yes, my rent is paid by the company," he says, explaining that this benefit helps offset Tokyo's otherwise expensive lifestyle and makes living in the city more manageable.

Sharma also asks about Japanese work culture, which is often perceived as strict and demanding. Shresth counters this stereotype with his own experience. "I have never experienced a toxic atmosphere in my team," he says, describing a professional, respectful, and supportive workplace where collaboration is valued.

Through his honest reflections, Shresth offers a balanced view of life in Japan—one that includes cultural adjustments and financial challenges, but also professional stability, personal growth, and a positive work environment. His experience resonates with many aspiring professionals considering careers abroad.

One major relief, he

had in mind.

The dog was well

known among residents

for his gentle nature.

Neighbours said Ah

Wang never barked at

children or elderly peo-

ple and was calm and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

placed blankets outside

the apartment to protect

him from the cold and

well-behaved. As winter

temperatures dropped,

residents grew increas-

ingly concerned. They

India's 14-Year-Old Vaibhav Suryavanshi Sets Record in U-19 World Cup 2026 Against Bangladesh

India's 14-year-old cricket prodigy, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, added another remarkable milestone to his rapidly growing list of achievements during the U-19 World Cup 2026 match against Bangladesh on Saturday. The young left-hander produced a scintillating knock of 72 runs off just 67 balls, featuring six fours and three sixes, to power India in a key encounter. Displaying his trademark aggressive style, Suryavanshi raced to his half-century in only 30 deliveries, leaving spectators in awe of his composure and skill at such a tender age.

At 14 years and 296 days, Vaibhav became the youngest cricketer ever to score a 50-plus in a Men's U-19 World Cup match, surpassing Afghanistan's Shahidullah Kamal, who had scored a fifty at the age of 15 years and 19 days against the West Indies in 2014. Pakistan's Babar Azam, who registered a half-century against the West Indies in 2010 at 15 years and 92 days, now ranks third on the list. Other notable entries include Pervez Malikzai (15y 125d) and Sharad Ve-sawkar (15y 132d), show-



casing the rarity of such achievements at the U-19 level.

Top Five Youngest to Register a 50+ in Men's U-19 World Cup

- 14y 296d – Vaibhav Suryavanshi (IND) vs BAN, Bulawayo, 2026
- 15y 19d – Shahidullah Kamal (AFG) vs WI, Dubai, 2014
- 15y 92d – Babar Azam (PAK) vs WI, Palmerston North, 2010
- 15y 125d – Pervez Malikzai (AFG) vs Fiji, Cox's Bazar, 2016
- 15y 132d – Sharad Vesawkar (NEP) vs ENG, Chattogram, 2004

Suryavanshi also etched his name in Indian cricket history by surpassing Virat Kohli in Youth ODIs for the most runs. In 20 Youth ODIs, he has accumulated 1,047 runs, overtaking Kohli's 978 runs from 28 matches. While India's Vijay Zol remains the high-

est run-scorer for the country in Youth ODIs with 1,404 runs from 36 matches, Bangladesh's Nazmul Hossain Shanto holds the overall top spot with 1,820 runs.

Off the field, tensions between the two teams were evident as India captain Ayush Mhatre and Bangladesh's Azizul Hakim Tamim avoided the traditional pre-match handshake. In a surprising move, vice-captain Zawad Abrar appeared for the toss instead of Hakim,

despite the latter being part of the playing XI. Following a rain-affected delay, Abrar won the toss and opted to bowl first, citing the damp conditions of the Bulawayo track as a strategic decision.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi's record-breaking performance and his fearless approach with the bat continue to signal the arrival of a potential future star in Indian cricket, capturing the attention of fans and experts alike as the U-19 World Cup unfolds.

Steve Smith Reveals Tactical Clash with Babar Azam During Record-Breaking BBL Chase

Australia's batting maestro Steve Smith has opened up about a tense on-field moment with Sydney Sixers teammate Babar Azam during their record-breaking chase against the Sydney Thunder at the SCG on Friday in the Big Bash League (BBL). The pair had earlier stitched together a commanding 141-run opening partnership, but a tactical disagreement in the 11th over briefly sparked friction between the star batters.

After facing three consecutive dot balls from spinner Chris Green, Babar nudged the fourth delivery toward long-on for what appeared to be a routine single. However, Smith, standing at the non-striker's end, sent him back, denying the run so he could retain the strike for the next over. The decision, Smith explained, was entirely strategic: he wanted to be on strike for the 'Power Surge'—a two-over period in the BBL where only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle—



so he could target the shorter boundary and maximize scoring opportunities.

The gamble paid off spectacularly. In the following over, Smith launched a record-breaking assault on Ryan Hadley, smashing four consecutive sixes and a four in a 32-run over—the most ex-

pensive in BBL history. While the strategy proved highly effective, it momentarily left Babar frustrated, feeling his batting opportunity had been curtailed.

Speaking to Channel 7 after the match, Smith explained his thinking behind the high-stakes decision. "We spoke at the

ten-over mark, and they [the captain and coach] said take the surge straightaway. I was like, 'Nah, give it one over. I want to hit to the short boundary. I don't want to screw up the first over. I'll try to get 30 off that over.' I think we got 32, so it was a good result," he said.

Smith admitted that Ba-

bar wasn't immediately happy with the plan. "Not sure Babar was too happy with me knocking back that single," he added, smiling.

Babar's frustration boiled over in the 13th over. After regaining the strike, he was dismissed first ball by Nathan McAndrew, chopping a delivery onto his stumps for 47 runs. On his way back to the pavilion, the Pakistan star vented his emotions by striking a boundary cushion with his bat.

Despite the brief on-field drama, Smith's brilliance ensured a comfortable five-wicket victory for the Sixers. He finished with a blistering century off just 41 balls, underscoring his dominance in the shortest format and proving why he remains one of the most dangerous T20 batters in world cricket. The victory also highlights the importance of strategic decision-making under pressure, even if it occasionally tests team dynamics on the field.

Sanjay Bangar Praises Abhishek Sharma, Updates on Indian T20I Squad Ahead of New Zealand Series

Former Indian batting coach Sanjay Bangar has lavished praise on India's current World No. 1 T20I batter, Abhishek Sharma, highlighting the young left-hander's fearless and aggressive approach as a defining feature of India's brand of cricket in the shortest format. Speaking on Jio Hotstar, Bangar said, "Abhishek Sharma defines the way this Indian team wants to play in the T20 format. A fearless and aggressive brand of cricket is only possible with a player like Abhishek Sharma."

The 25-year-old Abhishek made his T20I debut against Zimbabwe in July 2024 and has since emerged as one of India's most formidable batters in the format. In just 33 matches, he has amassed 1,115 runs at an extraordinary strike rate of 188.02, including two centuries and six half-centuries. His consistency and fearless strokeplay have made him a vital component of India's T20 line-



up, setting the tone for aggressive intent at the top of the order.

Meanwhile, the Indian team has been forced to make a few changes ahead of the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand, scheduled to begin on January 21. All-rounder Washington Sundar has been ruled out of the se-

ries due to a side strain. Sundar reported acute discomfort in his lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at BCA Stadium, Vadodara, on January 11. After undergoing scans and consulting an expert, he has been advised rest for a few days, followed by further monitoring and

management at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (COE).

To fill Sundar's spot, the BCCI Men's Selection Committee has named star leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi as his replacement. Additionally, Shreyas Iyer has been added to the T20I squad for the first three matches as a replacement for

the injured Tilak Varma, providing India with an experienced batting option in the middle order.

India's updated T20I squad for the series against New Zealand now includes: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wicketkeeper), Shreyas Iyer (first three T20Is), Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel (vice-captain), Rinku Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakaravarthy, Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), and Ravi Bishnoi.

With a mix of experience and youthful aggression, the squad is well-equipped to tackle New Zealand in the upcoming T20I series. Abhishek Sharma, in particular, will be expected to continue his fearless batting approach and lead India's charge at the top of the order, while the replacements aim to maintain balance and strengthen the team in the absence of key all-rounders.

ICC-BCB Negotiations Hit Logistical Snag Ahead of T20 World Cup 2026



The high-stakes negotiations between the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) over Bangladesh's participation in the upcoming T20 World Cup 2026 began with a significant logistical hurdle, underscoring the urgency and sensitivity of the discussions. The ICC had planned to send a two-member delegation to Dhaka, but visa complications reduced the team to just one, intensifying the pressure on the sole representative.

Andrew Ephgrave, the ICC's Head of Anti-Corruption and Security, arrived in Dhaka on 17 January to lead the discussions. His colleague, Sanjog Gupta, the ICC's CEO, was reportedly unable to travel due to a visa delay, leaving Ephgrave to manage the complex negotiations alone. Sources confirmed that the visa denial has added an unexpected layer of difficulty to what is already being seen as a "last-ditch" effort to resolve a dispute that could have major implications for the tournament, which is scheduled to begin on 7 February.

The impasse stems from a security-related concern raised by the Bangladesh government and the BCB. Bangladesh has formally requested that its group-stage matches, currently scheduled in India, be shifted to Sri Lanka. The request cites the prevailing political climate and safety considerations for Bangladeshi players and support staff, reflecting heightened anxiety in the lead-up to the tournament.

With less than three weeks remaining before the T20 World Cup, the clock is rapidly running out for both parties to reach an agreement. The negotiations in Dhaka are being closely monitored by the cricketing world, as a failure to resolve the deadlock could jeopardize the tournament even before the first match is played. Ephgrave faces the difficult task of balancing diplomatic sensitivities with security assurances, making him the linchpin in a delicate situation that could shape the opening stages of cricket's global showcase.

Mohammed Siraj Confident Ravindra Jadeja Will Bounce Back Ahead of Decider vs New Zealand



India pacer Mohammed Siraj on Saturday expressed full confidence in senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, insisting it would take just one breakthrough wicket for the left-arm spinner to regain his rhythm ahead of the series-deciding third ODI against New Zealand on Sunday. Jadeja has struggled in recent matches, going wicketless in the first two ODIs against New Zealand (0/44 and 0/56) and managing only one wicket in the preceding three-match series against South Africa at home.

"I don't think there is any concern about Jadeja's form. It's just a matter of one wicket. Once he gets that breakthrough, you'll see a completely different bowler," Siraj said at the pre-match press conference. Despite the lean returns, Jadeja's overall ODI record remains highly valuable, with nearly 2,900 runs at just over 32 and 232 wickets in 209 matches.

Siraj also emphasized that India's bowling unit remains confident despite being tested in the second ODI, where a few missed chances allowed New Zealand to level the three-match series. "We played well in both matches. In the first ODI, both batting and bowling clicked. In the second, even after losing early wickets, KL Rahul batted superbly, and Nitish Reddy contributed significantly," he said.

Reflecting on Daryl Mitchell's

match-winning knock, Siraj noted that India had their moments. "There was an opportunity—if the catch had been taken, the result could have been different. World-class batters capitalize on chances, and Mitchell did exactly that," he added. He explained that while plans were in place to dismiss Mitchell, execution at crucial moments fell short.

Siraj also highlighted the positive atmosphere within the team despite the series being tied 1-1. "The environment is very healthy. Senior players provide strong input, and we're preparing well for bigger tournaments. Wins and losses happen, but the dressing room remains upbeat," he said.

On the bowling strategy for Holkar Stadium, a small ground known for high scores, Siraj said he would focus on a stump-to-stump line to maximize chances for LBWs or bowled dismissals. He expressed confidence in fellow left-arm Arshdeep Singh if given the new ball, adding that his role is to build pressure and support wickets at the other end.

Siraj also praised Harshit Rana, who has impressed in the early overs, and reflected on missing the T20 World Cup, attributing it to workload management.

Sunday's decider promises to be closely contested as India and New Zealand aim to claim the series in the final ODI.

