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Justice, Power and the Press: What the Tarun Tejpal Case Means for Indian Journalism



Former Tehelka editor-in-chief Tarun Tejpal after a court appearance. The Bombay High Court on Thursday August 6, 2026 convicted him in the 2013 rape case, overturned his 2021 acquittal and sentenced him to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment

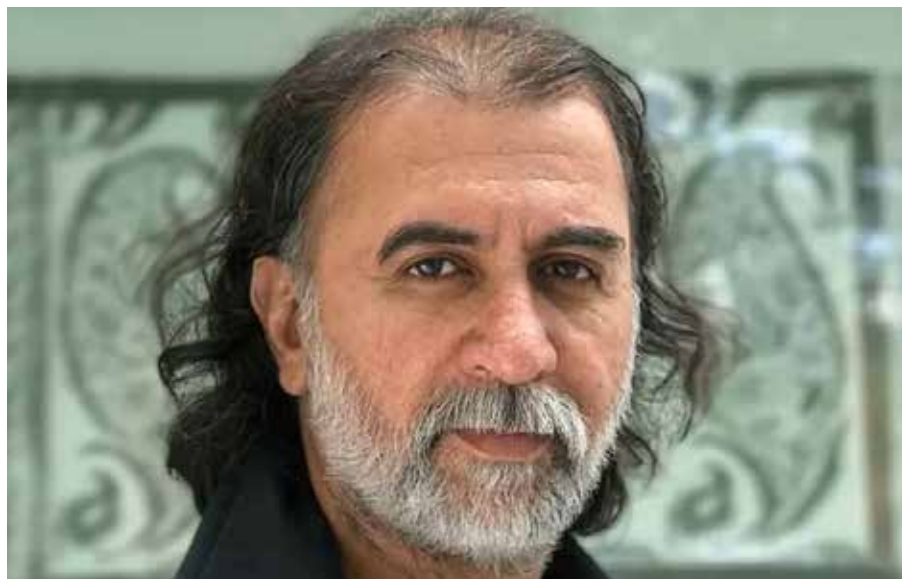
Every landmark judgment leaves behind more than a legal precedent—it leaves a moral question. The Tarun Tejpal case asks whether institutions that demand transparency from society are equally committed to practising it within their own walls. In the long run, public trust in journalism will depend not only on the stories it uncovers but also on the standards it chooses to uphold.

The Bombay High Court's decision to convict former Tehelka editor-in-chief Tarun Tejpal in the 2013 sexual assault case and sentence him to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment is not merely the conclusion of a long legal battle. It is also a defining moment for Indian journalism, reminding the profession that credibility is measured not only by the stories it publishes but also by the values it upholds within its own institutions.

For decades, journalists have served as democracy's watchdogs. They have investigated corruption, exposed abuse of

power and demanded transparency from governments, corporations and public institutions. That moral authority, however, carries an equally important obligation: the media must hold itself to the same standards of accountability that it expects from others.

The Tejpal case demonstrates that no profession enjoys immunity from the rule of law. A celebrated editor, respected for investigative journalism, ultimately faced judicial scrutiny not for his work in exposing others, but for allegations concerning his own conduct. The Bombay High



Court's decision to overturn the earlier acquittal underscores the importance of the appellate system in ensuring that justice remains open to review and correction.

This case should not be viewed as a verdict on journalism itself. Nor should it diminish the immense contributions made by thousands of ethical journalists who continue to work with integrity every day, often at considerable personal risk. Instead, it should prompt introspection about newsroom culture, leadership and institutional responsibility.

Modern newsrooms are hierarchical spaces where editors wield considerable influence over careers. That authority must never become a tool for intimidation, coercion or personal misconduct. Safe workplaces are not merely matters of legal compliance; they are essential to the credibility of journalism itself.

The case also serves as a reminder that reputation cannot substitute for accountability. Professional achievements, awards and public stature may earn respect, but they do not exempt anyone from the law. When allegations arise, they must be investigated fairly, adjudicated impartially and decided solely on evidence.

The Bombay High Court's judgment also reinforces public confidence in the appellate process. Trial courts play a crucial role, but higher courts exist precisely to re-examine evidence and legal reasoning where questions arise. That mechanism is one of the judiciary's greatest institutional strengths and reflects the prin-

The Bombay High Court's judgment also reinforces public confidence in the appellate process. Trial courts play a crucial role, but higher courts exist precisely to re-examine evidence and legal reasoning where questions arise. That mechanism is one of the judiciary's greatest institutional strengths and reflects the principle that justice is not confined to a single verdict. For the media industry, perhaps the most enduring lesson is that ethical journalism begins at home. It is difficult to demand transparency from Parliament, accountability from the executive or integrity from public institutions if news organisations fail to uphold those same principles within their own offices.

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For the media industry, perhaps the most enduring lesson is that ethical journalism begins at home. It is difficult to demand transparency from Parliament, accountability from the executive or integrity from public institutions if news organisations fail to uphold those same principles within their own offices.

Indian journalism today faces unprecedented challenges—commercial pressures, digital misinformation, political polarisation and declining public trust. Restoring confidence requires more than courageous reporting. It requires ethical leadership, transparent internal

systems and workplaces where every employee, regardless of designation, feels secure and respected.

The Tarun Tejpal case will remain part of India's legal history. But its larger significance lies elsewhere. It reminds us that the freedom of the press is inseparable from responsibility, that authority must always be accompanied by accountability, and that justice, however delayed, remains the foundation on which public trust is built.

A free press is indispensable to democracy. Equally indispensable is a press that is willing to uphold within its own institutions the principles it advocates for society at large.

Self-Reliant Women, Prosperous Chhattisgarh: A New Chapter in Women's Empowerment- By Dr. Daneshwari Sambhakar

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A state's true progress is reflected in the status of its women—their social standing, economic participation and role in decision-making. When women become self-reliant, families grow stronger, communities become more progressive and the pace of development accelerates.



• **Dr. Daneshwari Sambhakar, Deputy Director**

Mahtari Vandan Yojana provides ₹1,000 a month to more than 66 lakh women, with over ₹18,805 crore transferred through 29 instalments. More than 10.43 lakh women in Chhattisgarh have emerged as 'Lakhpatri Didis', backed by an expanding network of self-help groups.

From Mahtari Sadans and Sakhi One-Stop Centres to livelihood programmes, the state is linking financial independ-

ence with safety and social security. Women-led initiatives such as Jashpure, Sakhi Saree and Millet Cafés are taking local products to wider markets. The true measure of a state's development lies not merely in economic indicators, but also in the social status of its women, their economic participation and their role in decision-making. When women become self-reliant, families grow stronger, society progresses and development

acquires greater momentum. Guided by this approach, the Chhattisgarh government has placed women's empowerment among the important pillars of good governance. With 2026 being observed as 'Mahtari Gaurav Varsh', a series of initiatives are focusing on women's dignity, safety, health, education and economic independence. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and the guidance of Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi Rajwade, vari-

ous programmes are seeking to bring financial and social security within the reach of women across the state. Among the most prominent is the Mahtari Vandan Yojana, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 10, 2024. More than 66 lakh women are receiving ₹1,000 every month directly into their bank accounts. Through 29 instalments, more than ₹18,805 crore has been transferred to beneficiaries, while the 2026-27 state budget provides ₹8,200 crore for the scheme.

The government is also preparing to implement the Rani Durgavati Yojana, under which a girl will receive financial assistance of ₹1.50 lakh on attaining the age of 18. A budget provision of ₹15 crore has been made for the programme. The budget also provides ₹120 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and ₹80 crore for Mission Vatsalya.

Health and nutrition constitute another major component of the state's approach. For 2026-27, ₹800 crore has been provided for Anganwadi operations, ₹650 crore for supplementary nutrition and ₹235 crore for programmes addressing malnutrition and nutrition-related needs. Another ₹42 crore has been sanctioned for the construction of 250 new Anganwadi centres in urban areas and 500 in rural areas through convergence.

Mahtari Sadans are meanwhile being developed as dedicated spaces where women can participate in training, livelihood and social activities. Of the 368 Mahtari Sadans sanctioned so



far, 137 have been completed. The 2026-27 budget provides ₹75 crore for another 250 such centres.

From Financial Assistance to Economic Independence

Women's safety is being addressed through 34 Sakhi One-Stop Centres across all 33 districts. Women facing domestic violence, harassment or other forms of distress can obtain legal assistance, medical support, psychological counselling and temporary shelter at these centres. The Women's Helpline 181 and emergency service 112 provide an additional coordinated mechanism for rapid assistance.

Chhattisgarh has also introduced a digital Standard Operating Procedure for the functioning of Sakhi One-Stop Centres, strengthening the institutional framework through which assistance is provided to women in distress. Economic empowerment is increasingly being linked with collective enterprise. Self-help

groups are being connected with production and marketing, while a Unity Mall being developed at a cost of ₹200 crore is intended to provide wider market access to products made by women's groups.

Under the Bihan Mission, more than 2.92 lakh women's self-help groups have been formed, connecting over 31.65 lakh women. Chhattisgarh has also contributed substantially towards the national goal of creating three crore Lakhpati Didis, with more than 10.43 lakh women in the state having attained this status.

Activities ranging from Ready-to-Eat food production and agriculture-based enterprises to animal husbandry, food processing and handicrafts are helping rural women diversify their sources of income.

Several programmes also address the economic and social security of women construction workers. Eligible daughters receive ₹20,000 under the Mukhyamantri Noni Sashaktikaran Sahayata Yojana,

while assistance is available under the Mukhyamantri Silai Machine Sahayata Yojana and Didi E-Rickshaw Sahayata Yojana. Pregnant women workers are provided ₹20,000 under the Minimata Mahtari Jatan Yojana.

Under the Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah Yojana, mass marriages of more than 24,000 young women have been organised, with financial assistance of ₹50,000 provided for each couple. Concessional loans worth ₹129.46 crore have been extended to 42,878 women's groups under the Mahila Samridhhi Yojana, while the Mahtari Shakti Rin Yojana provides collateral-free loans of up to ₹25,000 for women's self-employment.

Education, health and

household welfare are also part of this broader framework. More than 38 lakh women are beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana in the state. Under the Sushiksha Yojana, 2,18,139 girl students receive financial assistance of ₹500 per month, while sanitary napkin vending machines have been installed in 2,000 schools through the Shuchita Yojana. At the same time, women-led enterprises are beginning to create identities beyond their immediate communities. The tribal women-operated Jashpure brand has emerged as an example of the 'Vocal for Local' approach and is reaching national and international markets. Initiatives such as Sakhi Saree and Millet Cafés are similarly helping create markets

for local products while generating additional income opportunities for women.

Women's empowerment in Chhattisgarh is therefore moving beyond individual welfare schemes towards a broader model combining direct financial assistance, social protection, nutrition, education, skills, entrepreneurship and market access. As women acquire greater economic independence and participate more actively in community and economic life, their role in shaping the state's development is also expanding. The emerging picture is one in which women are not merely beneficiaries of development programmes, but increasingly participants and partners in building a more prosperous Chhattisgarh.



SPECIAL FEATURE: Democracy Begins on Campus: Chhattisgarh Colleges to Lead Voter Awareness Campaign Throughout August

“SVEEP initiative to transform classrooms into centres of electoral literacy; students to learn constitutional values, digital voting services and the fight against fake news

Higher educational institutions in Chhattisgarh are set to become vibrant centres of democratic learning as colleges and universities across Dhamtari district prepare to implement an intensive month-long Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign during August.

The initiative, launched under the directions of the Election Commission of India, aims to encourage informed electoral participation among young citizens by integrating constitutional awareness, electoral literacy and responsible digital behaviour within college campuses.

District Collector and District Election Officer have issued detailed instructions to educational institutions to organise a wide range of awareness programmes designed to familiarise students with democratic processes beyond the classroom.

Campuses as the New Classrooms of Democracy

Unlike conventional awareness campaigns, the SVEEP initiative seeks to make students active participants in India's democratic process.



Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs), already established in colleges, will serve as the focal point of the campaign. Campus Ambassadors, faculty coordinators and student volunteers will jointly conduct activities aimed at strengthening awareness of voting rights, electoral respon-

sibilities and constitutional values. For thousands of first-time voters, these programmes will provide practical exposure to the functioning of India's electoral system.

Digital Electoral Literacy Takes Centre Stage

Recognising the increasing digitisation of election-related services, special training sessions will familiarise students with the ECINET application, enabling them to understand online procedures for voter registration, correction of details, migration and deletion of names from electoral rolls.

Participants will also be educated about the four annual qualifying dates for voter registration—January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1—along with the processes of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls.

Officials believe digital awareness will help simplify electoral participation for young voters while reducing procedural confusion.

Learning Democracy Beyond Textbooks

The campaign places equal emphasis on experiential learning. Colleges have been encouraged to organise debates, essay competitions, quizzes, mock polling exercises, poster-making contests, slogan-writing competitions, street plays and voter pledge ceremonies.

These activities are expected to encourage informed discussions on constitutional values while helping students appreciate the importance of free and fair elections.

Combating Fake News

One of the campaign's significant components is digital media literacy. Students will receive guidance on identifying misinformation, verifying election-related content circulating on social media and recognising misleading narratives that

could influence democratic processes.

With misinformation increasingly becoming a challenge during elections worldwide, officials believe equipping young voters with fact-checking skills is essential for strengthening democratic institutions.

Active Youth Participation at the Core

Educational institutions have also been instructed to inform the District Election Office in advance about major activities so that election officials can participate in campus programmes.

A comprehensive report covering all activities conducted during August must be submitted by September 5.

My Perspective as an Asst. Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication As some-



- Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign to be conducted across universities and colleges throughout August.
- Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) to spearhead voter awareness activities.
- Students to receive practical training on ECINET and online voter services.
- Mock polls, debates, quizzes, street plays and voter pledge programmes planned.
- Special emphasis on identifying fake news and promoting responsible digital citizenship.
- Institutions asked to submit activity reports by September 5.

one associated with journalism education, I believe this initiative goes beyond voter awareness.

Colleges are not merely institutions that award degrees; they shape informed citizens. A classroom that discusses constitutional values, electoral participation and media literacy prepares students not only for careers but also for responsible citizenship.

Introducing practical electoral literacy at the college level helps young people understand that democracy does not begin on polling day—it begins with awareness, informed choices and civic responsibility. In an era when misinformation travels faster than facts, programmes that encourage students to question, verify and participate responsibly are investments in India's democratic future.

CM Vishnu Deo Sai Directs Time-Bound Implementation of Welfare Schemes; PARAS Portal to Enable Monthly Real-Time Monitoring

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Chief Minister directs strict monitoring through the PARAS Portal, warns against delays in public service delivery and calls for accountability at every level.

Raipur: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has directed officials to ensure the timely and transparent implementation of all public welfare schemes, stressing that every eligible citizen should receive the benefits of government programmes without delay.

Chairing the first state-level review meeting of the newly developed PARAS (Project Assessment, Review and Analysis System) Portal at Mahanadi Bhawan on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said the digital platform would strengthen governance through regular monitoring, transparency and accountability.

The meeting reviewed the progress of six major public service initiatives, including CM Helpline 1076, Seva Setu, AgriStack, Viksit Bharat Ji-Ramji Yojana, the DBN-funded mobile tower project and key programmes of the School Education Department.

“The objective of the double-engine government is to ensure that the benefits of every welfare scheme reach the last person in society.



There will be no compromise on timely implementation or accountability,” Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said.

Monthly Reviews Through PARAS Portal

The Chief Minister announced that PARAS would now serve as the state’s integrated monitoring platform, with state-level reviews scheduled on the last Tuesday of every month. The portal is expected to provide real-time

monitoring of departmental performance, enabling quicker decision-making and timely resolution of implementation issues.

Strict Action on Delayed Land Demarcation Cases

At the first state-level PARAS Portal review meeting at Mahanadi Bhawan in Nava Raipur on August 6, 2026, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai asks officials to strengthen monitoring, improve service delivery

and ensure that every eligible beneficiary receives government support

Expressing concern over pending land demarcation cases in the Revenue Department, the Chief Minister said delays were causing unnecessary hardship to citizens and affecting public confidence in the administration.

He directed all district collectors to personally monitor such cases and ensure their disposal within the prescribed timeline. "Delay in land demarcation reflects administrative negligence and weak monitoring at the district level.

Accountability must be fixed wherever eligible citizens are made to suffer because of official inaction," Sai said.

100% AgriStack Registration Ordered

The Chief Minister instructed officials to ensure the registration of every eligible farmer under AgriStack, describing it as a critical digital platform for delivering multiple government services beyond paddy procurement. He directed district administrations to launch special registration drives and warned that officials would be held accountable if eligible farmers were deprived of benefits due to administrative lapses.

Strengthening Citizen-Centric Services

Reviewing CM Helpline 1076, Sai said the platform should function as an effective mechanism for resolving citizens' grievances without requiring repeated visits to government offices.

Officials informed the meeting that the helpline has

received more than 1.10 lakh complaints, of which over 65,000 have already been resolved, while 55.29 per cent of complainants expressed satisfaction with the services provided. The Chief Minister instructed departments with relatively weaker performance, particularly Energy, Panchayat & Rural Development and Revenue, to prepare targeted action plans for faster grievance redressal.

Expansion of Seva Setu

Reviewing Seva Setu, the Chief Minister noted that the portal currently offers 721 notified services across 27 departments. He directed departments to bring all remaining eligible services onto the digital platform and expand awareness through Gram Panchayats, Common Service Centres (CSCs) and Atal Seva Kendras to improve accessibility for rural citizens.

Focus on Rural Development and Digital Connectivity

The meeting also reviewed progress under the Viksit Bharat Ji-Ramji Yojana, with instructions to prioritise infrastructure projects in every Gram Panchayat and expedite approvals where projects are still pending. Officials also reviewed the installation of 476 DBN-funded mobile tow-

ers, with the Chief Minister emphasising the need to improve digital connectivity in remote and underserved regions.

School Education and Nutrition

The Chief Minister reviewed the implementation of school education schemes, including free textbook distribution, school uniforms, the Saraswati Cycle Scheme and the PM Poshan Shakti Nirman Programme.

He also directed the School Education Department to accelerate the development of kitchen gardens in school campuses and promote the plantation of useful trees such as drumstick (moringa) and jackfruit to support better nutrition among students.

"Children should understand the importance of nutritious food. School kitchen gardens can become a meaningful community movement while improving nutrition and environmental awareness," the Chief Minister said. Senior officials, including Chief Secretary Vikas Sheel, Additional Chief Secretary Richa Sharma, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Subodh Kumar Singh, and senior officers from the Revenue, School Education and Information Technology departments attended the



Chhattisgarh Bags 'GeM Sustainable Procurement Award' as Government Purchases Surge 113%

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State procurement through Government e-Marketplace touches ₹3,935 crore in 2025-26; competitive bidding saves ₹130 crore while MSEs secure orders worth ₹1,800 crore



Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal presents the 'GeM Sustainable Procurement Award' to representatives of the Chhattisgarh Government during the 10th Foundation Day celebrations of Government e-Marketplace (GeM) at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

New Delhi/Raipur:

Chhattisgarh has been honoured with the 'GeM Sustainable Procurement Award' at the 10th Foundation Day celebrations of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, recognising the state's grow-

ing adoption of transparent and competitive digital procurement.

Chhattisgarh received the recognition under the 'Premier Awards – State Government Felicitation' category for its effective utilisation of the GeM platform and the substantial increase in both the value and volume of

government procurement.

Competitive Bidding Saves 130 Crore

The expansion of digital procurement has also translated into savings for the state exchequer.

According to the state government, transparent and competitive bidding through GeM resulted in savings of

approximately ₹130 crore during 2025-26. The saving represents the difference between the estimated procurement cost and the actual market price obtained following competitive bidding.

Over the past three financial years, the state government estimates that competitive procurement has generated cumulative savings of ₹235 crore.

GeM's open bidding system, standardised specifications and digitally auditable transaction records are intended to bring greater transparency and competition into public procurement. The state has also been reviewing tender conditions and technical specifications to ensure that procurement standards keep pace with changing departmental requirements.

Small Businesses Secure 1,800 Crore in Orders

One of the more notable aspects of Chhattisgarh's GeM performance has been the increasing participation of smaller enterprises.

Procurement from Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) increased 61% to ₹1,800 crore during 2025-26, considerably exceeding the stipulated 25% MSE procurement target.

Participation by other priority categories also recorded sharp growth. Purchases from women entrepreneurs increased by 97%, while procurement from entrepreneurs belonging to

₹3,935 crore Chhattisgarh's GeM procurement during 2025-26

113% Year-on-year increase in procurement

₹130 crore Estimated savings through competitive bidding in 2025-26

₹235 crore Cumulative savings over three financial years

₹1,800 crore Procurement from Micro and Small Enterprises

61% Increase in MSE procurement

97% Growth in procurement from women entrepreneurs

108% Growth in procurement from SC-ST entrepreneurs

178% Increase in procurement from startups

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities rose 108%.

The strongest growth was recorded in procurement from startups, which increased by 178%.

'GeM Has Opened Government Market to Entrepreneurs': CM Sai

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, welcoming the recognition, said GeM had created an effective mechanism through which entrepreneurs in Chhattisgarh could directly access government demand and procurement opportunities without intermediaries.

He said the increased participation of women entrepreneurs, SC-ST entrepreneurs and startups demonstrated the potential of a transparent digital procurement system.

Sai said an open digital marketplace provides entrepreneurs with equal opportu-

nities and that the government's objective is to extend its benefits to a larger number of micro and small businesses across the state.

"Our government is making continuous efforts to ensure that more micro and small entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, SC-ST entrepreneurs and startups benefit from this system," the Chief Minister said, emphasising that transparent government procurement and stronger local entrepreneurship would contribute to the larger goal of building a developed Chhattisgarh.

The award assumes significance not merely because of the sharp increase in procurement volumes, but also because the state's figures indicate a broader shift towards competitive digital purchasing while expanding opportunities for smaller suppliers.

A New Dawn in Bastar: Tricolour Reaches Over 90 Villages Once Under Maoist Shadow

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Deputy CM Vijay Sharma and Forest Minister Kedar Kashyap take Bastar Tiranga Yatra through former Maoist strongholds; national flag reaches remote villages where Independence Day celebrations had remained out of reach for decades



As India celebrated its 80th Independence Day on Saturday, August 15, 2026, a very different celebration of freedom unfolded deep inside Bastar — in villages where the shadow of Maoist violence had for decades prevented ordinary expressions of national celebration.

The Tricolour reached more than 90 remote villages across the Bastar division, many of which were set to witness the National Flag being hoisted on Independence Day for the first time since 1947.

The occasion marked more than another Independence Day ceremony. For communities in areas once dominated by Maoists, the sight of the

Tricolour represented the changing security situation and the expanding presence of constitutional governance in some of Chhattisgarh's most difficult terrain.

At the centre of the symbolic journey was Karregutta, the densely forested hill region along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border that for years was regarded as a major Maoist stronghold.

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Vijay Sharma, accompanied by Forest Minister Kedar Kashyap, travelled through the region as part of the Bastar Tiranga Yatra, a motorcycle journey designed to carry the National Flag through areas once synony-

mous with Maoist influence.

The yatra began from Narayanpur on August 12 with more than 200 motorcycles and travelled through former Maoist-affected areas of Narayanpur, Dantewada, Sukma and Bijapur before reaching the Karregutta region.

For Sharma, the journey was intended to convey a message that went beyond the political or ceremonial.

"From now on, the Tricolour will fly with full pride and honour in every corner of Bastar on every national festival," he said as the yatra travelled through the region.

Where Black Flags Once Cast a Shadow, the Tricolour

Now Flies

The symbolism is particularly powerful because Maoists had historically attempted to enforce boycotts of national celebrations in areas under their influence, sometimes issuing diktats against Independence Day and Republic Day observances.

Sharma recalled that residents in such areas had once faced pressure to display black flags during national festivals.

That history makes the scenes emerging from Bastar this Independence Day especially significant.

Villagers, security personnel and public representatives gathering around the National Flag present an image very different from the one associated with these areas for decades.

"Today, when I visit different villages in Bastar, people tell me that they truly feel free now. There is no longer any force that can reject India's national flag," Sharma said.

The Deputy Chief Minister credited the people of Bastar and the courage of security personnel for the transformation taking place across the region.

The Bastar Tiranga Yatra passed through locations that carry painful memories of Maoist violence. Soil was also to be collected from places where security personnel and civilians lost their lives in Maoist attacks, for use in a future memorial.

The journey therefore became both a celebration and an act of remembrance.

Forest Minister Kedar Kashyap said the significance of carrying the Tricolour through areas once regarded

as centres of Maoist activity could hardly be overstated.

For security personnel who spent years operating in these forests, and for villagers who lived between Maoist coercion and the risks of conflict, an Independence Day celebration without fear represents a profound change.

Karregutta — From Maoist Stronghold to Symbol of Change

Karregutta occupies a special place in the story of the fight against Maoism.

The difficult hill and forest terrain along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border had served as a strategically important Maoist base. The region became the focus of a major 21-day joint operation by Central and state security forces in April-May 2025, during which 31 Maoists were killed.

Today, its significance is being recast.

The presence of ministers, security personnel, local residents and the National Flag in a landscape once considered extremely difficult for the state to access provides one of the most striking visual representations of the changes underway in Bastar.

But the transformation of Bastar cannot be measured only by the removal of Maoist camps or the success of security operations.

The more lasting measure will be whether roads reach remote settlements, schools function regularly, healthcare becomes accessible, young people find employment and villagers are able to participate in democratic and national life without fear.

Sharma has said the govern-

ment's focus in these areas is now increasingly on roads, education, skill development, processing of minor forest produce and employment.

That transition — from securing territory to ensuring development — may ultimately prove more difficult, and more important, than the security battle itself.

An Independence Day With a Different Meaning

For most Indians, hoisting the Tricolour on August 15 is an ordinary and cherished part of Independence Day.

For some villages of Bastar, it has taken nearly eight decades for that ordinary act to become possible without the shadow of Maoist intimidation.

That is what gives the events of this Independence Day their deeper significance.

A National Flag being raised in a remote village may appear to be a simple ceremony. In an area where armed Maoists once sought to determine whether that flag could be displayed at all, it represents something much larger — the freedom of ordinary citizens to decide for themselves what they celebrate and where their allegiance lies.

The challenge now is to ensure that the change becomes irreversible. Security can open the road into a village. Development must keep that road open.

Police and security forces can remove an armed Maoist presence. Schools, hospitals, employment, communications and responsive administration must ensure that another generation never finds itself isolated enough for extremism to return.

Ease of Doing Business: Chhattisgarh's Historic Initiative to Build an Investor-Friendly State- By Kumar Bahukhandi



From a unified OneClick system to risk-based approvals, Chhattisgarh is attempting to replace procedural delays with a faster, transparent and technology-driven investment framework

Industrial Development Policy 2024–30 combines regulatory reforms with incentives for manufacturing, services and emerging sectors

Single-window platform brings approvals, clearances, payments, land allotment and compliance within an integrated digital system. Reforms seek to give MSMEs greater freedom from routine inspections while strengthening investor confidence and accountability.

For decades, the ease with which an entrepreneur can establish and operate an enterprise has been recognised as one of the key determinants of a region's investment climate. Natural resources and infrastructure may attract initial interest, but investors ultimately look for predictability — clear rules, timely approvals, transparent administration and freedom from unnecessary procedural obstacles.

Chhattisgarh is now attempting to reshape this relationship between government and enterprise.

Under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, the state has combined its Industrial Development Policy 2024–30 with regulatory and digital reforms designed to simplify investment procedures and create a more responsive administrative environment for



CM Vishnu Deo Sai addresses an Investor Connect programme as Chhattisgarh builds a technology-driven, investor-friendly ecosystem through its 'Business Made Easy' initiative, the OneClick single-window system and regulatory reforms.

entrepreneurs.

The approach represents a shift from merely offering incentives to investors towards changing the system through which businesses interact with government.

At the centre of this transformation is the state's OneClick Single Window System, developed around the principle of "Business Made Easy". The integrated platform seeks to bring services ranging from approvals and statutory clearances to payments, land allotment and compliance within a unified digital mechanism.

For an entrepreneur, the significance is practical. A business environment becomes genuinely investor-friendly not simply when policies promise incentives, but when an investor can determine what approvals are required, submit applications, track their progress and obtain certificates

without navigating repeatedly between different departments.

The OneClick system provides a lifecycle beginning with registration and identification of required approvals, followed by a Common Application Form, applications for licences and NOCs, payment of consolidated fees and downloading of issued certificates.

The objective is to reduce physical interfaces with government offices while making the movement of applications more transparent and traceable. From Single-Window Clearance to Regulatory Reform Chhattisgarh's Ease of Doing Business initiative has moved beyond digitisation alone.

The Chhattisgarh Ease of Doing Business framework introduced in 2026 seeks to establish a risk-based approach to approvals and inspections. Instead of subjecting every enterprise to the same routine

regulatory process irrespective of its risk profile, the system is designed to focus regulatory scrutiny where it is genuinely required. This has particular significance for micro, small and medium enterprises, for which the cost of compliance can itself become a barrier to entrepreneurship.

The broader objective is straightforward: regulation must protect workers, consumers, the environment and public interest, but compliance should not become an unnecessary obstacle for legitimate businesses. This balance between facilitation and regulation is central to any credible Ease of Doing Business programme. The reforms are being supported by the Chhattisgarh Industrial Development Policy 2024–30, which seeks to diversify the state's industrial base beyond its traditional strengths in minerals, steel and power. The policy framework extends incentives across emerging and employment-generating sectors including pharmaceuticals, textiles, electronics, information technology, food processing and advanced manufacturing.

Among the incentives highlighted by the state's investment platform are provisions relating to stamp duty exemption, capital investment subsidy, technology purchase, technical patents, interest subsidy, employment assistance and EPF reimbursement. The exact eligibility and quantum depend upon the category, location and nature of the investment.

The significance of this approach lies in combining financial incentives with administrative reform. Incentives can

attract an investor's attention; a predictable regulatory system can influence whether that investment ultimately reaches the ground. Recent investment trends indicate that Chhattisgarh is seeking to convert this policy framework into sectoral diversification. Pharmaceutical, textile and garment projects have figured among recent investment proposals, while the state is also promoting electronics, semiconductor-related activity, logistics and technology-driven enterprises. The state's strategy is particularly relevant because Chhattisgarh already possesses several structural advantages: substantial mineral and energy resources, a central geographical location, road and rail connectivity, industrial land and a growing pool of skilled manpower.

But resources alone cannot determine competitiveness.

In an increasingly competitive federal economy, Indian states are competing with one another for the same manufacturing projects, technology companies, startups and employment-generating investments. An investor comparing locations is therefore likely to consider not only land and incentives, but also how quickly an enterprise can move from proposal to production. This is where Ease of Doing Business becomes more than an administrative slogan.

A transparent approval system reduces uncertainty. Digital tracking reduces dependence on personal follow-up. Defined timelines create administrative accountability. Risk-based inspections can

allow government agencies to concentrate their resources on areas where regulatory oversight is genuinely necessary. For MSMEs and first-generation entrepreneurs in particular, these changes can be consequential. Large corporations often possess specialised teams to handle approvals and compliance; a small entrepreneur usually does not. Simplifying procedures therefore has the potential to democratise access to the industrial ecosystem. The larger test, however, will lie in implementation. Digital portals must work reliably. Departments must adhere to prescribed timelines. Investors should receive clear information when applications are deficient. Approvals granted through a single-window mechanism must translate into coordination on the ground. And facilitation must remain equally accessible to a small local entrepreneur and a large corporate investor.

If these principles are implemented consistently, Chhattisgarh's Ease of Doing Business initiative could mark an important transition in the state's economic development — from an economy historically identified with natural resources and core industries towards one competing for diversified, technology-driven and employment-intensive investment. The idea behind the reforms is ultimately simple: an entrepreneur's energy should be spent on building an enterprise, creating employment and expanding production, rather than negotiating avoidable administrative complexity.

Chhattisgarh Pushes Green Steel, Draws ₹ 13,840 Crore Investment Proposals

“ Sai calls for greater value addition within the State as proposed projects promise 10,921 direct and indirect jobs

Chhattisgarh has attracted investment proposals worth ₹13,840 crore at the Chhattisgarh Industry Dialogue on Green Steel, held at a private resort in Nava Raipur on Thursday August 13, 2026. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, addressing the industry gathering and called for maximum value addition of steel produced in Chhattisgarh to take place within the State, with greater emphasis on downstream and speciality manufacturing.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai with the Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, a senior woman official and industry representatives during the Chhattisgarh Industry Dialogue on Green Steel at a private resort in Nava Raipur on Thursday, August 13, 2026. The dialogue focused on green steel, downstream manufacturing and greater value addition within Chhattisgarh-Photo Credit:channel24india.com

The dialogue, organised by the Chhattisgarh Government in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Thursday, focused on green steel, downstream manufacturing and the need to retain a larger share of the value generated from the State's mineral and steel



Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai witnesses the exchange of an investment proposal during the Chhattisgarh Industry Dialogue on Green Steel at a private resort in Nava Raipur on Thursday, August 13, 2026. The event received investment proposals worth ₹13,840 crore, with the proposed projects expected to generate 10,921 direct and indirect employment opportunities

resources within Chhattisgarh.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, who attended the programme as chief guest, said steel and mining had long formed a strong foundation of Chhattisgarh's industrial identity, but the State now needed to move beyond merely producing primary steel.

"Our objective should not remain confined to steel production. The maximum value addition of steel produced in Chhattisgarh should also take place within the State," Sai said.

He called for greater emphasis on downstream and special-

ity products, arguing that steel produced in Chhattisgarh should increasingly be converted locally into auto components, engineering products and equipment for the railway, defence and solar energy sectors instead of leaving the State primarily in its basic form.

"When value addition takes place in Chhattisgarh, employment will also be created in Chhattisgarh," the Chief Minister said, assuring investors that the State Government would stand firmly behind projects seeking to develop such industries.



Green steel emerges as next industrial opportunity

Sai said the global steel industry was rapidly moving towards greener production processes in response to net-zero carbon goals and maintained that Chhattisgarh had recognised the significance of this transition at an early stage.

With more than 26,000 MW of power availability and competitive industrial electricity tariffs, he said, Chhattisgarh was particularly well positioned to attract energy-intensive downstream manufacturing.

The ₹13,840-crore proposals emerging from the dialogue assume significance in this context, with the Government seeking to combine

Chhattisgarh's established strength in steel with newer, cleaner technologies and higher-value manufacturing.

The strategy also represents an attempt to address a long-standing economic question for mineral-rich states: how to ensure that raw materials and primary industrial output generate a greater share of jobs and economic activity within the region where they originate.

Nearly 8 lakh crore proposed in 18 months

Sai said the Industrial Development Policy 2024-30 had opened new avenues for investment, with Chhattisgarh attracting proposals of nearly ₹8 lakh crore over the past 18 months.

While steel and mining

remain important, the investment pipeline is becoming more diversified. Proposals have also come in sectors including artificial intelligence and data centres, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, textiles and agro-processing.

The Chief Minister linked the investment interest to reforms undertaken to simplify business procedures in the State.

Chhattisgarh, he said, had introduced an Ease of Doing Business Act, providing measures including self-certification for low-risk enterprises, risk-based regulation and deemed approval where applications are not disposed of within stipulated timelines.

The Government expects around 15 lakh MSMEs to ben-

efit from the reforms.

Sai also cited Chhattisgarh's performance in the CRISIL-NITI Aayog Investment Friendliness Index 2026, saying the State ranked first among major states in Regulatory Ease and Institutional Environment and second in Environmental Resilience.

The State was also recently presented the GeM Sustainable Procurement Award during the Government e-Marketplace's 10th anniversary celebrations in New Delhi.

Industrial expansion beyond Raipur-Bhilai belt

Another element of the Government's industrial strategy is to take investment beyond the traditional Raipur-Bhilai industrial belt.

Four new industrial parks have been approved in Rajnandgaon, Dhamtari, Janjgir-Champa and Bastar, according to the Government.

Rajnandgaon is also set to host an Electronics Manufacturing Cluster under EMC 2.0, spread across approximately 306 acres. The project has received approval from the Union Government and is expected to attract large-scale investment and potentially create around 9,000 jobs.

Companies operating in semiconductors, electric vehicles and smart electronics have shown interest in the cluster, the Government said.

The geographical expansion of industry is significant for the State because investment concentrated around established industrial centres cannot by itself deliver balanced employment opportunities across Chhattisgarh.



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‘No place for red tape’

Inviting businesses to invest in Chhattisgarh, Sai sought to project predictability and speed of decision-making as key advantages of the State.

"Our policy is clear, processes are transparent and approvals are being granted within stipulated timelines. There is no place for red tape here," he said. The Chief Minister added: "We will work together and together write a new story of success."

His message at the Green Steel dialogue was ultimately about moving Chhattisgarh

further up the industrial value chain. The State already possesses the minerals, steel-making capacity and energy base; the next challenge is to convert those advantages into higher-value manufacturing and wider employment.

For Chhattisgarh, therefore, the green steel push is not merely about producing steel with a lower carbon footprint. The larger objective is to ensure that more of the processing, manufacturing, investment and employment generated by its steel remains within the State itself.

Gen Z's Political Pulse: Modi Leads, Rahul Follows as Abhijeet Dipke Emerges as a New Youth Voice

“ A youth survey places Narendra Modi ahead of Rahul Gandhi and emerging activist Abhijeet Dipke, while dissatisfaction over paper leaks suggests young Indians are separating admiration for leaders from accountability

A recent C-Voter survey provides an interesting glimpse of that change.

Among Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and youth activist Abhijeet Dipke, Modi emerged as the most popular, receiving 39.8 per cent support. Gandhi was preferred by 27.9 per cent, while Dipke, whose national visibility has grown through recent student protests, received 12.6 per cent.

At first sight, the result appears straightforward: Modi leads.

But the other answers in the survey tell a more complicated—and perhaps more important—story.

Popularity Without Unconditional Approval

The same survey found that 50.7 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with the steps taken to prevent examination paper leaks. Only 33.2 per cent expressed satisfaction, while 16.1 per cent were unsure.

This is where the survey moves beyond a political popularity contest.

The leader who tops the popularity question can coexist with substantial dissatisfaction over an issue involving his government. That suggests something impor-



A generation that grew up with smartphones, instant information and unrestricted access to competing opinions is beginning to change an old assumption of Indian politics — that supporting a leader necessarily means supporting everything the government or political organisation associated with that leader does.

tant about younger citizens: political preference does not necessarily mean political surrender.

For a generation whose education, careers and employment prospects often depend upon competitive examinations, a paper leak isn't an abstract controversy debated in Parliament. It can represent lost preparation, financial burden on families and uncertainty about whether merit will actually be rewarded.

Modi Still Holds the Strongest Position

Modi's 39.8 per cent nevertheless demonstrates that his

connection with younger audiences remains formidable.

His political communication has adapted remarkably well to the digital age. Social platforms allow him to speak to young Indians without the traditional intermediary of newspapers or television.

But digital reach brings its own challenge.

The same technology that allows a leader to communicate instantly also allows young citizens to question instantly. A viral video can create enormous engagement, but it cannot per-

manently substitute for answers on education, examinations, employment and opportunities.

That is the new political equation.

Rahul Gandhi Has Space — and a Challenge

Gandhi's 27.9 per cent shows that he retains a substantial presence among younger respondents.

The figure also demonstrates that dissatisfaction with the government does not automatically translate into support for the principal opposition.

For Gandhi, therefore, the opportunity and challenge exist simultaneously.

Young voters may listen when the opposition raises questions about examination irregularities or unemployment. But eventually they will also ask what alternative solutions it proposes.

Opposition cannot survive indefinitely on identifying problems; it must convince voters that it can solve them.

Why Dipke's Number Is Different

Dipke's 12.6 per cent requires a different interpretation.

Comparing his percentage directly with Modi's or Gandhi's would be misleading. The other two have national parties, established political organisations and decades of public visibility behind them.

Dipke does not.

His recognition has grown primarily through the recent student agitation and CJP's advocacy on educational issues.

Therefore, 12.6 per cent should not be portrayed as evidence that he has suddenly become a national political challenger. What it does demonstrate is something potentially signifi-

cant about the digital generation: a person associated strongly with one issue can move from relative obscurity into the national conversation much faster than conventional politics once allowed.

Whether that recognition survives after the immediate agitation is another question.

From Protest to Organisation CJP has already begun confronting that question.

On August 6, 2026, the organisation constituted its National Working Committee and named Dipke its National Convener, with Sourav Das and Ashutosh Ranka serving as co-conveners.

CJP maintains that it does not presently intend to become a political party and instead wants to develop its grassroots organisation.

That may prove to be the more difficult phase of its journey.

A protest can unite people around dissatisfaction. An organisation must keep them together around objectives.

And if CJP wishes to remain outside electoral politics, it will eventually have to demonstrate that it can influence public policy without becoming merely another political pressure group.

Parliament Is Also Being Judged

The survey contains another figure political parties on both sides should notice.

Asked whether Parliament had held a satisfactory discussion on the paper-leak issue, 39 per cent said no, while 35.6 per cent said yes. Another 25.3 per cent were uncertain. The difference between the two principal responses is not enormous, so it would be wrong to present this as an overwhelming rejection of

Parliament.

But it does indicate unease.

And that unease isn't necessarily directed at one political party. When young people believe an issue affecting their futures has not received adequate institutional attention, the credibility question extends beyond government to the opposition and Parliament itself.

Prime Look Insight | The Real Winner Is the Questioning Generation

The temptation after any opinion survey is to declare winners and losers.

Modi leads. Gandhi follows. Dipke emerges.

But that may be the least interesting interpretation of these numbers.

The more consequential development is the emergence of a generation willing to support and question at the same time. It can admire Modi's leadership while demanding answers from his government. It can listen to Gandhi without automatically accepting Congress as the alternative. It can rally behind Dipke on student issues without necessarily wanting him to become a politician. That makes Gen Z harder to categorise—and perhaps healthier for democracy.

Political parties have traditionally invested enormous energy in discovering how to win young voters. They may now have to confront a different question:

How do you retain the confidence of a generation that can fact-check you, challenge you, organise against you and change its mind—all from the same mobile phone?

The C-Voter numbers will change. Another survey will produce another ranking.

From Guns to the Ramp: Nine Surrendered Maoist Women Step Into a New Life-By-Kumar Bahukhandi

“

At a National Handloom Day programme in Raipur on Friday, August 7, nine women who had left the Maoist movement appeared on the ramp in traditional handloom and Kosa silk — offering a striking picture of rehabilitation and a changing Bastar

There are moments when a photograph tells a much larger story than the event it records. In Raipur on Friday, August 7, 2026, nine women walked onto a fashion ramp wearing colourful handloom and Kosa silk garments. To an ordinary viewer, it could have been another presentation celebrating Chhattisgarh's traditional textiles. But the lives of the women on that stage gave the occasion an altogether different meaning.

All nine had once been associated with the Maoist movement in the conflict-affected forests of Bastar. Eight were from Sukma and one from Bijapur. Having surrendered and stepped away from the path of armed violence, they were now appearing publicly before an audience at the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Auditorium in Raipur, during the state-level weavers' conference organised on National Handloom Day.

The contrast was powerful. Women whose earlier lives had been spent in forests under the shadow of guns were now walking confidently under



stage lights, dressed in fabrics representing the culture and craftsmanship of Chhattisgarh.

They also walked alongside Femina Miss India Chhattisgarh Anushka Son, bringing them into a setting far removed from the world they had known before surrender.

Participants take to the ramp in traditional handloom creations during the National Handloom Day programme at Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Auditorium in Raipur on Friday, August 7, 2026. The event featured nine surrendered women Maoists from Sukma and Bijapur, highlighting their jour-

ney towards rehabilitation, dignity and a life away from violence-Photo

Credit:channel24india.com

Yet it would be a mistake to view the occasion merely as an unusual fashion show. Behind the colourful clothes and applause was a more serious story — of women attempting to reclaim ordinary lives after leaving an armed movement.

Among them was 22-year-old Punem Jyoti of Elmagunda village in Sukma's Chintagufa area, who had surrendered in Hyderabad in December. The experience of appearing on a fashion ramp was something

she had hardly imagined during her earlier life.

"I never thought something like this would happen in my life," Jyoti said, reflecting on the transformation she had experienced since leaving the Maoist movement.

Another 28-year-old surrendered woman, who did not wish to be identified, recalled how unfamiliar such an occasion was to her. "When we were in the forest, we had never seen such things," she said.

Her previous association with the Maoists' cultural wing had given her some experience of performing before people, which helped her face an audience during the ramp walk. But her most significant observation had little to do with fashion. "We are happy that, after renouncing violence, we are living a peaceful and dignified life," she said. Those words

perhaps explain the real importance of what happened in Raipur that Friday.

Beyond the Ramp, the Larger Story of Rehabilitation

For decades, large parts of Bastar have lived through Maoist violence, security operations and the social and economic consequences of prolonged conflict. Women have been part of that history too, although their experiences frequently receive less attention.

Some entered Maoist organisations when they were very young. Years spent in remote forest areas can leave them with limited formal education, few recognised employment skills and little familiarity with life outside the organisation. Surrender therefore cannot be regarded as the end of the process. In many respects, it is only the beginning.

A person may put down a

weapon in a single day, but building a new life can take years. That is what gives the Raipur event significance beyond its visual appeal. The women were not being presented merely as former Maoists. For a few hours at least, society was seeing them in another role — as individuals capable of learning, participating, working and becoming economically independent.

Some of the surrendered women are now associated with social organisations and are receiving training and learning new skills. Such efforts are crucial because rehabilitation will succeed only when the decision to abandon violence is accompanied by a realistic alternative.

A former cadre without education, employment or social acceptance remains vulnerable. A former cadre equipped with skills, a livelihood and dignity



has a far stronger reason never to return to the forest.

Handloom Becomes Part of the Message

There was also symbolism in the clothes the women wore.

Chhattisgarh's handloom and Kosa traditions represent generations of craftsmanship and provide livelihoods to artisan communities. By bringing surrendered women onto the stage in locally produced textiles, the programme connected rehabilitation with something deeply rooted in the state's cultural identity.

It also offered another image of Bastar.

For years, national perceptions of the region have often been shaped by encounters, landmines, security camps and casualty figures. Yet Bastar is equally a land of extraordinary tribal traditions, art, forests, textiles and communities whose lives cannot be defined solely by insurgency.

The women walking the ramp therefore represented more than their individual journeys. Their presence suggested what a post-conflict Bastar could eventually look like — a region in which people previously caught in cycles of violence find space in education, employment, enterprise and cultural life.

But symbolism must eventually translate into opportunity.

Fashion shows and public programmes can help restore confidence and reduce social stigma, but rehabilitation cannot survive on symbolic gestures alone. Women leaving extremist organisations require

sustained vocational training and, more importantly, actual employment.

Government schemes, private employers, social organisations and local communities all have a role to play. Training should be connected with viable livelihoods in areas such as handloom, handicrafts, agriculture, forest produce, hospitality and other locally sustainable sectors. Economic independence is particularly important for women. It provides not only income but also the ability to make decisions about their own future.

The success of rehabilitation should therefore not be measured merely by how many people surrender or how many weapons are deposited before authorities. The real test comes several years later: Did the person who surrendered find a livelihood? Was she accepted by society? Could she educate her children? Did she acquire the confidence to live independently? And, most importantly, did she have sufficient reason never to return to violence?

A Second Chance Must Become a Lasting One

The history of Maoist violence in Chhattisgarh cannot and should not be romanticised. Thousands of families, civilians and security personnel have paid a heavy price during decades of conflict. Rehabilitation does not require society to forget that history.

But ending an insurgency requires more than defeating armed groups in the forests. It also requires creating conditions in which those who abandon violence can permanently

return to democratic and social life. Society therefore has a responsibility alongside the government. If people who surrender are permanently branded by their past and denied employment or acceptance, rehabilitation becomes considerably harder. Accountability under law and an opportunity for reform can exist together.

This is what makes the nine women on the Raipur ramp worth remembering.

On Friday, August 7, 2026, they walked only a short distance across a stage at Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Auditorium. In another sense, however, the distance was enormous.

It was a journey from the forests of Bastar to the heart of the state capital; from an underground existence to a public stage; from being identified with a gun to being recognised as women trying to rebuild their lives. The applause eventually stopped. The stage lights were switched off. The National Handloom Day programme ended.

Their real journey did not.

For these nine women, the challenge now is to turn that moment on the ramp into something permanent — skills, employment, economic independence and acceptance.

And perhaps that is the strongest message emerging from their appearance in Raipur: putting down the gun opens the door to peace, but dignity, livelihood and social acceptance are what can ensure that the door to violence remains closed forever.

Sai Opens Independence Day Address With 'Jai Johar', Sets Out Roadmap for a Developed Chhattisgarh



On 80th Independence Day, Chief Minister pays tribute to freedom fighters and security personnel, hails transformation of Bastar and outlines new initiatives for youth, women, farmers and infrastructure

P yare Pradeshvasiyon, Jai Johar..."With this traditional Chhattisgarhi greeting, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai began his address to the people of the State on the occasion of India's 80th Independence Day on Saturday, August 15, 2026, paying homage to freedom fighters and presenting a broad roadmap for Chhattisgarh's development.

Sai said Independence Day was an occasion not only to remember those who sacrificed everything for the country's freedom but also to draw inspiration from India's journey of unity and integrity and strengthen the resolve to build a developed India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

He paid tribute to Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh and Veer Gundadhur, along with several other heroes associated with Chhattisgarh's resistance and freedom struggles.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai addresses the gathering during the State-level 80th Independence Day celebrations in Raipur on Saturday, August 15, 2026. Opening his address with "Pyare Pradeshvasiyon, Jai Johar," Sai paid tribute to free-



dom fighters and outlined his vision for a developed and prosperous Chhattisgarh-Photo Credit:channel24india.com via CMO.

Bastar's Transformation

Takes Centre Stage

One of the strongest themes of Sai's Independence Day address was the transformation underway in Bastar.

The Chief Minister said the

resolve for a Naxal-free India had been achieved and paid tribute to security personnel for their courage and sacrifice in the fight against Left-Wing Extremism. He pointed to Tiranga Yatras being taken out across Bastar as an expression of the changed atmosphere in areas once affected by Maoist violence.

"Now is the golden time for the reconstruction of Bastar," Sai said, highlighting the Niyad Nella Nar 2.0 and Bastar Munne initiatives. According to him, saturation of 31 schemes and 14 community facilities is intended to benefit more than 39 lakh people across the Bastar division.

He said schools that had remained closed because of Naxal violence had been reopened, while 36 new schools had also been sanctioned. Education Cities are being developed in remote areas including Orchha and Jagargunda.

The government, he said, has prepared a ₹4,824-crore livelihood upgradation plan aimed at raising the incomes of around 10 lakh families in Bastar. Security camps, meanwhile, are increasingly being developed as centres for public services, skills and entrepreneurship.

Farmers, Women and Rural Families

Sai described farmers' prosperity and dignity as a top priority of his government. He highlighted procurement of paddy at ₹3,100 per quintal, up to 21 quintals per acre, and said farmers shifting from paddy to pulses, oilseeds, maize, kodo, kutki and ragi



Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai acknowledges the ceremonial salute during the State-level 80th Independence Day celebrations in Raipur on Saturday, August 15, 2026, as the occasion unfolds with patriotic fervour

would receive input assistance of ₹15,000 under the Krishak Unnati Yojana.

On housing, the Chief Minister said that after approving 18 lakh houses in the first Cabinet meeting, the State had so far sanctioned 24.50 lakh homes, with an average of around 1,600 houses being constructed every day.

Women remained another major focus of his address. Sai said around 70 lakh beneficiaries had received ₹19,444 crore under the Mahtari Vandan Yojana. He also said 13.85 lakh women in Chhattisgarh had become 'Lakhpati Didis'.

Independence Day Parade: A contingent of Chhattisgarh Police performs a ceremonial drill during the 80th Independence Day celebrations in Raipur on Saturday, August 15, 2026, as spectators watch from the stands-Photo Credit:channel24india.com via CMO

Youth at the Heart of

Developed Chhattisgarh

Sai placed considerable emphasis on young people, saying new opportunities were being created from employment to innovation.

He said the State had undertaken reforms aimed at ensuring transparency in competitive examinations and had established the Chhattisgarh Staff Selection Board for recruitment to Class III and Class IV posts. A stringent law had also been passed to prevent cheating and unfair practices in examinations.

The Chief Minister said 7,000 young people had been recruited into the police, while recruitment for 3,946 teacher and assistant teacher posts had begun. Power companies were undertaking recruitment for 1,235 posts.

A new CG Assistance for Competitive Exam Scheme will support students preparing for NEET, JEE, CLAT, Railway, SSC, banking, PSC and UPSC exami-

nations. The State has also decided to provide 10 per cent reservation in direct recruitment for eligible Agniveers completing four years of military service, covering posts such as police constable, forest guard and jail guard.

Sai also announced that a ₹100-crore startup fund had been created under the Chhattisgarh Startup Promotion Policy to encourage innovation among young people.

500-Crore AI Mission

Technology featured prominently in the development agenda.

Sai said the government had approved a ₹500-crore Chhattisgarh State AI Mission, under which 100 AI data laboratories, five Centres of Excellence and more than 50 AI-based services would be developed.

The programme envisages AI training for six lakh students and 1.5 lakh government employees.

Five medical colleges — at Geedam, Kunkuri, Janjgir-Champa, Manendragarh and Kawardha — are also being started from the current academic session, while six government engineering and polytechnic colleges are to be developed as CGIT institutions.

Investment Proposals

Cross 8.23 Lakh Crore

On industrial growth, Sai said investor-connect programmes held in India and abroad had generated investment proposals worth ₹8.23 lakh crore, potentially creating around 1.74 lakh employment opportunities.



He referred to emerging industrial projects in textiles, electronics, furniture and manufacturing and said Chhattisgarh was moving towards establishing what he described as the country's first AI SEZ, along with an AI data centre.

The State is also developing the Raipur-Nava Raipur-Durg-Bhilai State Capital Region, while major road and railway projects are expected to improve connectivity with national markets.

'Meri Beti-Mera Abhiman' Announced

Marking Independence Day with a new initiative, Sai announced the 'Meri Beti-Mera Abhiman' campaign, under which toilets for girls will be constructed in 6,671 government schools.

He also said cremation grounds and waiting facilities would be developed in 6,524 villages under another rural development initiative.

The Chief Minister highlighted improvements in digital governance, saying more than 700 government services were available online through the

Seva Setu portal and over 80,000 complaints had been resolved through CM Helpline 1076.

Culture, Tourism and Chhattisgarh's Identity

Sai said the government would accelerate tourism development in Bastar and Surguja through the Mukhyamantri Paryatan Mission, while Chitrakote would be developed as a global tourism destination with a tent city. Sirpur, too, would be developed in accordance with world heritage standards.

He also announced an initiative to preserve the legacy of late Padma Vibhushan folk artiste Dr Teejan Bai through the Dr Teejan Bai Lakkala Alankaran, while the proposed Chitrotpala Film City is intended to support the development of Chhattisgarhi cinema.

Concluding his address, Sai invoked the Rig Vedic message "Sangachhadhwam, Sam Vadadhwaam", calling upon the people to move forward together, united in thought and purpose, towards the shared goal of a developed India and developed

After the Guns: Sai Backs Modi's Warning on 'Dimaagi Naxals'-By-Kumar Bahukhandi



Echoing the Prime Minister's Red Fort address, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai says the defeat of armed Naxalism must now be followed by a wider struggle against the ideology of violence

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on India's 80th Independence Day, one part of his speech had particular resonance in Chhattisgarh.

The Prime Minister spoke of the success achieved against armed Naxalism but warned that the challenge had not disappeared completely. Even as the gun-wielding insurgency loses ground, he cautioned against what he termed "dimaagi Naxals" — those who, in his assessment, continue to sustain or promote an extremist mindset.

In Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai strongly endorsed the Prime Minister's assessment. "The Prime Minister is absolutely right. Armed Naxalism has been eliminated, but 'dimaagi Naxals' still remain," Sai said while responding to Modi's Independence Day address.

Coming from the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, the observation carries significance beyond routine political endorsement.

Few states have experienced the human, social and economic cost of Maoist violence as deeply as Chhattisgarh. For decades, large parts of Bastar were known nationally through



encounters, ambushes, improvised explosive devices, security casualties and villages where the writ of the administration struggled to reach.

That picture is changing rapidly.

And it is precisely because the armed movement has been pushed back so significantly that the question raised by Modi — and reinforced by Sai — deserves closer examination.

The Battle Beyond the Battlefield

does victory over Naxalism mean once the guns begin to fall silent?

For much of its existence as a separate state, Chhattisgarh has confronted Maoism as one of its gravest internal-security challenges.

The conflict was never confined to armed cadres and security forces.

Ordinary tribal families lived with its consequences. Roads could become targets. Construction projects could be

obstructed. Schools and government buildings were affected. Movement through certain areas carried risks unimaginable in other parts of the state.

Security personnel paid with their lives. So did civilians and members of tribal communities. Development itself became inseparable from security.

The transformation now unfolding in Bastar therefore represents far more than a change in policing statistics.

Security camps have moved deeper into areas once regarded as Maoist strongholds. Roads and telecommunications have expanded. Government services are reaching settlements that remained isolated for years. Maoist cadres have surrendered, while sustained security operations have substantially reduced the geographical space available to the insurgency.

Independence Day 2026 offered powerful symbols of that transition.

The Tricolour was raised in villages where the shadow of Maoism had for decades prevented normal expressions of national and civic life. Former strongholds witnessed Independence Day celebrations involving local communities, officials and security personnel.

Such scenes carry a mean-

ing that numbers alone cannot convey. A national flag flying freely in a village once dominated by an armed movement represents more than the recovery of territory.

It represents the recovery of public space, civic confidence and normal life. But recovering territory is not the same as securing the future.

Security forces can dismantle camps, recover weapons, disrupt networks and push armed cadres out of their traditional areas of influence.

An idea cannot be eliminated through an encounter.

And that is where the next phase of Chhattisgarh's struggle begins. If Maoism found space historically in isolation, deprivation, grievances and distrust of institutions, lasting peace will require those conditions to be addressed with the same determination that has characterised the security campaign.

A village cannot merely be declared Naxal-free.

It must acquire the conditions that allow it to remain Naxal-free.

A newly built road matters because it allows a farmer to reach a market, an ambulance to reach a patient and a teacher to reach a school.

Mobile connectivity matters because isolation has historically been one of extremism's greatest advantages.

Education matters because it gives a young person choices. Employment matters because peace becomes durable when people have a stake in stability.

Healthcare, banking, electricity, drinking water and

responsive administration matter because the presence of the State is ultimately judged not by the number of security camps it establishes but by the quality of life it enables.

The transition from security operations to ordinary governance may therefore be one of the most important tests facing the Sai government.

Winning Back More Than Territory

There is another dimension to the changing Bastar story that deserves greater attention.

For decades, much of India came to know Bastar through photographs of armed Maoists, security forces, burnt vehicles and the aftermath of violence.

That was never the whole identity of the region.

Bastar possesses an extraordinary cultural inheritance — tribal traditions, languages, festivals, forests, crafts, music, dance and landscapes that long predate the conflict.

Peace creates the opportunity for this identity to emerge from behind the imagery of insurgency.

Recent developments have already provided glimpses of that change.

Former Maoist cadres are returning to mainstream society. Young people from previously affected regions are participating in sporting and cultural activities. Communities that once lived under the pressure of insurgency are increasingly engaging with government institutions.

The transformation of surrendered women Maoists offers a particularly striking example. Women who once lived within armed formations

have been seen acquiring skills, participating in public programmes and attempting to build entirely different lives.

Such rehabilitation should not be treated as a public-relations exercise.

It is an essential part of countering extremism.

A person who surrenders a weapon needs more than immediate financial assistance. Reintegration requires skills, employment, social acceptance and the confidence that there is a dignified future outside the movement.

If surrendered cadres return to communities without livelihoods or acceptance, the process remains incomplete.

The same principle applies to the next generation.

The strongest protection against a revival of Maoism will not be permanent deployment of extraordinary numbers of security personnel.

It will be a generation that sees education, enterprise, sport, employment and democratic participation as more powerful instruments of change than violence.

What Does 'Dimaagi Naxal' Mean?

This is also where Modi's phrase "dimaagi Naxals" requires careful consideration. The expression is politically powerful. It is also broad enough to generate legitimate debate.

If it refers to individuals who continue to advocate armed revolution, justify Maoist violence or encourage the overthrow of constitutional democracy through force, the ideological challenge is obvious.

A weakened armed organi-

sation does not necessarily mean that the ideas used to justify its violence have disappeared. But India is also a constitutional democracy, and that makes another distinction equally important.

Criticism of the government is not Naxalism.

A journalist questioning an official claim, an academic examining displacement, a lawyer representing an accused person, a tribal activist demanding forest rights or an opposition leader challenging security policy cannot be branded extremist merely for disagreeing with those in power. Democratic dissent and advocacy of political violence are fundamentally different things. Recognising that distinction does not weaken the campaign against Naxalism.

It strengthens its democratic legitimacy.

Indeed, the most convincing answer India can give to an ideology advocating violence is to demonstrate that its constitutional system provides peaceful means to challenge authority, seek justice and change governments.

Elections allow governments to be removed. Courts allow State action to be challenged.

Journalism allows power to be questioned. And Assemblies allow political disagreement.

Peaceful protest allows grievances to be expressed.

None of these is a weakness of the Republic. They are among its greatest strengths.

The ideological battle against Maoism must therefore be fought with confidence rather than fear.

Development Must Include

Bastar's People

The retreat of armed Naxalism also opens enormous economic possibilities for southern Chhattisgarh.

Improved security and connectivity can encourage investment, tourism, local enterprise and employment.

But development in Bastar carries a special responsibility.

The region's tribal communities cannot merely become spectators to economic transformation taking place around them. Their participation must be central to it.

Land, forests and traditional livelihoods have profound economic and cultural significance. Development that ignores those relationships could create new grievances even while old ones are being resolved.

The State therefore faces a delicate but achievable task: expanding economic opportunity while protecting identity, dignity and legitimate community rights. The best answer to extremist propaganda will be development that people can see, participate in and benefit from. A young tribal entrepreneur building a successful enterprise is an answer. A girl from a remote village entering university is an answer. A farmer obtaining a better price because a new road connects his village to a market is an answer. A former Maoist earning a dignified livelihood after surrender is an answer.

A tribal family receiving responsive healthcare from a functioning government facility is an answer.

These may appear to be ordinary achievements.

In a region emerging from

decades of insurgency, they are profoundly political ones.

From Security Success to Democratic Success

Sai's endorsement of Modi's Independence Day warning should therefore be seen against this larger transition.

The first stage of the struggle was necessarily about restoring the authority of the constitutional State in areas where armed organisations exercised influence.

The next stage is about demonstrating what that constitutional State can deliver.

This is a more complex test.

A security operation has identifiable objectives. A territory can be secured. A camp can be established. A cadre can surrender. A weapon can be recovered.

Trust is harder to measure.

So is opportunity.

And so is the disappearance of an extremist idea.

Yet these will ultimately determine whether the gains made against Maoism become permanent.

The State, in effect, has two victories to achieve.

The first is to establish the authority of the Constitution over territory previously dominated by armed insurgents.

The second is to convince every citizen living there that the constitutional system belongs to them and can answer their aspirations.

The first victory can be secured through force when necessary. The second must be earned through governance.

That distinction is central to understanding the future of Bastar.

PM Modi Assures Full Support to Flood, Landslide-Hit Families in 80th Independence Day Address



‘Entire country stands with you,’ Prime Minister tells affected families from Red Fort; expresses solidarity as heavy monsoon rains, floods and landslides hit several parts of India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi on Saturday, August 15, 2026, on the occasion of India's 80th Independence Day. In his address, Modi expressed solidarity with families affected by floods and landslides, assuring them that the entire country stands with them

P rime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, August 15, 2026, assured families affected by floods and landslides across different parts of India that the government and the entire country stood firmly with them, placing the suffering caused by the monsoon calamities among the concerns he raised from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the country's 80th Independence Day.

After hoisting the Tricolour at the historic Red Fort in New Delhi, Modi addressed the nation and expressed solidarity

with people who have lost family members, homes, livelihoods or have otherwise been affected by floods, flash floods and landslides during the ongoing monsoon season.

"My dear Indians, in the past few days, some parts of the country have witnessed floods and landslides, and many families have been affected," Modi said.

Acknowledging the distress faced by people in disaster-hit areas, the Prime Minister said the government understood their suffering.

We fully understand their pain and suffering. I assure the affected families that the entire country stands with them."

The assurance from the Red Fort carried particular significance as the country celebrated its 80th Independence Day while several regions continued to grapple with the consequences of intense monsoon rainfall.

PM's Message of Solidarity From Red Fort

The Prime Minister's remarks brought the plight of disaster-affected families into

the country's principal Independence Day address, signalling that their immediate difficulties remain a national concern even as India celebrates the anniversary of its freedom.

Heavy rainfall during the monsoon has affected several parts of the country, causing flooding, flash floods and landslides and disrupting normal life. Assam, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Nagaland are among the states that have faced severe weather-related situations this season.

For families caught in such disasters, the consequences can extend far beyond the immediate emergency. Houses and crops can be damaged, roads and bridges disrupted and communities temporarily cut off, making relief followed by rehabilitation an equally important part of the response.

Modi's assurance therefore placed emphasis not simply on acknowledging the calamities but on conveying to affected citizens that they would not face the crisis alone.

The Prime Minister's choice to raise the issue at the beginning of an address delivered on one of India's most important national occasions also gave the message wider resonance.

Independence Day traditionally provides the Prime Minister an opportunity not only to outline national priorities and achievements but also to address challenges confronting citizens.

This year, the suffering caused by natural disasters became part of that national message.



Relief and Rehabilitation Remain the Challenge

The immediate priority following floods and landslides is saving lives, evacuating people from vulnerable locations and ensuring access to food, drinking water, medicines and temporary shelter.

But the challenge does not end when floodwaters recede.

For affected families, rebuilding homes, restoring livelihoods, repairing damaged infrastructure and returning children to schools can take considerably longer. Farmers may have to contend with damaged crops and agricultural land, while remote communities can face prolonged connectivity problems after roads and bridges are affected.

The Prime Minister's assurance from the Red Fort consequently carries an expectation of sustained institutional support through both the relief and rehabilitation stages.

Disaster response in India

involves coordination among the Centre, state governments, district administrations, specialised disaster-response forces, security personnel and local agencies. The severity and geographical spread of monsoon-related disasters make such coordination particularly important.

Modi's statement also underscored a broader message associated with Independence Day — that national solidarity extends to citizens confronting tragedy in any part of the country.

For those celebrating the day away from disaster-hit regions, the Prime Minister's remarks served as a reminder that the national celebration was taking place alongside the hardship being endured by thousands of families elsewhere. As the Tricolour flew over the Red Fort on India's 80th Independence Day, Modi's assurance to those families was unequivocal: their suffering was understood, and the country stood with them.

Politics of Personal Comment: When a Woman Becomes the Punchline



AIADMK leader R B Udayakumar's "When will Trisha be Deputy CM?" jibe may have been intended as an attack on alleged political patronage, but dragging an actor into the argument raises a larger question about the boundaries of political discourse.

Politics thrives on criticism. Governments must be questioned over appointments, favouritism, conflicts of interest and the use of public office. Opposition parties not only have the right to raise such issues; in a democracy, they have a responsibility to do so.

But there is a difference between political criticism and personal insinuation.

This distinction has again come into focus in Tamil Nadu after AIADMK leader R B Udayakumar reportedly took a swipe at Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay by asking when actor Trisha, who has worked with Vijay in several films, would be made Deputy Chief Minister.

Udayakumar's broader argument deserves political scrutiny. In a video that went viral, the former minister questioned appointments allegedly given to individuals professionally associated with Vijay during his film career. He referred to appointments ranging from government advisers and a special representative in New Delhi to positions connected with temples and the



state film training institute.

If an opposition leader believes such appointments demonstrate favouritism, there is nothing improper about demanding answers. Who was appointed? What qualifications did they possess? What procedure was followed? Was there transparency? These are legitimate questions.

The problem begins when the argument shifts from appointments that can be examined on facts to a sarcastic reference involving a

woman who is not shown to have anything to do with those decisions.

Why Bring Trisha Into It?

Trisha is a public figure and a prominent actor. That does not automatically make her personal or professional association with another actor legitimate ammunition in every political battle involving that person.

Asking sarcastically when she would become Deputy Chief Minister does little to establish whether the govern-

ment's appointments were justified. Instead, it risks reducing a serious allegation about governance to a personal taunt.

This is particularly troubling because women in public life and entertainment are frequently pulled into political controversies through insinuations about their relationships with powerful men. Such references attract attention, but they rarely contribute evidence to the argument being made.

If there is evidence that Trisha has been considered for public office, politicians are entitled to question it. If there is none, her name should not become shorthand for an allegation of political favouritism.

Criticise the Chief Minister, Not an Uninvolved Individual

Vijay, as Chief Minister, cannot expect immunity from sharp criticism. His government's appointments, policies and administrative decisions belong in the public domain and should withstand opposition scrutiny.

If people from his cinema career have received important government positions, the opposition can place the entire list before the public and ask the government to explain the criteria behind every appointment.

That would be powerful political criticism because it would be based on facts.

A personal jibe involving Trisha actually risks weakening that argument. Instead of forcing a discussion about transparency in appointments, the controversy shifts towards whether the remark itself

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crossed a line.

The episode comes against an already charged political background, following controversy over alleged insulting remarks concerning the actor. That makes restraint even more important. One objectionable personal comment cannot become justification for another.

Political Speech Needs Boundaries

Freedom of political expression must remain wide. Satire, sarcasm and even uncomfortable criticism are part of democratic politics. Politicians should not be shielded merely because criticism is harsh.

But freedom of expression does not require abandoning

judgment.

There is a simple test political leaders could apply: Is the person being named directly relevant to the public issue being questioned?

If yes, ask the toughest questions possible.

If not, particularly when the reference relies on speculation about personal relationships, leave that person out of the political crossfire.

Tamil Nadu's political parties have enough substantive issues to debate — governance, employment, welfare, investment, law and order, public finances and administrative appointments among them. None requires turning a woman actor into a political punchline.

Can Ramayana Reclaim the Sacred Aura That Adipurush Lost? The Legacy of Arun Govil Sets a High Benchmark- By- Kumar Bahukhandi



The casting of Arun Govil as King Dasharath is also widely seen as a symbolic bridge between generations—linking the timeless television classic with a new cinematic adaptation.

With the release of the first glimpse of Nitesh Tiwari's *Ramayana*, social media has once again erupted into a familiar debate: Can any modern adaptation recreate the reverence that Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* achieved? And more importantly, has Bollywood learned its lessons after the failure of *Adipurush*?

The new film, starring Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravana, and Arun Govil as Dashratha—the actor who became synonymous with Lord Ram—returns to the epic with enormous expectations. Scheduled for release during Diwali 2026, the film has generated optimism among audiences who are hoping that India's greatest epic will finally receive the cinematic treatment it deserves.

The Gold Standard: Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan*

Long before streaming platforms and visual effects transformed filmmaking, Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* became a cultural phenomenon—Source-Internet.

Arun Govil's portrayal of



Lord Ram in Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* remains one of the most iconic performances in Indian television history.

When Arun Govil appeared on television as Lord Ram, millions of viewers folded their hands before their television sets. Streets emptied every Sunday morning, and the serial transcended entertainment to become a shared spiritual experience.

Its success did not rely on cutting-edge technology or grand visual effects. Instead, it rested on faithful storytelling, dignified performances, respectful dialogue and a deep understanding of the

emotions associated with the epic.

Even today, many viewers continue to regard Arun Govil's portrayal as the benchmark against which every new Ram is measured.

Adipurush: A Grand Vision That Failed to Convince

Prabhas and Kriti Sanon as Lord Ram and Sita in *Adipurush*, a visually ambitious adaptation that sparked widespread debate over its creative interpretation of the epic—Source-Internet

When Om Raut's *Adipurush* was announced, expectations were equally high.



With Prabhas portraying Lord Ram and Kriti Sanon as Sita, the film promised a large-scale cinematic interpretation of the epic. However, following its release, it became one of the most debated films in recent Indian cinema.

Many viewers felt that the characters, visual design and especially several dialogues departed too far from the spirit traditionally associated with the Ramayana. The criticism was particularly intense over some lines written by Manoj Muntashir, which many audiences considered inconsistent with the dignity of the epic.

The controversy spread beyond India, with members of the Indian diaspora also expressing disappointment, arguing that a story revered across generations deserved greater cultural sensitivity.

To his credit, Manoj Muntashir has acknowledged that *Adipurush* "couldn't meet expectations." He has maintained that the film was made with sincere effort, while also expressing pride in its music and hoping that the soundtrack of the upcoming *Ramayana* surpasses it.

That acknowledgement reflects an important reality: creative effort alone does not guarantee acceptance when adapting a sacred text that holds deep emotional and religious significance for millions.

Nitesh Tiwari's *Ramayana*: A Different Approach

The first glimpse of *Ramayana* suggests that the filmmakers are taking a markedly different path.

Rather than attempting to radically reinterpret the story, the visuals indicate a greater emphasis on mythology, traditional aesthetics and emotional authenticity. Ranbir Kapoor's restrained appearance as Lord Ram and Sai Pallavi's portrayal of Sita have already received positive reactions from many viewers online.

The casting of Arun Govil as King Dasharath is also widely seen as a symbolic bridge between generations—linking the timeless television classic with a new cinematic adaptation.

Whether the film ultimately succeeds will depend not only on its visual scale but also on whether it captures the moral depth, compassion and restraint that define the *Ramayana*.

Respect Matters More Than Reinvention

Indian cinema has repeatedly demonstrated that audiences are open to fresh interpretations of mythology. However, the response to *Adipurush* also showed that viewers expect those interpretations to remain respectful of

the core values and emotional essence of the original narrative.

For many, Lord Ram is not merely a literary character but a source of faith and inspiration. Any adaptation therefore carries a responsibility that extends beyond commercial entertainment.

At the same time, reactions to films inevitably vary. While many viewers strongly criticised *Adipurush* and felt its creative choices did not honour the epic, others appreciated aspects such as its music, performances or technical ambition. Public opinion was far from uniform.

A Defining Moment for Mythological Cinema

The upcoming *Ramayana* now carries expectations that go beyond the success of a single film. It represents an opportunity to restore audience confidence in large-scale mythological storytelling.

If it succeeds in combining cinematic excellence with reverence for one of India's most cherished epics, it could establish a new benchmark for the genre while paying tribute to the legacy created decades ago by Ramanand Sagar and Arun Govil.

If not, comparisons with both *Ramayan* and *Adipurush* will continue to dominate the conversation.

